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CONTENTS.

	Page.
The New Year.—The Editor	1
Stocktaking.—J. T. Lloyd	2
A Tame Torquemada.—Mimnermus	3
A Fragment on Matrimony.—T. F. Palmer	4
The Parson's Thanksgiving Prayer.—Ess Jay Bee	6
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	6
Acid Drops	7
Man and Nature.—Avon Dale	8
To Correspondents	9
Sugar Plums	9
Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.	10
The Crows.—E. G.	10
Heinrich Kitzler.—H. J. Stenning	11
A Day of Thanksgiving.—Frank Betts	13
The Churching of Bacchus.—Percy Ripley	13
Letter to the Editor—The Struggle for Existence	13
Society News	13

Views and Opinions.

The New Year.

1918 opens, as did 1917, with Christendom still at war. And so far as Christianity is concerned, 1928 might see the world still engaged in the pastime of destruction. Whenever and however the War comes to an end, the end will not be in the least due to the influence of Christianity, whether organized or unorganized. Discontent in the world of labour, the implied threat to capitalists if the War continues, the feeling that the lengthening of the War may threaten the security of a dominant class, scarcity of food, even the war-weariness in the Army itself, all these factors may combine to bring the War to a close; but no one would be daring enough to suggest that the influence of Christianity will be strong enough —even as a discernible factor—to lead the world back into the ways of peace. Powerless to prevent the War breaking out, the Churches of Christendom show themselves equally impotent to bring it to a close. All they can offer the world is the futile imbecility of a Day of Prayer. But it is not the intercession of prayer the world requires; what it needs is the intercession of common sense.

* * *

The Savage in Our Midst.

Each year of the War has been ushered in by a Day of Prayer, and each year has seen the War growing more ruthless. That is God's answer—if he answers at all—to the petitions of his followers. In each country millions of Christians pray to their Deity that he will help them to kill a few hundred thousand of his followers in some other country—for that is really what a Day of Prayer amounts to. They do not put it thus plainly—religion in a civilized country is nothing if it is not hypocritical; but as our leaders are convinced that peace is impossible until enough Germans have been killed to break the German military class, and as German leaders are equally convinced that peace cannot come until the "mailed fist" and "shining sword" have established their supremacy, no other meaning can be given to the petition. And if God does answer these prayers, his reply is to be read in the casualty lists. In the mediæval period, people carried the images of saints in front of them for protection. Further back in the history of human culture we find savages carrying their gods before them when advancing to attack a hostile tribe. The savage with his Ju-Ju, the mediæval Catholic with his image, the modern parson with his Day of Prayer, what is the mental difference between the three? There is none; despite difference of language and dress, they are absolutely upon the same level. The dress of the archbishop masks the paint and crude ornaments of the savage medicine-man; the paint of the medicine-man holds the promise of the elaborate dress of the archbishop. Modern God and primitive Ju-Ju, primitive priest and present-day parson, they are all of a piece. A substantial identity exists beneath a difference of dress. The call to a Day of Prayer is a call to the savage in our midst. Civilization has not destroyed the savage yet. He is merely restrained with occasional periods of liberty. And on January 6 he is having a day out—by Royal Command.

* * *

What Has God Done?

One may well wonder whether any reasonable being really expects anything to follow from this "Command" day of prayer? Will it have any effect on the German armies? Will it have any influence on our own? If it will, why not concentrate on prayer, and end the War in a way suitable to ourselves? Why trouble about economy campaigns, and loan campaigns, if our vital need is really a prayer campaign? Why not mobilize the parsons and leave the laymen at home? We have the King's word that we can only have victory if the "blessing of Almighty God" rests upon our endeavours. But in a war victory usually rests on someone's endeavours, and we must, therefore, conclude that whoever succeeds, God has blessed their endeavours. And a further conclusion is that, when the Germans were driven back from the Marne and the Somme, God blessed our endeavours, and when the Germans swept over Poland, and Serbia, and Belgium, and Italy, God blessed their endeavours. But, perhaps, the truer view is that God has nothing at all to do with it. That would certainly be more complimentary to the Deity. For imagine the moral value of a God with the power to end the War refusing to act until the nation goes on its its knees and asks him to intervene! A God worth spending sixpennyworth of incense on would have ended the War long ago. He would have prevented the German armies marching across Belgium, he would have stayed the sinking of civilians at sea, and the murder of civilians on land. He has done none of these things, and we are now asked to collectively arise and remind him that there is a war on, that it is time he did something! Could absurdity go further? A God who needs petitioning in such a connection is not worth the trouble of asking.

* * *

The Bursting of a Bubble.

Certainly 1917 can have given the Churches small

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cause for pleasure, and 1918 offers them but little comfort in prospective. When the War commenced, all the Churches did what they could to make capital out of the world-agony—the falsehood that the War was due to the growth of Freethought, alternated with deliberately concocted lies concerning revivals of religion at home and abroad. There is no need to mince matters; the people who spread these stories about a revival of religion must have known they were not true. When men like the Bishop of London went to France and told the soldiers of the revival of religion in England, they knew it was not true. And when they came home and told us about the revival of religion amongst the troops, they knew the tale was false. There was no room for an innocent mistake. There was no revival either at home or abroad, and that fact is now so patent that even the pretence of a revival is given up. The War did not revive men's faith in Christianity; on the contrary, it broke through the cover of a formal profession of faith, and brought them face to face with facts. And the result is that at no previous period have the Churches stood so low in the public estimation as now. Thousands have discarded Christianity who but for the War might have gone on rendering it a formal support. The War has broken through many shams, and one of them has certainly been the sham of religion as a beneficent force in human affairs. * * *

The Future for Freethought.

But if the outlook is dark, so far as the immediate future of the Christian Churches is concerned, it is promising enough for Freethought. We are not among those who foresee a millennium when the War is over. We do not believe that with the declaration of peace, the capitalist and the working-man, the squire and the agricultural labourer, will embrace and forget all their old differences, and causes of conflict. On the contrary, we foresee a stormy period ahead, and even a struggle to get back some of the liberties that we have lost for the avowed purpose of prosecuting the War. But we need not wait for the end of the War to see the progress made by Freethought. It is not that there have been—to use a cant term—conversions. We have no belief in conversions of any kind. It is rather, as we have said, there has been a realization. The shock of the War has compelled thousands to some sort of self-examination, with results wholly profitable to Freethought. There is a keener demand for militant Freethought literature to-day than has been the case for many years. There is a keener interest in Freethought lectures, and this in spite of so large a number of the younger and more adventurous spirits being out of the country, serving in either the Army or the Navy. The position of this journal, after more than three years of War, is itself an earnest of better days in store. The breaking down of Supernaturalism of necessity involves a gain to Naturalism; a weakening of faith in God is only the other side of a strengthening of confidence in reason and humanity. Peace will see a world weary of War, and largely disillusioned as regards the value of religious belief. And this will give Freethought a better chance than it has yet had to make its power felt in the life of the world.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

It is startling to think of the heavy, rough, actual wood of the Cross, and to observe that now the Cross has become only a symbol, and is decked with silken tassels and little velvet flags, and is guaranteed easy for carrying. Moreover, its victory was assured when it was accepted among the world's trinkets and worn as jewellery.—*W. R. Paterson, "Benjamin Swift."*

Stocktaking.

> One calls to me out of Seir (Edom), Watchman, what of the night? Saith the watchman, Morning cometh, and also night; if ye will inquire, inquire; go, come again (Isaiah xxi. 11, 12).

THAT is a delightfully sensible passage. It encourages neither unreasoning optimism nor hope-extinguishing pessimism. Egypt was being invaded by the Assyrian hosts, and the prophet represents the inhabitants of Idumæa as eager to learn whether or not their beloved country was likely to fall within the invaders' sweep. The prophet's answer was characteristically diplomatic. On the whole their chance of escape was good; but they must be on the alert: they must be neither unduly elated with confidence, nor cast down into despair; their duty was to keep their eyes and ears open, and be ready for any emergency. They must also be in close touch with their leaders, and never fall asleep. That is a principle applicable to any cause in any age or country. It behoves Freethinkers, every now and then, to inquire: "Watchman, what of the night? How do we stand? What are our prospects?" This is the season for stocktaking, for making an examination and inventory of goods in hand, and the prospects of the business, whatever it may be. Soon after the War broke out, clergymen confidently predicted that the death-knell of Rationalism had been sounded; in fact, that all anti-Christian movements were doomed to disappear—never to return. One of the loudest of such prophets was the Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Regent's Park Chapel, who joyously assured the readers of the *Christian World* that the future belonged to Christ and his Church, and that Freethought organizations had received notice to quit. At the time, to superficial observers, it seemed as if the prophecy had every likelihood of being speedily fulfilled. Churches and chapels were crowded to the doors, and the obsolete prayer meeting shot into prominence as the most popular institution of the day. Even the secular press had such headlines as "A Nation on its Knees," and "A Whole People at Prayer." The War was going to bring about the mightiest revival of religion the world had ever seen, and here it was already knocking at the doors. Surely this was the day of the glorious triumph of Christ, and the final overthrow of all his enemies.

For a while, we repeat, it looked as if Freethought was actually at the end of its tether, because the nations were returning to the God of their fathers; but only for a very short while. In a few months the religious wave that swept over the land had spent itself, and the people borne Christwards on its crest drifted back to where it had picked them up, with the result that in a recent interview the Rev. Dr. Orchard had the courage to admit that religion is now at a deplorably low ebb throughout the land. Instead of a religious revival, a religious decline appears to have set in everywhere. *And Freethought is still alive.* Even the *Literary Guide* and the *Freethinker*, over which Mr. Spurr waxed so sarcastically merry in one of his articles, have not had the decency to verify the reverend gentleman's prediction, but are even flourishing, despite the extremely adverse conditions under which they are being published. Indeed, we may honestly say that the outlook for our cause was never more encouraging and inspiring than it is at this moment. It is admitted by fair-minded clergymen that the War has destroyed the faith of multitudes, and added numerous recruits to the ranks of the army of freedom. Such being the case, one naturally asks, why do the people of to-day abandon the creed which their ancestors cherished with such ardour for so many centuries? Why does the religion of the Cross so com-

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pletely fail to meet their intellectual and moral requirements? Mr. Bottomley has told us that he went to hell on the battlefield, and there saw the glory of God; but that is the first time we have ever known the place of torment to yield such a glowing, happy vision. Does the editor of *John Bull* verily believe that hell, wherever it may be, is a revelation of the glory of the God of justice and love? Is it not rather an irrefragable evidence of the non-existence of a Supreme Being who is said to rule the world in righteousness and truth? Some there are who argue that the War, at its worst, is only an egregious aggravation of evils and miseries and horrors from which humanity at the best of times has never been wholly free. We admit it, and have always maintained that the prevailing conditions of life afford an unanswerable argument for Atheism. What we are calling attention to now is the fact that in this War those evil conditions have assumed such unprecedented proportions, and become so enormously intensified, that thoughtful men and women are having their eyes opened to the infinite absurdity of the belief in a righteous and good Deity. It is an old argument, brought home to thousands for the first time by the horrible carnage going on day and night on the battlefields. In this respect Freethought stands to gain even by the War, while religion is being increasingly discredited thereby. How frequently have we recently heard the exclamation: "This war has robbed me of faith in Divine Providence, and made an Athiest of me." Seeing hell at the Front, many a British soldier has had a radically different vision from the one described by Mr. Bottomley.

The Christian religion is being so entirely discredited because it is not true. Many of its present-day champions assert that the two most cardinal articles in its creed are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. As a matter of fact, however, neither article is to be found in the New Testament. The Gospel Jesus never throws out even the remotest hint that God is the Father of the human race as such. The Jews who persecuted him said: "We were not born in fornication; we have one Father, even God." Jesus gave them the lie direct, saying, "If God were your Father, ye would love me"; and to his disciples he confidently spoke of God as his Father and theirs. In John's Gospel we read thus: "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." One of the great words in the Pauline Epistles is "adoption"; and the doctrine taught therein is that we are not children of God by nature, but become so by adoption. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." In the New Testament brotherhood also is restricted to the disciples of Christ. By Jesus himself his followers were addressed as "brethren," while "the Gentile and the publican" were treated as outsiders (Matt. xviii. 17). Paul invariably spoke of his converts as "brethren." In 1 Peter ii. 17, we are exhorted to "honour all men" and to "love the brotherhood."

Now, whatever some modern preachers may say, the fact remains that the Bible does not represent God as the Father of all men, or all men as brothers. Furthermore, Christianity ignores the natural greatness and dignity of man, and persists in depicting him as fallen, depraved, and lost, and as incapable of a life worth living except through faith in the finished work of Christ. They who become Christians confess that this world is not their home, that their citizenship is in heaven, and that their life here, as such, possesses no value whatever. On earth they are but strangers and pilgrims, "seeking after a country of their own," and looking for "the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The only legitimate inference from such expressions is that Christianity is a religion, not for this world, but pre-eminently for the world to come. Indeed, St. John instructs his readers to be on their guard against setting their affections on things earthly, because, he says, "the world passeth away," and is not worth bothering about.

These aspects of the Christian religion, once they are seen in their true light, condemn it as utterly unworthy of survival as the alleged inspirer and guide of man's life on earth. This is being found out by an ever-growing number of people, with the inevitable result that they become non-religious. Dr. Fort Newton recalls the pathetic refrain in classic lore, "The Gods do not care"; and he admits that "in one form or another this idea of Divine indifference pursued the classic mind like a Nemesis," and that "its long shadow has not entirely vanished yet." The reverend gentleman is not quite blind to the fact that to-day "faith is terribly tried and men everywhere are troubled by grave questionings"; but he is fundamentally mistaken when he describes the loss of faith as due to "giving way to impulsive illogic." The truth is that belief in God's care for men is always entertained in spite of the logic of facts. Does not Newman himself affirm that "it is a great question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world as the doctrine of a creative and governing power"? That great man came to a pass when he had to embrace either Atheism or Catholicism; and though for himself he chose the latter, he has left it on record that an unbiased contemplation of the phenomena of the world leads to Atheism, Pantheism, or Polytheism (*Apologia*, pp. 323, 377, 379).

All things considered, then, we conclude that we have every reason to stir up our courage in confident hope of the final victory of our cause. The Freethought tree is spreading its branches in all directions, and all classes of men are finding grateful shade underneath them. There is no room for despair, or even for doubt. Within the Churches as well as without, our banner is held aloft, and many a clergyman is at heart on our side. Mr. Augustine Birrell speaks slightingly of Paine's *Age of Reason*, characterizing it as a work which "nobody is ever likely to read for instruction or amusement"; but be that true or false, the fact remains that the critical conclusions of the *Age of Reason* are now adopted and expressed by all the leading Biblical scholars, and scarcely anybody has the temerity to protest. Superstition is visibly passing; and the period of moral and social reconstruction on a purely natural and sound basis has already commenced. This affords ample ground for rejoicing, and justifies us in predicting for one another a happy and prosperous new year in the noble service of humanity.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Tame Torquemada.

The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away, like a northern iceberg floating into southern seas.—*G. W. Foote.*

EVERY bishop, it seems, must have his biography; and there have been episcopal biographies which made their readers groan. Hence, it is not surprising that a leading light of Nonconformity should have "related himself to paper," and Dr. Robert F. Horton's *Autobiography* (Allen & Unwin) is amply justified. It is the intimate record of a very full life, told with sincerity. Earnestness is its outstanding quality; and the wonder is that after so many years tilting at windmills, this Free Church Don Quixote should retain his crusading spirit unabated.

Dr. Horton is one of the last of the "hot gospellers,"

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but he has stronger affinities to Newman Hall than to Spurgeon and Billy Sunday. Indeed, Spurgeon regarded him as one of the "Down Grade" heretics. The life-like portrait Dr. Horton has painted of himself emphasizes most clearly the outstanding differences between himself and the Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle and the Playboy of the Western World. Dr. Horton has a passion for "crying for the moon," and has always set himself seriously to the solving of some of the social problems of the age. He has not hesitated to say frankly what he thinks; and, doing so, has offended susceptibilities. The most interesting quality of Dr. Horton's *Autobiography* is, however, not the prejudices of the author, but the light thrown on the religious and social life of our time.

Reared in a Nonconformist home, Dr. Horton was eyed with some suspicion in his schooldays. At Shrewsbury school he was appointed crier, which compelled the holder to end announcements with the pious adjuration, "God save the Queen, and down with the Radicals." He only escaped this pleasant ordeal by his removal to New College, Oxford. It will be news to many to learn that Dr. Horton rowed in the Oxford Eight five years consecutively. Still in his study hangs the oar which helped the boat up in 1887; and his section of the victorious vessel is now a cupboard to hold books.

Dr. Horton was fortunate with his acquaintances, and he watched the celebrities he met with a critical eye, and jotted down his impressions with determination. He tells an amusing tale of Professor Bywater, who was always talking of Plato: "When I was a child I was vaccinated and christened; neither of them took." The talented and unfortunate Oscar Wilde was also a student, and sat for his examination with Horton, who says:—

> I see him now, with his flabby face and ruffled hair, striding up to the desk for fresh paper after the first hour; then handing in his book half an hour before time was up. He was a genius, and for him to pose was second nature. Of course, he was in the first class; he reached by sheer ability a position which I had gained only by the concentrated and interested labour of two years.

These recollections of his Oxford days have more than a passing interest. "Milner," he says, referring to the Union debates, was the speaker of that time who made the greatest mark afterwards. He had a somewhat foreign accent, and never struck us as quite English, but his intellectual mastery was the prophecy of his famous career." Dr. Horton adds a caustic comment on the intelligence of the governing classes:—

> My Union experiences were not without their value in opening my eyes to the nature of English public life. When I was president my predecessor and successor were Lymington (now the Earl of Portsmouth) and Brodrick (now Lord Midleton). Thrown a good deal into their company, I found out the slender equipment with which the governing classes, by the weight of their traditions, could be carried to the highest places.

Dr. Horton decided to adopt the ministry, as his father and grandfather had done. "I knew that in Dissent," he writes, "it is absolutely impossible to obtain a distinction which gives you any acknowledged place in the national life." This is a hard saying in a civilized country, for Horton belonged to the Congregationalists, one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most reputable of the Free Churches. Always a "whole-hogger," he announced his intention of declining the title of Reverend and refusing to adopt clerical dress. "I shall wear," he declared, with a plentiful lack of humour, "no clothes to distinguish me from my fellow-Christians." The Oxford "barbarians" made rare fun of this remark, and caricatured Horton soaring to the sky and tearing off his clothes.

There are more serious things in the book than these trifles. Dr. Horton's first speech at the Oxford Union was in defence of the rights of Nonconformists to bury their own dead with their own rites. A Free Church minister had lost his wife, and when he brought her to the churchyard he found that the place allotted to her was a rubbish-heap. It was happenings such as this which determined Horton to enter the Congregational ministry. Had it not been for these ecclesiastical antagonisms, he might have entered the Church of England, and, to quote his own words, "even have risen to be a canon." And, as canons go, he would have been a good one.

Dr. Horton's indignation at the Church's conduct towards Nonconformists was only natural; but it must be remembered that the Church's attitude towards the working classes was equally objectionable. What sixteen centuries of the rule of the Bishops had done for the common people has been told by Joseph Arch, the first agricultural labourer who became a member of Parliament. In moving language he described the conduct of Churchmen towards their poorer brethren:—

> First up walked the squire to the communion rails; the farmers went up next; then up went the tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the wheelwright and the blacksmith, and then, the very last of all, went the poor agricultural labourers. They walked up by themselves; nobody else went with them; it was as if they were unclean—and at the sight the iron entered into my heart and remained fast embedded there. I said to myself, "If that's what goes on—never for me!"

The Torquemada strain in Dr. Horton shows itself in his abortive efforts to impose Puritanism on his fellow-citizens. Once he determined to preach in support of a crusade against music-halls. "Then it occurred to me," he says, naively, "that I had never been to such a place." So he went, and found the performance decorous and commonplace. "It was deplorable," in Dr. Horton's view, "that human beings should find pleasure in things so banal, stupid, and insipid." However, to his credit, he recast the notes of his sermon.

Dr. Horton's personality could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. It is one of the oddest of blends, for it includes a good deal of Paul Pry, a touch of Pecksniff, and an infinite amount of Sunday-school teacher. In the bad old days of absolute monarchy it was a law with all good citizens that "the king could do no wrong." This adage Dr. Horton has applied to himself. He magnanimously denounces all those who dare to utter a word that might not profit the little boys and girls of that Hampstead conventicle he himself adorns. Dr. Horton's theology, however liberal it may be, has not yet reached the level of Freethought, nor can it ever do so until it ceases to be theology and becomes simple Secularism. For any purpose connected with the real welfare of the people, the Christian religion might as well be dead and buried—as it will be when the people see the truth.

Mimnermus.

A Fragment on Matrimony.

Among civilized communities the system of monogamy is in every way the best. That love which lies deep does not depend upon external attractions alone. It arises from mental sympathy, and is permanently nourished by mutual affection and esteem. This form of love deepens and develops as the years roll round, and there is, perhaps, no more beautiful human spectacle than that displayed by the venerable married couple most happy when most united, albeit youth and youthful beauty have long since fled. Not that youth and beauty are

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necessarily associated. Many a grandparent possesses an intellectual loveliness of feature which is the harvest of a well-spent life. Professor Bain has shrewdly observed that:—

> The sociable interest is by its nature diffused: even the maternal feeling admits of plurality of objects; revenge does not desire to have but one victim; the love of dominion needs many subjects; but the greatest intensity of love limits the regard to one.

Nor is this overmastering passion for the sole possession of the adored one peculiar to the higher human stocks. Uncivilized races furnish examples of its power, while Brehm and other careful observers have described its occurrence among birds. In his *Descent of Man*, Darwin submits evidences of the monogamous instincts of domesticated mammals, and there is ample proof that most birds pair for life. But although an unbroken partnership constitutes the ideal state of matrimony, this need not discountenance reasonably easy and inexpensive divorce. When an ill-matched couple find it impossible to endure enforced companionship or cohabitation, every rational facility should be afforded for divorce with the right to re-marry so long as the interests of the innocent children are properly safeguarded. The offspring are necessarily the first consideration, for they were not consulted as to their birth; the children are frequently helpless; they suffer acutely amid domestic misery, and in them resides the future of the race. Therefore, with complete security of the rights of the children unsuitable alliances could be expeditiously dissolved with great advantage to the distracted partners, their offspring, and the social organism.

The duration of wedlock varies widely among different communities. With some peoples the ties of matrimony are so slender that they scarcely endure for a season. On the other hand, Man, the traveller, asserts that in the Andaman Islands the marriage union is absolutely indissoluble. The Yeddahs of Ceylon, certain New Guinea races, and several tribes of the Indian Archipelago never part until separated by death. But in the majority of cases the marriage contract is easily broken. In Greenland, Nansen tells us the married couple frequently separate after a six months' marriage. Waitz states that the Wyandots take their partners on trial, and should the experiment prove unsatisfactory the parties separate after a few days have elapsed. Among the savages of Australia, the natives of Samoa, the Dyaks of Borneo, and numerous other uncivilized stocks, divorce is as easily obtained as marriage. In the far eastern East love is so fleeting that the people are incessantly occupied in changing their mates. Divorces are an everyday episode of Moslem life. The matrimonial bond is so loose with the Bedouins that Burckhardt met men of middle life who had been married more than fifty times. In Egypt, Lane noticed a similar state of affairs. Very few are the dwellers in Cairo who have not divorced one spouse at least. In fact, as Professor Westermarck records in his invaluable *History of Human Marriage*, many native Eyyptians—

> have in the course of two years married as many as twenty, thirty, or more wives; whilst there are women, not far advanced in age, who have been wives to a dozen or more men successively.

Winwood Reade, in his *Savage Africa*, remarks of the Sahara Moors that they considered it improper for man and wife to live too long together, and "the leaders of fashion are those who have been the oftenest divorced." Old wives vanish, and new spouses appear so frequently in the household of the Bondo Negro that the paternity of the children is a subject of the haziest conjecture.

With various races in all stages of savage and semi-civilized development the husband has full liberty to send his wife away. The Aleuts commonly bargained their women for food and raiment. In Tongo the man merely informs his helpmeet that he desires her no longer when he wishes to divorce her. Among the ancient Israelites, again, if the woman failed to reach the man's standard of excellence he simply bade her depart. This is plain from the following verses:—

> When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and send her out of the house.
>
> And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.—(Deuteronomy, ch. xxiv. v. 1, 11).

With other peoples other customs prevail, even the Greenlanders rarely dismiss their wives when they are mothers, and divorces are infrequent among many of the North American Indians. With numerous native races in all parts of the world the marriage tie is regarded as much too sacred for hasty dissolution, and many instances are recorded from China to Peru where divorce is the exception rather than the rule.

Recognition of the parent's duties towards the offspring has materially influenced the marriage customs of quite uncivilized races. No divorce is available among the Kukis if the wife has given birth to a son; but if the union prove barren, the man may discard his spouse and wed another. In Indo-China divorce is permitted among the Red Karens when the marriage proves childless, but the birth of one child is sufficient to prevent divorce. Hunter states that with the Santals and Tipperahs of India the consent of the husband's clansmen or that of a jury of village elders is essential to secure a divorce. With sundry backward tribes adultery alone will condone divorce, and among various other communities public sentiment serves to strengthen the dignity of marriage. Even with some extremely uncivilized races the wife's assent forms an important factor in cases of separation. The ancient Mexicans viewed matrimony as a permanent contract, and divorce was frowned upon both by the priests and the people. Adultery, in Nicaragua, constituted the only offence which empowered a husband to divorce his partner. Although divorces are easily obtainable in China, Medhurst ascertained that separation is comparatively rare in that country. Legal facilities for divorce are very reasonable in Japan; but according to Professor Rein and other authorities, the softening influences of family life are so healing that the marriage bond is seldom broken, and divorces are relatively rare.

In Rome and Greece divorces were easy of accomplishment, particularly in their later periods. With the triumph of the Christian religion, facilities for judicial separation were restricted, and the New Testament text, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," was sternly quoted against all dissenters. Still, divorces were from time to time conceded to the rich and powerful, until the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, "definitely suppressed the last traces of divorce as a legal practice."

Catholic countries still suffer from the Church's pronouncement. Divorce was established in France by the great Revolution. It was sanctioned and utilized by Napoleon, but it disappeared with the reaction which succeeded his fall. The Republic waited until 1884, when the Government became sufficiently stable to withstand all the plots of the royalists and clericals. Then, on the 27th of July, divorce was restored to the statute books of France. In Spain and Italy a husband may apply for a legal separation, but the marriage contract cannot be annulled.

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The Reformation led to an amelioration of the Canon Law in Protestant States. The proof of adultery on the part of the wife is now sufficient to secure dissolution of marriage throughout the Protestant world, although the law varies in other respects in different countries. Under the Prussian "Landrecht," debauchery, drunkenness, insanity of more than a year's duration, and the combined wishes of the two partners in the absence of offspring, are among the provisions for divorce. When the married pair have remained judicially separated for three years, divorce is available in Denmark and Norway by mutual consent. Even in Jesuit-ridden Austria unconquerable aversion, when conclusively established, finds its solution in divorce. Clericalism, however, was, in the 'fifties, too powerful in Ireland to permit the inclusion of that country in the new divorce legislation of England. To this hour divorce is only possible in Ireland by special Act of Parliament.

It is a legitimate inference from analogy that aboriginal man paired with his partner until after the birth of the offspring. Whether the union persisted longer, we cannot say. Trustworthy observers have noted that the man-like apes form family groups, and it is a fair deduction that the habits of primitive races were very similar. After a long and careful consideration of all the available data, Westermarck concludes that on the whole the tendency towards lifelong unions has increased with the advance of civilization. Nevertheless, that anthropologist regards a further freedom as inevitable among civilized mankind. For—

> It must be remembered that the laws of divorce in Christian Europe owe their origin to an idealistic religious command which, interpreted in its literal sense, gave rise to legal prescriptions far from harmonizing with the mental and social life of the mass of the people. The powerful authority of the Roman Catholic Church was necessary to enforce the dogma that marriage is indissoluble. The Reformation introduced somewhat greater liberty in this respect, and modern legislation has gone further in the same direction.

Even in England there is now a fair prospect for an advantageous rationalization and reform of our effete laws relating to divorce. And despite the angry antagonism of the representatives of Rome at the top, right down to the pastors of the puniest Bethels at the bottom, this urgent and far-reaching improvement cannot long be delayed.

T. F. PALMER.

The Parson's Thanksgiving Prayer.

The following lines—slightly altered—appeared in the *Freethinker* at the end of the Boer War. They are so appropriate to the present situation that we have ventured to reprint them.

ALMIGHTY GOD, whose only Son
Was dead against all "scrapping,"
We very nearly had begun
To think that Thou wast napping.

We now approach Thy Throne of Grace,
Not far from Ludgate Circus,
To "kid" the foolish British race,
And—keep us from the "work'us."

O Lord, we're thankful 'tis Thy will
To set the nations squabbling;
We're glad Thou art a Briton still;
We thought Thou had'st been "wobbling."

We thought that Thou had'st been and gone
And joined the Hun rapscallions,
Forgetting that Thou'rt always on
The side of big battalions.

Almighty God, we hope that we
Shall bring them to submission,
Those horrid Germans, thanks to Thee
And—lots of ammunition.

We beg an answer to our prayers,
Clear cut, without evasion,
Regretting Thou hast answered theirs
On more than one occasion.

Thanks, Lord, for leading us in war,
The field to slay the foe on;
"Thanksgiving Day" would be no more
If nations had no war on.

O pardon what we've done amiss
To make our vict'ry tardy;
O Lord, we'd quite forgotten this:
The Kaiser's not the Mahdi.

There's one thing more we ask of Thee,
And trust that Thou wilt heed it:
Fill us with generosity;
Thou knowest that we need it!

ESS JAY BEE.

The Blank Wall.

VI.

The tragedy of the child in modern civilization has been, or should have been, made obvious to every thinker by the conditions of life which we find around us to-day. The child mind, so delicate and pure in quality; so susceptible to environment, and so fanciful in its imagination, has for its home to-day an insane hot-bed of corrupted brains and decadent ideas. All things would seem to conspire against the purity and delicacy of the child mind. It is born flower-like into an atmosphere reeking with the foul odours of extreme commercialism, sordid competition, struggles for existence, militarism, and general degradation.

Who can adequately estimate the disastrous psychological effects of this diseased environment upon the infant personality? What reward would sincere investigators receive? What attention and honest thought? Practically none. The idealist and the reformer cannot but be forced to one conclusion; that high-minded purpose, idealism, beauty, and the coloured joy of life, are utterly alien, and even repulsive to the modern brain, which prefers to fatten upon gross and ugly realities of its own manufacture. Observe, for instance, in the large and popular toy-shops (which set themselves the task of pleasing the child mind) how important the idea of militarism has become since the War. Remember that the emotional and spectacular imagination of the child is inflamed by the sensational "Khaki Outfits," toy swords, pistols, cannons, soldier's hats, and even miniature uniforms, &c. Look for beauty in a modern toy-shop and you will be disappointed. This is only one example of the systematic corruption of the child mind. Contamination awaits it at every turn—escape seems impossible. Only those children gifted with abnormal personalities and even genius can withstand, or attempt to withstand, the polluted stream of civilization as it sweeps down into the gutters of time.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE FATE OF CHRISTIANITY.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief, have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, murder, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. We derive from our ancestors a belief thus fostered and supported. We quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Does not analogy favour the opinion that, as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that, as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they would now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.—*Shelley*.

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Acid Drops.

The article in the *Nation*, by "An Officer," to which reference was made in these columns last week, has been followed by a letter from "Another Officer" on the same lines. He endorses the statement that "the most unpopular feature of Army life" is the Church parade. He adds :—

> At a certain Cadet School in Sussex (name herewith) it was decided, some months ago, to make Church Parade voluntary. Result—no Church Parade and the issue of an order to the effect that one Company would turn out each Sunday.
>
> The Church has no more hold on the civilian in the Army than it has on him outside the Army. Therefore the armed (and powerless) civilian does object very strongly to being forced to listen to men (who, in many cases, obviously do not credit him with the intelligence of a Tierra del Fuegan native) preaching at him.
>
> At the present time the soldier's religion is, probably, composed chiefly of a little faith and a lot of hope; that he will one day escape from the horror and misery of war; that he may be delivered from the endless parades—church and others—the dull, brainless routine of army life, and be a man again, free to walk how, when, and where he chooses, and to have his haircut when he likes.
>
> In the meantime it would interest him to know why the Padres are all officers.—Yours, &c.

Many others besides soldiers would like to know why parsons rank as officers—with a comfortable salary.

On one point, however, "Another Officer" is mistaken. He says: "Soldiers are officially obliged to have a religion, and if, in the flurry of joining up, they are unable to think at the moment of one, they are entered as C. of E." But this is not the case. Soldiers need not profess any religion on joining the Army. Many men, and many officers, seem to be of a different opinion; but it is not the case. A soldier is asked his religion, and his reply must be taken as given. It is because so many are ignorant of this that a profession of some religion is insisted on. And in a profession where men are washed by order, dressed by order, and put to bed by order, probably many do not see why they should not have a religion by order likewise.

The clergy are quaint folk, and, in the expressive French phrase, "live in baloons." For instance, note the interest these men have in the War. They are exempted from military service, and when they do act as army chaplains they get the pay of officers and not that of privates. Their profession is almost the only one unaffected by the War. The burning question of the moment with them is not the prosecution of the War, but concerns the orthodoxy of Dean Hensley Henson, who has been appointed to the see of Hereford.

"Christmas waits have been scarce this year," sighs a contemporary. We wonder what the folk who have stood in the food queues think of it.

Lord Hugh Cecil has expressed his staunch faith in eternal punishment—for other people. This reminds us of the story of the two Scotch elders who were discussing the question of the everlasting bonfire. One of the elders scouted the notion of mercy, and broke out, "A kirk without a hell isna worth a single dam."

Reviewing a small book on the *Achievements of Christianity*, the *Church Times* contrives to pay the author a left-handed compliment. The object of the book is to show that Christianity is not discredited; that it has done and is doing much for civilization. The student of apologetics is told that if he reads the four short chapters he will hardly fail, "if *not to be convinced*, at least to be moved," by the arguments. We do not doubt it. Many readers will be moved to pity the writer for wasting his time and energy on so ungrateful a subject. But in the name of common sense, what is the value of an argument that does not convince?

Still, the reviewer is cheerful, if a bit muddle-headed. One ends by praising this "real thinker" whose arguments are not convincing, and assures us that there is a good time coming for the Christian faith.

> One of the most encouraging signs of the present day is the way in which the younger men, both clergy and laity, are devoting themselves to hard thought on the new problems, both theological and social, of the coming age. These problems they are facing with courage and confidence. They may make mistakes, but none can say that Christianity is bankrupt of intellectual and spiritual power when he thinks of the brilliant young men who are content to fight under its banner to-day. It is the agnosticism of the Huxley period that, like Giant Pope in Bunyan's allegory, has grown "crazy and stiff in its joints"; and has almost lost its power to injure.

We have read some of the sociological studies of these clerics and clerical-minded laymen, and have found them disappointingly amateurish. After all, what can we expect from people who imagine that anti-Christian polemic is still where Huxley and his Agnostic friend left it? One Agnostic we know is, curiously enough, a Broad Church clergyman, whose strong point is not coherent thinking. Most people who use their brains are Atheists. They know that they are as much entitled to deny the existence of God as Christians are to deny the existence of fairies. There is not an iota of evidence to show that fairies do not exist; but as sosn as it was obvious that there was no evidence to show that they do exist, the case went against them by default. We not only *doubt* their existence—we *deny* it. Agnosticism, as a witty writer once put it, is a feather bed to catch a fallen Theist.

The Bishop of London has once more unburdened his episcopal soul. "This is the time," he says, "for the nation at the critical moment of the conflict to tighten the belt." Surely a counsel of perfection from a bachelor bishop who enjoys a salary of £200 weekly for preaching the Gospel of Poverty.

One of the Yellow Press publications was quite lyrical in its Yuletide leader. "Let this Christmas be spent," it said, "by the faithful, in prayer." We wonder how many journalists had "housemaid's knee" owing to their devotions.

Bishop Welldon is exultant because "the birthplace of the Saviour is now safe under the shadow, not of the Crescent, but of the Cross." Couldn't Providence safeguard the old home without the assistance of Thomas Atkins?

"Christmas Day finds the British at Bethlehem," says the *Sunday Pictorial*. We thought that Cook's excursionists were no uncommon sight in the Holy Land.

"France has her holy places," declares that accomplished theologian, Mr. Horatio Bottomley. Perhaps he remembered that when good Americans die they go to—Paris.

Business men do not seem to mind whose corns they tread on when they are on the war-path of commercialism. Recently we saw a cigar-box with a coloured portrait of Buddha on the lid. Perhaps, before long, some enterprising tradesman will name a brand of cigarettes after the Second Person of the Trinity.

A cripple, charged at a London police-court with begging, admitted that he sometimes took five pounds in a day. The dear clergy will smile at this modest result.

A writer in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* says that when Dr. Hensley Henson, the new Bishop of Hereford, came to the East End of London, he at once challenged the "Bradlaughites" to put forward their best man. A debate was arranged with the result that the said "Bradlaughites" cheered Dr. Henson to the echo and "hissed their own champion off the platform." With the usual care for the feelings of Freethinkers, we note that the name of this discredited champion is withheld. It would complete the story if the readers of the *Sentinel* were told that the man hissed

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off the platform was Bradlaugh himself. When one is telling a lie one might as well go the whole hog and have done with it. As it is, the story is spoilt for want of a little artistic trimming.

We fancy the authority for the story is an unnamed curate, as it is a curate who informs the *Sentinel* writer that he remembers what a "disastrous blow" Dr. Henson dealt at "the truculent propaganda of Atheism" in East London. Well, we have a personal acquaintance with Atheism in the East End of London for going on thirty years, and we can only marvel at its rapid recovery. But the Bishop of London usually explains that it was he who laid out Atheism in the East End. Now it turns out to have been Dr. Henson. We rather imagine it was "Mrs. Harris."

The American Young Men's Christian Association has raised ten million pounds in two months. This raises begging to one of the fine arts.

An ugly doll, representing a Conscientious Objector, has made its appearance in the toy-shops. And this is a country that professes to worship the Prince of Peace.

Pious folk who hailed the conversion of Mr. Horatio Bottomley to Christianity as a victory for the Faith had better moderate their transports, for it almost appears that the distinguished theologian is still searching for spiritual satisfaction. Writing of the British occupation of Jerusalem, Mr. Bottomley says, "may not one of the first fruits of the New Occupation be the merging of all the creeds of the Churches into a new Evangel for the succour of the souls of mankind?"

The dear clergy are always proclaiming their hard lot in converting a naughty world, but they do not say much about the "cushy jobs" in their profession. A Sunday paper declares that "the Dean of Windsor has little to do beyond supervising the services in St. George's Chapel, and he receives £2,000 a year to keep up the Deanery, a most comfortable residence in the Castle precincts."

Lord Longford, Prof. H. W. Mackintosh, a couple of canons, with other folk, sign a letter published in the *Irish Times*—the proper address of which would have been the district asylum. The lesson these people derive from the present state of affairs is that we are near the close of the "Times of the Gentiles," that the "Personal return of our Lord" cannot be far distant, all affairs should be considered in the light of this "Blessed Hope." What a long way off the "Age of Reason" does seem when one comes across such a production as this letter.

A writer in the *Sunday Chronicle* suggests using the Churches as centres for food distribution. We see no objection, and it would certainly be putting them to a more useful purpose than they serve at present, although if it were done we should find the Churches using it as an argument in favour of the truth of Christian doctrines. But why not ask the Churches to pray for a repetition of some of the Biblical miracles—say, of the loaves and fishes. That would get over the trouble at once.

The *Times*, which is so ready to exclude letters on all sorts of subjects that do not suit its policy, continues the publication, week after week, of letters on "Christian Reunion." And it is an illustration of the power of Christian brotherhood that after all these centuries Christians should be discussing whether it is possible for them to worship together. They can meet and work together on all sorts of non-religious matters, it is only when religion is on the carpet that they separate.

The *Daily News* of December 22 refers to a decision of the United States Supreme Court annulling an ordinance of Louisville which segregated the black population. It then refers to a case in which certain South African natives were forbidden to attend service on board a British transport on account of their colour. Someone wrote to the Primate about it, and he did not see his way to interfere in the matter. He added that "No problem has caused more distress and difficulty than the problem of the mixture of white and black at Divine Service." The brotherhood of man is a most elastic doctrine in all Christian countries.

We do not agree with the Society of Friends that "Christianity requires the toleration of opinions not our own lest we should unwittingly hinder the worship of the Spirit of God," for the reason that such has never been the opinion of any considerable body of Christians at any time or place. But, nevertheless, we do appreciate the decision of the Society to continue its publications on War and Peace without submitting them beforehand to the Censor, as required by Regulation 27c. That is the way to meet regulations of this character. Mere protest is useless. Tyranny is never disturbed by bluster, only by determined action. We repeat what we have said before, that we have no objection whatever to proper legal penalties being attached to treasonable literature, provided the decision as to what is treasonable be left to the Courts. But to make certain individuals, whose elevation to power may be the result of party political accident or trickery, the judges of what ought to be allowed publication, is an act of sheer tyranny. The public has no means of knowing what is suppressed, or why it is suppressed. Free opinion is stifled at its birth, and all that is left is a manufactured opinion both vicious and worthless. We don't care a brass button about the fortunes of political parties, but we do care a deal about freedom of speech and of the press; and we have hopes that this latest attempt to muzzle opinion will yet be given up as unworthy the traditions of British freedom.

Mr. H. B. Irving, speaking at the City Temple, said that some of the old Puritan prejudice against the theatre was due to the fact that more people went to the theatre than to church. This was getting right on the spot, and had Mr. Irving carried his researches back far enough, he would have discovered that the objection of the early Christians to the Roman games on Sunday was avowedly based on the fact that they kept people away from church. Later, this business aspect had to be disguised, and *moral* reasons were invented. These always flourished best here, for John Bull was always an easy first in discovering a moral reason for everything he did or contemplated doing.

The Rev. John Godsell Prentice, a Nottinghamshire rector, and his wife, were remanded at Nottingham the other day, charged with stealing 664 tickets, value £12 9s. 4d., from a Church Army canteen. Mr. and Mrs. Prentice will be tried on January 8. But it hardly seems the touch of a 'prentice hand.

"The creation of a strong, wide, tolerant, orthodox, reformed Church of England, as nearly as possible co-extensive with the nation," is the great need of to-day, says the Dean of Manchester, Whose need? We presume the Dean means *his* need, and the need of those in the same line of business as himself. No one else appears to be conscious of any such need. Anyway, we fancy the Dean will wait a long while before he sees a Christian Church co-extensive with the nation.

Man and Nature.

THE world rolls round for ever like a mill
And grinds out death, and life, and good, and ill;
It has no purpose, reason, mind, or will.

Man might know one thing, were his sense less dim,
That it rolls not to suit his petty whim,
That it is quite indifferent to him.

Yet mind is born as bursts a beauteous flow'r,
And man attains to intellectu'l power—
From clods, not gods, is caught this sentient dower.

AVON DALE.

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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.

THE Editor begs to return thanks for the many Christmas and New Year good wishes that have reached him. As an earnest of goodwill, they are greatly appreciated.

J. F. AUST.—Thanks. See paragraph. Our best wishes for the New Year.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Your card reached us on Christmas Eve, and we were pleased to see it, as an indication that you are still well. We hope to see you before long.

A. F. DICKINSON.—Copies of the *Freethinker* for so far back as 1885 could only be obtained second-hand. It might be possible to pick up a bound volume for that year.

H. BULL.—We endorse your opinion that if people could only be induced to read and think sufficiently, the game of Christianity would be ended. However, greater numbers are now both reading and thinking, and that is so much to the good. Shall be pleased to see you when we visit Birmingham.

VINCIT OMNIA VERITAS.—Papers are being sent, and hope they will reach you safely. Balance will be used for sending copies of *Freethinker* to men at the Front. Thanks for good wishes, which we heartily reciprocate.

J. RANKIN.—The *Bible Student's Monthly* is distributed from house to house, and its character almost defies comment. There are some things in the world that are protected from criticism by their very stupidity. The leaflet you enclose is one of these.

J. H. WATERS.—Received, and shall appear. Thanks.

F. S. LAWES.—Pleased to know your newsagent is willing to display *Freethinker* poster, and also to display copies of the paper. When that is done sales are certain. We are sending on the posters for use.

S. CLOWES.—We did not mean that the victory over the L.C.C. had not a value for those outside London, only that it was of special value to Londoners as their liberty was directly attacked. That is why we directed our appeal specially to them.

C. W. GREEN.—There is no end to these fanciful interpretations of the Bible, which we regard as so much wasted ingenuity, even though they may carry with them a certain interest.

V. NEUBERG.—Pleased to hear from you, but sorry you have been spending time in hospital. Hope to see you home again soon, and that good luck will follow you through 1918.

"SAMMY."—Criticizing writings of the kind you enclose is a sheer waste of time. People who write and people who read this "prophetic" stuff are hopeless. It is the most hopeless form of religious imbecility.

W. W. KENSETT.—We are obliged for the consideration shown in your note. Having to face such things is one of the penalties of our position. We regret that want of space prevents our publishing your letter this week. We have received others on the same subject. If we cannot find room in our next, we may summarize the more pertinent ones.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings and best of wishes for the New Year.

C. GOODWIN.—We do not think 1918 will be easier for us than was 1917. It looks like being much harder; but we are not at all discouraged. And we feel sure that 1919 will see us still pegging away.

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 commence with this number the thirty-eighth volume of the *Freethinker*. So far as Freethought journals in Europe are concerned this constitues a record. Thirty-seven years is a long while for a journal, such as this one, to endure, and its survival argues an unusually strong bond between writers and readers. And we think we may safely say that during the whole of its existence the *Freethinker* has never ceased to battle for freedom in a larger than a sectarian sense. It has championed Roman Catholic or Protestant equally with Freethinkers whenever it saw the legitimate freedom of either attacked. It has aroused bitter hatreds and devoted friendships; and the same cause has led to both. When a man or a paper acts with strength, he or it is bound to make both warm friends and fierce enemies. The latter may be avoided by a policy of hesitancy and compromise, but the former will also be sacrificed. And we certainly would never dream of losing our friends for the sake of placating our opponents.

And so, in spite of the depressing circumstances around us, we greet all our readers with the best wishes for a Happy New Year. The best of good fortunes would be that which brought back peace to this priest-ridden, superstition-drugged, and blood-deluged world. We owe our readers much for the help they have given during 1917, and we have evidence that there will be no slackening of effort during 1918. The *Freethinker* has more than held its own during these three years of war, and we have every confidence that the *Freethinker* flag will be flying as bravely and as proudly as ever when the War is over. The struggle gets harder as the War lengthens, but there is some consolation in the thought that every month brings us nearer the end.

We have planned a fairly elaborate programme for 1918, the details of which will become apparent as circumstances permit their realization. But we have mapped out for publication over a score of pamphlets, in addition to several books, some of the former of which will be of special interest to Freethinkers. Two things will determine the rate of their appearance—the possession of capital and the paper shortage. We fancy we can overcome the first, if the second does not become too acute. But the supply of paper grows shorter, and the price gets higher. Still, we have managed to put a number of new publications on the market, and some more new ones will certainly follow within the next few weeks.

The Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. commences its New Session to-day (January 6) with two lectures by Mr. Cohen in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick, at 3 o'clock and 6.30. The secretary writes that he is expecting good meetings, and we hope he will not be disappointed. There is nothing like a full house for encouraging audience, speaker, and organizers.

The Birmingham Branch opens its New Year course of lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, on Sunday, January 6, with a lecture by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, entitled "God and the War," with special reference to Mr. Arthur Machen's articles on the subject in the London *Evening News*. Comment will also be made on the National Day of Prayer.

We wish to call special attention to the course of Sunday afternoon lectures arranged to take place in the West Central Hall, Alfred Place, Tottenham Court Road. The lectures are arranged by the Executive of the N. S. S. Mr. Snell opens the course to-day (Jan. 6), at 3.15. His subject is one that should attract a good audience.

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Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THE purpose of this Fund is to raise the balance of expenses—estimated at between £80 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:—£31 2s.; J. G. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 2s. 6d.; P. Shakespeare and Cannock Friends, 5s.; J. White, 5s.; Four Draughtsmen, 10s.; O. A. S., £1; W. W. Kensett, 10s.; John Weeks, 2s.; B. B., 5s.: G. Grove, 2s.; Sam Hampson, 4s.

The Crows.

IN these times the young are beginning to realize what a fearful legacy their ancestors have left them. They cannot lay their fingers on the plague spot. Now, it must be very clear that fetters cannot be placed on our hands unless our minds have first been so thoroughly subjugated that we are, at any rate, ready to receive them. If we are the children of working-class, or so-called middle-class folk (for in actuality there is no difference), unless we are very lucky we receive our first fetter but a few days after we are born. What is this fetter? We are made members of some religious body or other, as like as not the Established Church of England. Whether it is Church of England or not, we come under the influence of the "Crows." Well did a more enlightened French nation dub the black-coated sycophants who neither toil nor spin, but whose whole subsistence depends upon the credulity of simple folk, blood suckers who prey one upon the other, and all upon the poor. This sounds like mere abuse, the invective of the untutored agitator, but it is true. I have searched in vain for one great action of the modern churches to help democracy and the mass of the people. On all hands they encourage the worst elements in the community. They encourage the idle, both rich and poor, the vagabonds to increase like mice and flood the labour market with cheap and inefficient labour, thereby forcing the artizan worthy of the name to lower himself in order to include the worthless as comrades. They encourage the exploiter of labour to put up the price of his wares, and to lower the pittances doled out to those he employs, they encourage the professional soldier, that enemy of progress, the lawyer, and in fact, all those in the community whose existence is sterile and dependent upon subservience. "But," you will say, "if this is so obvious, why is it tolerated for an instant?" In the first place, it is not so obvious to those who have been brought up in its tainted atmosphere from the earliest minutes of their existence. Weeds sown so young are very hard to eradicate. In order not to appear merely dogmatic and abusive, let us examine them and their systems piecemeal. Of the Mediæval Church I shall not speak, its many faults and vices are so patent. It was the bitterest enemy of Progress, both scientific and political; but let us, in common fairness, remember that the Early Church did at least stand in opposition to the actual rapacious governing class. It was the Church who excommunicated King John. The sanctuary knocker had a significance which is absolutely foreign to the Church to-day. The foul and incestuous union of Church and State has generated a breed of vices Christianity pure and simple is a doctrine of forgiveness and non-resistance. The Church, with its twin brothers, the Army and Navy, practically form the nucleus of the State. So we see that the Church in its very essence is essentially unchristian.

Since the doctrine of the Church is unchristian, what is it? Since it is not Jesus which binds all the Churches together, whether free or fettered, what, in the name of humanity, is it? When considering the subject, let us erase from our minds Jesus and the Brotherhood of Man, since it is only left to Freethinkers to respect them, and looking deeper, expose the real doctrine to light.

The Crows tell us that it is impossible to "make the best of both worlds." Nearly all the various sects and schisms agree on this point, especially that withered and anæmic object, the Church of England. It is a lie, unless to make the best of this world is to be either a business man or a clergyman, for if there is a Heaven above, there is no room in it for the conscious Pharisee. How dare they attempt to say to the starving man "that it will be made up to him" in the next world, with their dinners waiting for them at home? The first to talk like this is usually that monstrosity the "muscular Christian" curate, whose face is red with the blood of the meat meals he engulfs. How dare he talk of showing men the way to God when he knows nothing of God or the way? The yokel in the fields who sees the blue sky, the brown earth, and the green trees, or the sailor who sees the great waves trying to swallow him up, and hears the gale shrieking through the rigging; or, again, the mechanic who tends and feeds some huge engine with its remorseless steel arms and whirring wheels, knows more of God and his ways than this puny object. The Crows claim that they tend suffering and visit the sick and poor—another lie. If they spend so much time visiting the sick and trying to cure them by prayer, why is there so much sickness? Or is it that they merely cry "Baal! Baal!" to a God that hears them not? It is left for the hard-working doctor to bring them recovery or a more or less painless death. And if they do comfort the sick, they are paid to do it, a thing which the ordinary man does from the best motives for nothing. Their religion has not created human sympathy. And as for visiting the poor, it is a sham and a lie. How little do the unfortunate relish these compulsory district visitings by the miserable lay worker, who is usually some idiotic woman with no useful occupation; indeed, no occupation at all, except to meddle with what is best left alone. They preach an ascetic denial of this world's goods to those that don't possess them, but never to those that do, or to their own bishops and high paid clergy. And for this the wealthy, of whom their Founder said it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for such to enter the kingdom of heaven, thank them, for it all helps to bind the thinking artizan and to pauperize the vagabond. They teach chastity to the young, and have enormous families themselves, for whether the marriage law should be amended or not, it is not the chatter of the clergy that renders the impure pure, all in a twinkling. They teach the idle and stupid to increase and multiply, to flood an already overstocked labour market, and to provide material for the "charitable" (loathsome word!) orgies of their parishioners. To prevent children is unheard of by them; it is potential murder. This, they say, when they must know that it is a hundred times more immoral to flood the world with children that cannot be kept, and for whom there is no room, and who, after wandering the streets, must ultimately become either hooligans or prostitutes. Nor will they touch upon the real and terrible problems that face us, such as unemployment (the result of their own teaching, by the way) or prosti-

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tution or venereal disease. Oh dear, no! Such things are not discussed in the drawing-rooms they frequent. Nor do they give a thought to their own sex-starved daughters who "help in the parish." We who are young and to whom the problems of life and love are very real, can procure no help whatever from our spiritual pastors. I know, for I am one who has tried. What do they offer us? Mouldy doctrines of sacerdotal rites. Do they really believe that a babe is "made a member of Christ," whatever that is, by a priest's fat hand and a little water? I trow not. Do they really believe that a child who dies without this rite, to quote a Jesuit, "crawls the red-hot floors of Hell"? If they do believe it, they are monstrous beasts; if not, liars. I hope and believe that the majority do not believe such rubbish, for it is easier to deal with a silly rogue than with an obscene fool. Is it possible that they still believe that indifferent port and war-bread can miraculously change to blood and wine, and that there is miraculous curative power in a bone that a dog would scorn to gnaw? No. The truth is they don't know what they believe and, what is more, they don't care.

And such are the men to whom the spiritual guidance of children is committed! It is a matter for great congratulation that the Sunday-schools both of the Established and of the "Free" Churches are annually being more and more depleted. Year by year they have to retreat from one stronghold to another, but their grip is still tight upon their hapless victims. How can we expect Labour to take the dignified position it merits, when the labourers of the future are spiritually suckled upon the milk of subservience? Link by link is the moral chain firmly riveted: first by baptism, when the recipient is quite irresponsible; from baptism, by easy stages, to catechism. This impudent *proces verbal* teaches yet more subservience. The words, "to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters, and to submit myself lowly and reverently to all my pastors, masters, and spiritual teachers," are always dinned into the young head. If you throw enough mud, some will always stick. Just at the impressionable age it does stick right readily; and the pity of it is that this unspeakable cant is always taught just before the young person is entering the labour market. Mark this well, for it is very significant. The bud is nipped at exactly the right moment, and the mischief is done. After that, the young mind is further worried by being admitted to the communion. With regard to this rite, the Church of England has no definite doctrine at all. It wobbles between the two stools of meaningless symbolism and the facetious doctrine of transubstantiation, and ends up by sitting heavily and ignominiously on the floor. The mischief wrought by the Crows would fill a huge volume, and at any rate far outrun the scope of this essay. Mischief between husband and wife, parents and children, thereby severing the greatest and most sacred bond between humankind; misappropriation of funds, public and private; grabbing of land and rents (for the Ecclesiastical Commission is a notoriously heavy-handed landlord), all go to swell the long catalogue of the misdeeds and crimes of the Church. All that applies with equal force to the dissenting bodies, for whether one pipes to the multitude wearing a cope and mitre, or a black cassock, or a white tie, or a scarlet jersey, the net result is the same. They all stand for mental bondage and domination. They are all playing the tyrant's game. The only difference between the various breeds of Crow is that the chains they wish to bind on us differ in colour. They pipe, but happily fewer and fewer dance to the tune.

The War for a time restored to the Crows some of their vanishing power, for in the mental disorder that inevitably follows on any upheaval, people lose their balance and fall back on superstition and darkness. Hence we see that the Crows, along with necromancers and fortune-tellers, for a time regained some of their lost popularity. It is easy for a cleric to twist, and the Prince of Peace is soon made to don khaki. However, the mental miasma soon lifts, and the Crow is seen with his feathers more ruffled than ever. How cheerfully they shouted for king and country, and went from door to door, recruiting. One priest I know of went so far as to decorate his altar with red and blue bunting. They yelled louder than any that all must go and fight their fellow-Christians. How gladly they urged the young *poor* man to give his life, and the old *rich* one to give his money, for a consideration. Suddenly, however, all are forced to go, and with yelps of fear all the eligible curates run to find protection behind their respective bishops' gaiters. The truth comes out at last; they have been urging upon others to do what they themselves were unprepared to do. However, they rose to the occasion, and sat upon tribunals to deliberate as to others. It is a notorious fact the clergy who sat upon tribunals were far more deaf to the appeal of the widow's son with many cares than were his "lay" brethren. Woe betide the Conscientious Objector, who, at any rate, was only following the teaching of his Prophet, whether right or wrong, who was to be judged by a Crow. Again, the clergy have spent much breath urging upon the laity to lend their money for the prosecution of the War. It is significant that the official body of the Church felt it necessary to wait to lend their money until it could procure a higher rate of interest, and then invested three million sterling of filched money. It now transpires that, foreseeing the disaster that surely waits them in the future, they are making an effort to regain a footing by endeavouring to make themselves teachers in the schools. Let us not allow this hardly won privilege to be taken from us, this progress to be destroyed, while our minds are engrossed elsewhere. I appeal especially to those between twenty and thirty, in whose hands the future lies, to be up and doing now, as there is great danger ahead.

Let us not be led by any false sense of delicacy to spare the feelings of these men. A refinement of taste must hamper us in combating these folk. Always let us remember that they call out about their offended feelings while executing the laws against "blasphemy"—which is, in plain language, disagreeing with them, and saying so—with all the ferocity of which they are capable. Have they not always vilified great names in the history of Freethought? Are we to show consideration for the persecutors of Thomas Paine, Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, Foote? Are *our* "feelings" of no account? Let us not be afraid. I recommend every young Freethinker to speak fearlessly, to be proud of his freedom on every occasion possible. For let us remember the struggle is to be one of life or death for our views. There can only be one possible issue to such a contest in the long run, as truth must ultimately rout falsehood. Let it not be said that we in any way retarded the advent of cleaner and more wholesome thought.

E. G.

Heinrich Kitzler.

Authorship is a singular thing. One man has luck in the practice of the craft, and another meets with misfortune.

Perhaps the saddest mishap befel my poor friend Heinrich Kitzler, Master of Arts at Gottingen. No one there is so learned, no one so fecund of ideas, no one so industrious as this friend, and yet, up till this

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hour, no book of his has appeared in Leipzig. The old library attendant always laughs when Heinrich Kitzler asks him for a book, which he greatly needs for a work he has in hand. "It will be in hand for a long time," murmurs the old attendant while he ascends the library ladder. Even the cook laughed when she went to the library to fetch a book "for Kitzler." He was commonly regarded as a fool, but, at bottom, was merely an honourable man.

Nobody knew the real reason why no book of his was forthcoming, and only by chance did I discover it once when I called on him at midnight to light my lamp, he being my study neighbour. He had just completed a treatise on the *Excellence of Christianity*, but seemed in no way to be rejoicing at the circumstance, and woefully looked at his manuscript. I said to him: "Now, at last, will your name figure in the Leipzig book catalogue, among the works that are just coming out." "Ah, no," he sighed deep from his heart, "this work, too, I must throw on the fire, like its predecessors." And then he confided to me his dreadful secret. The poor doctor met with the saddest misfortune when he had written a book. As soon as he had developed the groundwork of the theory he had set out to demonstrate, he felt obliged to acquaint himself with the objections which any opponent could maintain against it; he investigated the most cogent arguments attaching to the opposite standpoint; and, as these unconsciously took root in his understanding, it always happened that when the book was ready the opinions of the poor author had similarly been transformed, and a conviction quite contrary to that maintained in the book had grown up in his mind. He was, then, honest enough, as a French author had likewise behaved, to sacrifice the laurel of literary fame on the altar of truth; that is, to consign his manuscript to the flames. For this reason he sighed so deeply when he had demonstrated the *Excellence of Christianity*.

Mournfully he said, "Now I have made excerpts from the works of twenty Church Fathers; whole nights I have been glued to my desk, reading the Acta Sanctorem, while punch was being drunk, and songs were being sung in your study. For the theological works necessary for my book I have paid thirty-eight hardly earned thalers, instead of buying a pipe-bowl with the money. I've worked like a dog for two years—two precious years of life, and all to make of myself a laughing-stock—to make me turn away like a convicted boaster when I am asked, "When will your *Excellence of Christianity* be out? Ah, the book is ready," continued the poor man, "and it would also please the public, for in it I have glorified the victory of Christianity over Heathendom, and have thereby shown also truth and reason triumphant over hypocrisy and folly. But, unfortunately, I feel in my heart of hearts that——"

"Don't say any more," I cried with genuine indignation, "Do not dare, O Deceiver, to blacken the sublime, to drag the splendid through the mud. Even if you would deny the miracles of the Gospels, yon cannot deny the victory of the Gospel was a miracle itself. A small company of defenceless men went forth into the great Roman world, and, in spite of its railèrs and philosophers, triumphed by the mere power of the Word. Corrupt heathen society trembled and tottered at the word of these strange men and women, who announced a new kingdom of heaven, and feared nothing on the old earth, neither the claws of wild beasts, nor the fury of wilder men; neither the sword nor the flames, for they themselves were the fire and sword of God.

This sword has cut down the withered leaves and decayed branches of the tree of Life, thus healing it of gathering corruption. This fire has again warmed from within the torpid trunk, that it may put forth fresh leaves and new blossoms. These pioneers of Christianity—their struggle and their complete victory—are the most awful and sublime phenomena in the world's history." These words were spoken with the more appropriate expression, as that evening I had taken too many glasses of beer, and my voice sounded the more resonant. Heinrich Kitzler allowed himself to be in no way impressed thereby. With a painful ironic laugh he said, "Friend, don't give yourself so much trouble. All that you have just said I have myself, in this manuscript, far better and far more thoroughly set forth.

I have painted in the sharpest colours the abandoned condition of the world in Pagan times, and I may flatter myself that my boldest strokes recall the work of the greatest Church Fathers.

I have shown how vicious the Greeks and Romans became through the evil example of those gods, who, if we are to believe the crimes imputed to them, were hardly worthy to rank as men. I have said, in plain language, that even Jupiter, the first of the Gods, would, if judged by the Criminal Code, have deserved the prison, if not the gallows, a hundred times. On the other hand, I have expounded the moral teachings which are to be found in the Gospels, and shown how, after the pattern of their godly example, the first Christians, in spite of the contempt and persecution which they suffered therefore, only taught and practised the best and purest morals. The finest part of my work is where, full of inspiration, I recount how the young Christianity, the little David, measures itself against the old Heathendom, and kills this great Goliath. But this dual has since appeared to me in a different light—all the pleasure and love of my apology dries up in my breast when I picture to myself how any opponent could represent the triumph of Christianity. To my undoing, a new author, one Edward Gibbon, came to my notice, who did not express himself very favourable over this victory, and did not seem to make much of the fact that those Christians for whom the spiritual sword and fire did not suffice, sought refuge in the material fire and sword.

Yes, I must confess that at last my deepest sympathy was evoked for the vestiges of Paganism, those lovely temples and statues, which were no more a part of the religion that was dead long before the birth of Christ, but which belonged to Art, which is eternal. It all came to me once when, with moist eyes, I chanced to read in the library the *Appeal for the Temple*, wherein the old Greek Libanius most pathetically beseeched the pious Barbarians to spare those priceless masterpieces with which the genius of Hellas had decorated the world. But in vain—that memorial of a springtime of humanity, which will never return, and which could only flourish once, was irretrievably destroyed by the dark fanaticism of the Christians.

"No," continued the Doctor, "I will not by publishing this book lend countenance to such crimes. Never. And to you, the shattered statues of beauty, and to you, ye Manes of the Dead Gods, to you who are now only lovely visions in the Shadow Kingdom of Poetry, to you I sacrifice this book."

With these words Heinrich Kitzler threw his manuscript in the fire, and of the *Excellence of Christianity* nothing was left but grey ashes.

(*Translated from Heine's "Die Gotter in Exil"*).

By H. J. STENNING.

The *Sunday Pictorial*, in its Christmas issue, had a leading article on "The Star of Bethlehem." The other Sunday papers devoted columns to theatrical stars.

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A Day of Thanksgiving.

What have we to thank thee for O God of Heaven?
For loosing on our peaceful lands the bloody hounds of war,
For murdered son and outraged sister, ruined homestead, loss of limb,
Lover's voice for ever silenced in the bloody din?
Is it because the harvest is less than the year before,
That famine and tornado, pestilence and flood
Stalk through the lands that are not yet at war?
Is it that thou hast taught us through centuries of grace,
How by scientific warfare we can reduce the race?
(More humane means we knew of but thy servants did forbid.
Since in using them thy power we did withstand).
Is it for empty cupboards, is it for fireless grate,
The piteous wail of little ones, fretful sound of children,
Crying for their birthright, sobbing for their rest,
That before Thy throne, O Great One, with song of praise we wait?

With clasped hands, and with bended knee, we often thee besought,
Right strenuously we prayed to thee for peace.
We have built thee noble mansions, we have furnished them with taste.
We have clothed thy priests in broadcloth, we have decked them out with lace.
We have given of our earnings which we could ill afford,
And thy servants they did tell us "we were pleasing to the Lord."
Yet in thy anger thou hast smitten we who strove so hard to please;
Toiled with aching brain and muscle to keep thy priests in ease.
In thy blind and wanton fury, thou hast lashed us till the gore
Poured in torrents from our body, and we swore to bear no more.

Yea, O God, we haste to thank thee, to lift our voices to the skies,
Since the mask at last has fallen from humanity's tired eyes.
And we see beyond the darkness the first gleam of morning light,
And we know we near the ending of the Gods' long night.

Frank Betts.

The Churching of Bacchus.

January 6 being set apart for national prayer, the public-houses are to be closed upon that day.—*Daily Papers.*

Ah me! how sad it is to think
That beer and prayer such rivals are,
And living waters as a drink
Are ousted by the "public" bar.

But though the inns are tippler free
Upon the holy day; I think
The loudest prayer of all will be,
The prayer of thirsty souls for drink.

Percy Ripley.

Correspondence.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Major G. O. Warren, like most critics of the Malthusian doctrine, has quite misunderstood it. What Malthus showed was that if people married and had children without restraint, the number of births in each year would in all but exceptional cases exceed the production of additional food in the same period, so that either a check must be put upon reproduction, or there will be poverty and excessive mortality. This is true, whether there are a few thousands or thousands of millions of people upon the earth, as new land can only be brought into cultivation gradually. The fact that much of our land is uncultivated does not in the least show that our country is not over populated. In simply means that in recent times a unit of labour here enabled more food to be obtained by the exchange of our manufactures for the food of other countries, than it would have done if directly expended on our own soil. There is not the slightest justification for the assertion that our country could support twice its present population. This is derived from Kropotkin, who has utterly ignored the fundamental chemical question as to the amount of fertilizing material (especially fixed nitrogen) available for production on the large scale.

Major Warren appears also to have been captured by that plausible compendium of economic fallacies, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. That capital is absolutely essential for the employment of labour can be seen in an instant by simply considering (which Henry George carefully abstained from doing) what would happen in this country if capital were destroyed—dwellings, factories, tools, railways, ships, and other means of transport, flocks, and stores of food. How many people would be employed or be able to work in any fashion at the end of a month?

As a lifelong Freethinker, who has watched the progress of the Freethought and Rationalist Movements for many years, I have been both amused and saddened to see how, in employing the Darwinian doctrine for the iconoclastic purpose of destroying the Christian faith in a beneficent Deity thwarted by the machinations of Satan, many "Freethinkers" have persistently neglected Darwin's own warning as to the necessity for bearing the principle of the struggle for existence in mind in considering all biological phenomena, and have merely substituted the Socialistic faith in a beneficent Nature thwarted by the machinations of the capitalists. The Malthusian doctrine, which is absolutely substantiated by modern vital statistics, is equally destructive of the myths of theology and of Socialism, and it has the merit of giving us a sound basis for constructive rational ethics—the crying need of the Freethought Movement.

Charles V. Drysdale, D.Sc.

[We have received several letters from other correspondents, for which we regret we are unable to find space.—Ed.]

Society News.

The North London Branch debates re-open this evening. Mr. Percy Friedberg will support the contention that Freethinkers ought to be Socialists, and Mr. A. Eager will oppose. We expect a lively discussion, and hope the North London "saints" will attend in full force and bring friends with them For further particulars, please consult the Guide notice.—H. V. Lane, Hon. Sec.

We hear from Mr. J. Partridge, the indefatigable Secretary of the Birmingham Branch, that the lecture fixtures for January, February, and March include Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, F. J. Gould, H. Snell, A. D. Howell Smith, E. Clifford Williams, and F. E. Willis. Mr. Partridge will be delighted to forward a printed programme to anyone applying for it to 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

The New Manchester Branch of the N.S.S., which commenced its first regular series of meetings early in October, has proved an undoubted success. The weekly gatherings have been well supported, and the "papers" given—exclusively by members of the Branch—have led to some interesting discussions. The lectures, so far delivered at the Downing Hall by Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, and Palmer, have had good results, and we are looking to the future in the confident assurance that the committee's efforts will be rewarded by a further increase of members, and an active participation in the propagandist work of the Branch. A social has been arranged at the Downing Street Hall for Saturday, January 12, at which, it is hoped, that all the members will endeavour to be present.—H. Black, Secretary.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Ought Freethinkers to be Socialists?" Affirmative, Percy Friedberg Negative, A. Eagar.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, Mr. H. Snell, "King George's Day of National Prayer."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "God and the War."

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N.S.S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, "Shelley's Queen Mab."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, E. Ilsley, "The Futility of Prayer"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Collingwood Hall, Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Meeting.

NEWMANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mr Chapman Cohen, 3, "Morality Without God"; 6.30, "The Savage in our Midst"—A Study of the Day of Prayer.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6 30, Mr. R. Chapman, "The Service of Man."

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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.

London.

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 St. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Rd. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch St. J. J. Jaques, 191 Old St.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Rd., Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Rd. (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Rd., Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore St., Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Rd. 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.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King St., Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Rd., Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82, Seaford Rd., West Ealing.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

Country.

Aberdeenshire.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.

Askam-in-Furness.—Mr. J. Gill, The Pharmacy, Duke St.

Barrow-in-Furness,—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

Beccles.—C. Chase, Station Road.

Birkenhead.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.

Birmingham.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook St. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Wocester St. F. Holder, 42 Hurst St. Mr. Benton, High St., Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Rd. Post Office, Saltley. Messrs. Stanford & Mann, New St. Mrs. J. E. Burns, 478 Bordesley Green.

Bolton.—E. Basnett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road.

Breconshire.—Mrs. Jenkins, Gartly House, Talgarth.

Carlisle.—Ashton Ridley, 16 and 18 Bridge St., Caldewgate.

Carshalton.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.

Cheltenham.—S. Norris, Ambrose Street.

Coventry.—Miss Bowry, 6 Earlsdon St.

Cullompton.—A. W. Clitsome, The Square.

Derbyshire.—Mr. Featherstone, Chapel-en-le-Firth.

Dublin.—J. C. Kearney, 59 Upper Stephen St. and 52 South St. George's St.

Dundee.—Mr. Cunningham, St. Andrew's Street. "The Hub," High Street. Mr. Lamb, 121 Overgate.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
The New Bishop of Hereford.—The Editor	17
Jesus and His Words.—J. T. Lloyd	18
Death, and After.—Mimnermus	19
Distressed Dualists.—Ignotus	20
Illusion.—Vescor	21
Is There a Hell?—James H. Waters	22
Acid Drops	23
To Correspondents	25
Sugar Plums	25
Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.	26
The Morality of Robert Burns.—Coila	26
New Testament Legends for Young Readers.—F. J. Gould	27
Letters to the Editor—St. George of England, 28: Socialism and Malthusianism, 29: The Struggle for Existence	29
Credulity.—J. F. Cordon	30
Notice of Meetings	30

Views and Opinions.

The New Bishop of Hereford.

Quite a storm is raging over the appointment of Dr. Hensley Henson to the Bishopric of Hereford. The quarrel is largely a domestic affair, and a Freethinker can hardly be expected to contemplate the rumpus without considerable amusement or a certain amount of contempt. Dr. Henson is denounced for his heretical and liberal views, although both his heresy and his liberality exist only because there are still large numbers of people calling themselves civilized while holding beliefs that properly befit men of the Stone Age. In such an environment, the reputation for being a liberal thinker is easily attained; and we have no doubt that many people in the position of Dr. Henson would be surprised if they could only be brought to realize how very old-fashioned they are. The heresies *they* propound, with quite an air of dashing adventure, are now such commonplaces with Freethinkers that they are very often thought of as unworthy of mention.

* * *

The Absurdity of Christianity.

It must be due to our having escaped the misfortune of being either born a Christian or trained as one, that we find it a matter of the greatest difficulty to treat grown-up men and women who hold beliefs such as form the subject of controversy between Dr. Henson and his critics with any degree of gravity. The charges against Dr. Henson are that he does not believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus; he thinks there was no resurrection of the body of Jesus—or that it is, at least, open to question; he does not believe in the miracle of the marriage feast at Cana, etc. But these are really not things that a man should be attacked for not believing; they are things that any sane person should be ashamed of having it said of him that he does believe them. Any sensible person who knows the constituents of wine and water, knows that to transmute water into wine is a sheer impossibility. It can no more be done, in fact, than a conjurer can produce eggs from a silk hat without putting them there beforehand. When we see eggs produced from a hat, we may not know how it is done, but we laugh at those who accept the trick at its face value. And so of those who believe the things that the new Bishop of Hereford is attacked for doubting. They may have a certain claim upon our sympathy; they have none on either our gravity or respect.

* * *

Fraud or Folly.

Let us try to put the matter quite plainly. Just at the moment there is a deal of discussion on the question of Spiritualism. Mr. Edward Clodd, in a just published volume, after a most elaborate examination of the evidence, comes to the sweeping conclusion that it is, in the main, a case of folly or simplicity, misled by fraud. And in that conclusion thousands of Christians will agree with him. But is there any reason why we should be less plain of speech, with regard to Christian doctrines, or to those who believe them and those who teach them? When a man comes along and professes to believe that, of all the myriads of people that have been born, one, and one alone, was born without the co operation of a male human being, and that after being truly dead, he arose from the grave, what reason is there for our not saying that this is a case of pure folly or pure fraud? Can anyone even *think* of a child being born without a father? The birth of a child is no longer a mystery. We know all the stages from conception to birth. How, then, can anything else than folly or fraud believe or profess to believe in the hocus-pocus of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation? And so with the resurrection, the raising of the dead, and similar doctrines. It is not that we simply do not believe these things for want of evidence, we *know* they are not true. We are as certain of this as we are that two and two did not make five in ancient Judea, any more than in modern London. We can assume either folly or fraud on the part of Christians. We cannot credit them with sincerity and intelligence in relation to Christianity and still retain our own reputation for sanity.

* * *

Christianity a Survival.

A passage cited against Dr. Henson from his public writings is as follows. It deals with the events of the life of Jesus, including his alleged divine birth and resurrection:—

> If a nineteenth century observer had been present he would have given a different account of the occurrences from that which has come down to us.

This passage contains an important truth, but also a very serious error. It implies that a nineteenth century observer would have seen many things quite plainly that were not there to be seen. No one could have seen the divine birth, no one could have seen the resurrection, or the walking on the water, or the feeding of

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the multitude, or the turning of the water into wine, or the raising of the dead. No one could have seen these things, because they were never there to be seen. What a modern observer would have seen is that these things were believed. And if he had been properly equipped for writing home a report of his experiences, he would have pointed out that in believing these things the Christians were exactly on a level with a great many other people in the world. He would have noted the numerous stories of virgin love-saviours and of resurrected gods. He would have pointed out that the social atmosphere was thick with stories of the miraculous, and that all these beliefs were contemporaneous with an absence of scientific knowledge. He might have seen religious teachers casting out devils, and he would not have hesitated for a moment in describing these possessed people as epileptics or lunatics. Of course, we have no report from a nineteenth century observer on the spot, but we have reports from modern observers on these ancient beliefs, and they are clearly expressed on these lines. And the truth in the sentence cited is that the whole question is one of historical development. Go amongst the primitive peoples of the world to-day, and you will find flourishing the state of mind out of which the Christian Church grew, and on which it is built. Our modern Christians are, when they are sincere in relation to their religious belief, on the level of savages. Mr. Clodd has well pointed out the relation of modern Spiritualism to primitive savagery. And all he there says applies with equal truth to Christianity as a whole. Modern Christianity is an elaborate, an expensive, and a socially disastrous survival of primitive savagery.

* * *

The Road for Honest Men.

Nothing of what is said above is new to Freethinkers. But is it new to Christians? There's the rub. To some Christians it is, of course, new—so new that they would reject it with the readiness with which the religious mind always repudiates an unusual truth. But to other Christians? To the clergy, for instance? Is it new to them? For our part we find it almost impossible to believe that a large number of the clergy are not as familiar with what has been said as we are. The truth about religion is too well known, the proofs are too close to hand, they are too accessible in scores of volumes, for these gentry not to know that Christian doctrines trace their ancestry straight back to primitive animism. Christians do not believe in miraculous births, risen corpses, or in miraculous acts anywhere but in the Bible. And this is not the attitude of honest belief. When a man honestly believes an absurdity at home he will believe it abroad. He can have nothing against it. But when a man professes to believe a story in one place, and the moment he is told a similar story elsewhere, condemns it as a lie or a fraud, he pronounces judgment on his own sincerity. And from that point of view we sympathize with Dr. Henson's critics. If Dr. Henson does not believe in the stories of Christ's life as actual, historic events, he has no moral right to remain an officer of the Established Church, drawing its money, and professing himself a Christian clergyman. His place is outside the Church. He should follow the example set by many honest men. And it is certain that affection for the Church, as a Church, need not restrain him. There will be plenty left to look after its welfare. Fat salaries and easy posts, place and power and distinction will continue to form sure baits for many. But for honest and intelligent men there is only one course open. Folly may continue to believe, fraud may continue to profess, honesty and intelligence should take their way along the broad road of human development.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Jesus and His Words.

THE Rev. W. Garrett Horder, who has been minister of the Ealing Congregational Church for upwards of thirty years, is exceedingly well known as a great authority on hymnology, and has edited an excellent hymn-book. He is also regarded as a preacher of more than average ability. One of his sermons was published in the *Middlesex County Times* for December 29, 1917, and is eminently deserving of a critical notice. It is based on three texts in which Jesus is represented as the source of life and light to mankind, and as having left "us an example that we should follow in his style." Mr. Horder begins by stating that "the question as to whether Christian people should take part in war has been debated almost entirely on the words of the Master," and that "on that question words from his lips can be found both for and against participation in war"; but he maintains that such questions cannot be settled by an appeal to the mere words of Christ. He draws the well-known distinction between the letter and the spirit of Biblical terms, calling special attention to the Apostle Paul's declaration that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." In reality, the distinction is largely false and misleading. There is no legitimate method of getting at the real meaning of any statement except through the words employed. Mr. Horder's tirade against literalism misses the mark altogether, because if we do not take the words of Jesus according to the letter, their interpretation will be determined by the idiosyncrasies of different interpreters. The great fault of Tolstoi, we are told, was that he was a literalist—that is to say, that he had the temerity to take Jesus at his word, or to cling exclusively to his "mere precepts." The truth is that many of the precepts in the Sermon on the Mount are so incapable of translation into conduct that they cannot be treated seriously until they have been judiciously interpreted. Innumerable are the interpretations already in circulation, with the result that scarcely any two Christians are agreed as to the duty enjoined in any commandment of Jesus. Mr. Horder says:—

> The fact is, the best interpretation of the precepts of Christ is to be found, not in the minute exegesis of commentaries, but by finding out how Christ lived out his own precepts. The Life shows the precepts in action. In the Life the precepts live before our eyes.

Did Jesus live out his own precepts? If we accept the historicity of the Gospels, our answer must be in the negative. As Tolstoi points out, on one or more occasions he flagrantly violated his own principles. But let that pass.

Mr. Horder's discourse is by no means complimentary to Jesus as a teacher. Referring to non-resistance to evil, going to law, giving, and lending, he says:—

> These are tremendous demands. Taken in the letter no one has ever obeyed them. They would absolutely overturn the proper order of the world. Taken as an Oriental would take them—as exaggerated expressions of things, which at their heart are virtues, for all oriental speech is to the prosaic Westerner immensely exaggerated—those precepts point to ways that are possible, but in which men are unwilling to go. But taken as Tolstoi and the non-resistants take them, in their letter, it may be confidently asserted that Christ did not follow his own precepts.

If the Gospels are in the least degree reliable, it is absolutely certain that Jesus was not a conscious exaggerator. He tells us distinctly that his words were to be done by all, and that the doing of them was an incarnation of highest wisdom. He pronounced the doer of them a wise man who built his house upon the

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rock, and the non-doer of them a foolish man, whose house, founded upon the sand, could not withstand the storms of life. To him there was no distinction between the letter and the spirit of his sayings, which he treated, not as counsels of perfection, but as rules for daily conduct. Nothing in the world is easier than to wax hilariously merry over the case of Count Tolstoi; but few seem to realize how much he gave up in the attempt to walk in Jesus' steps. It is perfectly true that when the commandments of Jesus are presented just as they are, men express their revolt, saying, "Oh, this is visionary; this is no religion for us;" but the clergy endeavour to make the Gospel acceptable to outsiders by averring that Jesus did not mean what he said, but that, like any Orientalist, he deliberately exaggerated, with the result that most of his sayings stand in need of interpretation. Dr. D. W. Forrest, of Edinburgh, published a volume of more than four hundred pages, entitled *The Authority of Christ*, in which he interprets the Sermon on the Mount in the hope of making its teaching authoritative for the twentieth century. Christians boast that they see God in the face of Jesus Christ, but they might with even greater truth confess that they see Christ in the face of this or that divine; while, as a matter of fact, they see neither God nor Christ save as imaginary portraits painted by artists of different schools.

Like all his brethren, Mr. Horder pretends to be on exceedingly intimate terms with God, but he judges the Divine Being by himself. He also agrees with Mr. H. G. Wells, "who would have a God who would not suffer crucifixion, but would resist it; who would have a God presented as strong with immortal youth." He even admits that many of the precepts of Christ do lean in the direction of what may be called the softer virtues. Of course, he understands why Jesus did not name and expatiate on the sterner and more manly virtues, and he has considerable sympathy with the people who, in consequence, characterize Christianity as "a soft, unmanly religion." He goes the length of avowing that "a good deal of preaching about love in God is so one-sided and unbalanced that it makes the Christian Faith well nigh impossible for strong and vigorous natures." Then he adds:—

> The love of God is represented as like the love of many foolish parents, whose love leads to the spoiling of their children, and renders such children almost unbearable in their behaviour—parents who "love not wisely but too well," to use a common phrase. But the wiser teachers of Christianity have already had a truer and fuller vision of love in God. They saw clearly enough that love of the highest type, as it must be in God, sometimes leads to discipline, to chastisement, to sternness; that it does not always express itself in softness or yielding, but often by sternness and unyieldingness.

All that is true enough as applied to human love, Undoubtedly the two types of affection do exist and manifest themselves in human life; but Mr. Horder oversteps the limits of his knowledge when he describes God as loving in either sense. What he does is to paint God in his own image, and after his own likeness. Being of a strong, manly character himself, he takes it for granted that the same is true of the Heavenly Father. No doubt love is sometimes at its highest and best when the rod is in its hand. The preacher's object in thus dwelling on the character of God is to convince his hearers that Christ is God manifested in the flesh, and that we are to interpret his teaching in the light of his character. And yet we are assured that "a pedantic following of the steps of Christ is as foolish as a pedantic obedience of his words." At this point we are confronted with the preacher's Christian bias. He says:—

> Now I suppose it may be said that the life is more unique than the precepts of Christ. Probably, from the other sacred books of the world you could make a collection of precepts falling not very short of those in the Gospels. But the figure of Christ, the life of Christ that cannot be paralleled—that is the unique part of Christianity. There is the light for our way.

Of course, such a passage could only fall from the pen of a believer in the impeccability of the Gospel Jesus, a belief which has no other support than two bare assertions, the one by Paul that "he knew no sin," and the other by Peter that he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." From those two assertions the Church elaborated the dogma of the absolute sinlessness of Christ. And yet even the Gospels do not portray a perfect, spotless character. Jesus' treatment of his mother, on several occasions, was anything but faultless, and much of his teaching was immoral and anti-social. To his disciples he promised peace, and yet he declared that it was not peace, but a sword that he brought to the world. He disapproved of family affection by claiming for himself the supreme place in every heart. He came before parents, wife, and children; and without the surrender of all for his sake discipleship was impossible. Furthermore, the Gospel Jesus is a wholly impossible character. We know to a certainty that no such person ever lived at all, or ever can live. His very existence would have been a setting aside of the inexorable laws of Nature.

Mr. Horder must be aware that neither as teacher nor as Saviour has Christ been a success. Theoretically his teaching is eulogized as the truest and noblest in the world, while, practically, it is universally ignored. Theoretically his praises as Saviour of the world are enthusiastically sung throughout Christendom; but, practically, even Christendom still wallows in its sins. In this unspeakably horrible War millions of men have already been killed in his name, and for the establishment of his kingdom. Mr. Horder admits that words uttered by him can be found both for and against participation in war; and, as king of men, he was powerless to prevent the frightful conflict, and is equally incapable of ending it.

J. T. LLOYD.

Death, and After.

The Question: If a Man Die Shall He Live Again? By Edward Clodd. Grant Richards.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S unaffected tribute to brave Walter Savage Landor, "the unsubduable old Roman," comes to mind on seeing Mr. Edward Clodd's critical examination of Spiritualism, *The Question: If a Man Die Shall He Live Again?* (Grant Richards). At a time of life when most men think only of slippered ease, Mr. Clodd is busy with his pen on behalf of the cause he has so much at heart, and to which he has rendered such unselfish devotion for so many years. The old energy of style, the tremendous vitality and interest in men and things, remain unimpaired, and the veteran watches events as keenly as ever, and comments on them with his customary robustness and independence of mind. A man who has seen so much of the world as he, and who has been mixed up for so many years with the developments of thought, religion, and literature, and has met the leaders in these fields and in the society of his time, has enjoyed unusual scope for observation. Already he has dispensed from his treasures with a royal hand, but he has plenty in reserve, as is proved by the contents of his latest book.

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Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond* has given a new impetus to Spiritualism, of which the astute dabblers in the occult have taken full advantage. Indeed, the name of Sir Oliver has been exploited as a triumphant proof of the existence of spiritual phenomena. Hence Mr. Clodd's brilliant examination is both timely and necessary.

With the exception of the Christian religion, there is, probably, no other cult whose history is so steeped in fraud as that of modern Spiritualism. The fraud is "gross as a mountain, open, palpable." Even Spiritualists have to admit it, and are driven to argue that the detection of fraudulent mediums is no proof that all manifestations are unsatisfactory. Mr. Clodd's inquiry is very exhaustive. He must have read many books and pamphlets, and he has overlooked nothing of serious importance. He examines in detail the cases of detection ranging from the time of the Davenport Brothers, the Fox Sisters, down to the day of Madame Blavatsky, Eusapia Palladino, and others. The methods of the famous Mrs. Piper are analysed, and Sir Oliver Lodge is also subjected to the ordeal of criticism. As the result of his examination, Mr. Clodd considers that spirit survival has not been established. It is not his fault that, though the book is primarily concerned with the question of man's immortality, it is full of talk of telepathy; it is about the soul of man, and full of chatter of clairvoyance; it is of matters religious, and discusses automatic handwriting. In the last analysis, the Spiritualists base their case for the soul's immortality on these things, and Mr. Clodd but follows their lead.

In this volume, Spiritualism appears in its best clothes, and is seen at its bravest. Yet Mr. Clodd's verdict is "not proven." As explained by this relentless critic, the new Spiritualism is very like the old. Behind all the verbiage of telepathy, clairvoyance, automatic handwriting, precognition, and the like, there is always the furtive figure of "Sludge, the Medium." This is clearly seen by Mr. Clodd, and it says much for his restraint that he writes calmly throughout. His book is the deadliest criticism of Spiritualism that we have seen. He shows that the "spooks" have contributed nothing to human knowledge. This is the purport of his volume, and it is written with knowledge and balanced judgment.

Spiritualists are not the only folk who profess to have dealings with the "supernatural." The clergy are as much interested in "spooks" as the mediums. They babble of "gods," who get angry with us; of "devils," who must be guarded against; of "angels," who fly from heaven to earth. The Bible is a spook-book, and belief in spirits is an integral part of the Christian religion. Nearly fifty thousand clerical gentlemen are engaged in this spook business, to say nothing of their lay assistants. The "spooks" of the clergy are no more real than the "bogeys" of the Spiritualists. The clergy, however, are wiser than the mediums. They know that if a showman never lifts the curtain, it does not matter whether he has anything or nothing on the other side.

In spite of the clergy and the mediums, the riddle remains unanswered, the sphinx is still silent. Couched in plausible and semi-scientific language, presented with all the resources of men who have devoted their lives to the subject, this plea for survival is, in the last resort, but an appeal to emotionalism. The poet Heine hit the right nail on the head where he suggssted, smilingly, that the idea of immortality may have suggested itself to a lover in the arms of his mistress, or to some worthy burgher sipping his beer on a summer's evening. It is, in the last analysis, but a desire for personal continuance, to be for ever as we are. In spite of man's importunity, "the rest is silence."

The new Spiritualism gives no better answer than the older creeds, and the later messages from the "other side" are as unconvincing as the earlier. The poor Indian dreams of his happy hunting grounds; the Mohammedan pictures his Paradise peopled with houris; the prosaic Christian looks for the jewelled streets of the New Jerusalem; and Sir Oliver Lodge believes that "spirits" smoke cigars made of essences, ethers and gases. The world is no nearer a solution than in the far-off days of old Lucretius, or in the still earlier time when primitive man cowered in his dug-out in mortal fear of the lightning. The oracles are contradictory with regard to a next world.

All we know for certain is that man is mortal, but nature is immortal. The world grows old, and we grow old with it; but nature is ever fair and young. The white flowers of the spring return year by year; lads and maidens are ever wandering at eventide. The love of husband and wife is ever consecrated by the coming into the world of the beautiful new life springing from their own. Though our personality be blotted out by "the poppied sleep," our influence goes to swell the volume of humanity.

After all, death is not so much our concern as life The men of to day have shown the greatest courage and the highest disdain of death ever shown. It is our present fate, smoky with clouds that hide splendour or doom, to be living at the very apex of the world's history, and in the zenith of man's challenge of fate. The secular solution is the best. All sprang from Nature, and have their day, and all return for sleep. Fear should have no place: "Into the breast that gives the rose, shall we with shuddering fall?"

MIMNERMUS.

Distressed Dualists.

THE walls of Modern Athens had scarce ceased to echo the flourish of trumpets which greeted the announcement of "General" Booth that he had decided to make Scotland a unit of the Salvation Army's life—an announcement, by the way, received in silence by Edinburgh's men of God—when a body of men calling themselves "The United Free Church Office-Bearers' Association" took sweet counsel together, and decided upon a conference on the subject of "Spiritual Quickening," which conference was duly held upon the 22nd day of December, in the year of grace (or disgrace) 1917.

This gathering was presided over by Sir David Paulin, a genial insurance manager; but, unlike "General" Booth's meeting, the clergy—and big guns at that—were in the very forefront of the proceedings. The principal speakers were Dr. W. M. MacGregor, a leading divine of the U.F. Church, and Dr. Wallace Williamson, ex-Moderator of the Established Church of Scotland. The newspaper report of the meeting is, to the extent of five-sixths of its space, taken up with the speeches of these reverend doctors, who trounced the Scottish laity for making Christianity merely an extraneous thing—a "trimming" to their lives. Dr. Wallace Williamson said: "The war was profoundly a spiritual war, and would be won only if the nation could stand firm to the eternal principles of Jesus Christ." Both divines insisted upon a "real rededication of the national life"—surely a tongue-twisting resolution for a Scotsman to take on New Year's Eve! A hint was given that a special effort was to be made with the objective of "spiritual quickening" in February, 1918. No precise information about this effort was furnished, but it was agreed to hold another conference, at which a more particularized plan of campaign may be forthcoming. Dr. Wallace Williamson desiderated "a God-fearing Scotland which would show its fear of God in being a clean, honest, sober Scotland." And Dr. MacGregor

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flatly declared that "they were not going to put their trust in what people call a 'social gospel.'"

All which would appear to indicate that there is substantial agreement between the spokesmen of the U.F. Church Office-Bearers' Association and the platform supporters of "General" Booth. The names of the latter were not so much as mentioned at the conference. Notwithstanding, here we have further gloomy testimony to the decadent state of "Puir Auld Scotland." How many conferences will be needed before she is spiritually convalescent? Her self-appointed spiritual guardians are wonders at conferring and at the preparation of elaborate reports. The late Dr. Parker, once invited to attend a Free Kirk General Assembly, after listening to the reports of a large number of committees, got upon his feet, and electrified the "House" by exclaiming, "Mr. Moderator, I should now like to hear the report of the Devil."

There is a certain type of medical man who encourages the crotchets of his hypochondriacal patients. Similarly, there are clerics who profess to admire the church member who is ever bewailing his moral degeneracy, and his lost and undone condition. In each case this habit of mind is either the outcome of disease or hypocritical affectation. But there are other Scotsmen, like David Deans, in the *Heart of Midlothian*, whose pessimistic lamentations are not merely individual and subjective, but also national and objective. To such minds, of course, a "Social Gospel" is necessarily abhorrent as a means of salvation.

Such minds to dispassionate philosophers are bewildering contradictions. You will please understand that the Scottish Church member, who is for ever denouncing himself as the vilest sinner, is, in reality, the holiest saint. So we may not be without justification in thinking that, by a parity of reasoning, Scotland is, after all, not so black as she is painted by such Scotsmen. With such men social and secular improvement is always suspect. No such improvement can be for the benefit of the people unless it receives the approval and benediction and *imprimatur* of the Church. At present we are all much concerned about the provisions of a new Scottish Education Bill which has just been introduced. Many of us look upon it as an epoch-marking event, and of the most vital interest to the community. But it does not appear to have occupied two minutes time of the conference on "Spiritual Quickening." The great panacea for Scottish ills in the estimation of our pastors and masters is not knowledge but belief.

Introspective morbidity is certainly harmful; but when to that is added the objectionable nose-poking habit of looking for the faults and vices of other people, the subject is on the high road to mental disintegration. Sane and balanced judgment is impossible to vigilance society experts. They are out to find mankind bad, and are never pleased when they are disappointed.

The Chairman, in opening the conference, to which we have adverted, made a notable, and-to Freethinkers a welcome, admission. He said there had been "a regrettable increase of Materialism." And it is this remark which has induced the adoption of the title of this article. This U. F. Conference platform sends out its S.O.S. signals because of that terrible thing Materialism. Ah, these deluded spiritualistic dualists! They seek to split the universe into two distinct sections—the material and spiritual, secular and sacred, human and divine. What does this inevitably tend to? Surely to duality, division, disunion, dissension. The Monist is he who believes in harmony, union, co-operation. His duty is to strike off the fetters from the minds of men. Change men's minds and you change everything. IGNOTUS.

Illusion.

IT is not often a modern article does not contain the word "illusion" or "delusion," or both. Compare the following, culled at random from recent issues:—

> (1) In all great upheavals and calamities in the world's history there has been a growth of delusions.....if anyone imagines he has heard the last of the Welsh Church spectre, he is likely on the return of peace to be disillusioned.
>
> (2) Neither the clergy's enormous wealth, nor their arrogance, nor prestige.....can avail to give them even the illusion of progress.
>
> (3) Men in crowds are swayed by a collective logic which has its roots in mysticism and illusion.
>
> (4) War is one of the many illusions and delusions which have come down to us from the ignorance and stupidity of the past.
>
> (5) The illusions of the childhood of humanity were harmless in comparison with the aberrations of later periods.

Here we have the illusion of progress, of collective logic, and of childhood; war is both an illusion and a delusion; while upheavals give rise to delusions, one of which is apparently the illusion of having laid the Welsh Church spectre.

Turning to Whately, we learn that "illusion is an unreal image presented to the bodily or mental vision, as fancy, hope, appearances," while "delusion is a false show which cheats the fancy or senses; an erroneous view, for instance, of politics or religion." From which we gather they are two aspects of the same thing; delusions are illusions to us, or else we should not hold them, and illusions are in reality nothing but delusions. In other words, our errors as to appearances or phenomena, politics and religion, are subjectively illusions, and objectively, as others see them, delusions. Thus, an author's pleasing illusion as to the value of his work may be viewed by the editor as a pure delusion; the bloom on a maiden's cheek is illusion when not the work of health, and delusion when not the work of Nature; the South Sea shares were an illusion when they were being bought, and a delusion when they and their owners were sold. It is high time we called our harmless or pleasing illusions and childish ignorances by their proper names—dangerous delusions. Like More, we may lose our heads over our Utopias.

To take Whateley's three suggested topics—first, the world of appearances. We are at the outset pulled up sharp by the idealist, who tells us that all phenomena are illusions. If he is right, these remarks need go no further; life, thought, and everything else becomes meaningless for us. But at the risk of being called "vulgar realists" and "no philosophers," we must submit that the delusion is here on the other side. Everything is a delusion to somebody; to the scientist supernaturalism is discredited, to the theologian science is bankrupt, to the supernaturalist Materialism is vicious, to the man in the street philosophy is taboo; and if it comes to the question which suffers from the fewest illusions, we may fairly claim that, from his very constitution, it is the Secularist. If it should be proved, after all, that life is an illusion, we may still fall back on Metchnikoff's argument that death (so-called) is a delusion, and wish our opponents joy of their theory when arterial sclerosis, caused by that same illusory life, in the form of phagocytes, carries them off.

Illusion is common to the unregulated imagination and emotions of childhood, such as love and hope. Shaw is unfortunately right in saying that it is the mainspring of all human action, but, happily wrong in adding that there can no more be illusion without a reality than

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a shadow without an object. It is the absence of reality that causes the pain of disillusionment which is inevitable sooner or later, as in the case of the boy with the memory, who used to think the slender tops of the fir-trees were close against the sky, and on growing up "found it little joy to know that heaven was further off than when he was a boy."

But it is religion and war, especially in company, which are the great illusion-makers. The great illusions about war have been sufficiently pointed out of late, *e.g.*, that armaments can be amassed, and a whole nation learn the arts of war without using them; that conquests of territory and indemnities are intrinsic gain; that war creates as much good as it destroys; that war can ever end war, etc. Whether its abolition by an international ethics bureau is also an illusion awaits the test of time, but there can be no question as to the widespread disillusionment which the last three years have brought about.

To give an instance from the Bible. Abraham was promised by God that he should possess the land of Canaan, yet died without owning more of it than his wife's grave, for which, after the usual Jewish offer gratis, he paid the full price. This may be taken as a specimen of the promises of "Revelation." Or take the illusions of three typical recent "conversions," Mr. R. J. Campbell, after doing a large trade for several years in a humanized religion which denied any real reality to sin, a divine Jesus, atonement, and miracles, and obtaining thousands of adherents to a League of Progressive Thought, has now found that a rationalized religion is impossible, and declared his conversion to traditional Christianity. This return to the illusions of despair we can understand, but the second conversion, that of Mr. Wells to Godism, is not so innocent. "God, the Invisible King," is well described by Mr. A. S. Tom's as literary tosh, destitute of the least moral or spiritual meaning. Mr. Archer's full examination of this hocus-pocus of hallucinations is one of the brightest pieces of writing of the year.

And now we have Sir A. Conan Doyle's conversion to Spiritism. "A new revelation," he says, "is in process of delivery, with a body of fresh doctrine already accumulated from automatic writing, direct voices, and other sources." "The world beyond is a definite reality, attested by an irrefutable body of evidence, etc. Let those who must play tricks with themselves, for the uninitiated the age-long delusions of superstition merely inspire a life-long protest.

That a Moloch worship of this kind should be the story of our race, and command the adoration of millions for its fictions of blood; that the martyrdom of man over every square inch of the earth's surface should have had a mere nightmare for its sufficient explanation and countenance; that papacies and inquisitions should have been able for so long to clothe themselves with the glamour of this *ignis fatuus;* that tyrannies should have found a sanction for every vice and crime in the mere invocation of the "divine" name, and the appeal to its malignancy and terror; that under other names and forms its desolating delusions should still germinate; and that any kind of charlatanry and spirit-jobbery should be able to find a respectable name under which to harbour, is indeed appalling.

Countless explosives have been hurled in our day by illusion-freethinkers against these entrenched deceptions, till the empty husk of miraculous revelations, provident gods, bodiless spirit theories and the rest, line the shores of the dead seas of thought; but while we continue to palter with admissions that beliefs may be false and yet do no harm, and that to attack creeds may be productive of moral injury; in fine, as long as the *exitialis superstitio* of Christianity finds its Constantines, so long will illusion masquerade as saving truth.

But the conjuring tricks of the clergy, those princes of illusion are less and less holding the imagination of their followers. There is every hope to-day of undrugged humanity coming to its own. It is the inherent pessimism of religion, in teaching, for instance, that happiness and justice are not attainable in this life, that is the worst of delusions. Even Mr. Balfour admits that it is a strong point of naturalism that it has no sympathy with those metaphysical systems which regard all life as illusion, and all desires as wretchedness.

VESCOR.

Is There a Hell?

THERE was momentous news in the issue of the *Daily Chronicle* of December 22, 1917. Therein we are told that Lord Hugh Cecil says that hell does exist, but hell-fire, as Lord Hugh understands it, would not hurt a fly; it simply means "a state of non-existence for the obstinate and wilfully wicked." What a change by the sea of thought! The mental nostrils of Lord Hugh abhor the smell of theological sulphur; but although the smoke of everlasting fiery torment has been smothered, the hobs of hell are still pointed to with pride. "Belief in hell," concluded Lord Hugh, "brings before us God once more as the Father of all mercies, not in spite of but because, he is the architect of hell." What a thing is Christian imagination! It is like a monk of the Inquisition showing a visitor the torture-chamber and, while regretting its disuse, dwelling lovingly on its devilish ingenuity. And who but a Christian could call the architect of hell the Father of all mercies? Why, no man could commit a crime deserving as punishment that of eternal torment, and this new-fangled explanation of hell-fire as a state of non-existence is a recognition of the fact.

"The view of eternal destruction must be admitted to be the most natural and the most complete solution of the problem of evil." Thus Lord Hugh. Now, what is the problem of evil? According to the fantastic Christian scheme of things, evil is the outcome of the sin of Adam and Eve in partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. In other words, to be more profoundly ignorant than the priest makes the worshipper the more easily imposed upon by the hocus-pocus of theology. So, in order to save Christians from hell-fire—that is, the evil which is the result of the sinful fruit-eating of their first parents, a human sacrifice to God had to be made, which was effected in the crucifying of Jesus Christ. As a consequence, the Devil, God's hangman, was thrown out of employment by God's son. But the Devil was still given a chance to ply his trade, but was always liable to bankruptcy if his victims called upon the name of their Redeemer. The Christian scheme of things is puerile, still has in it the reek of the animistic, primitive savage, evinces the handiwork of anthropomorphic guessers, and only maintains its position by reason of its highly ornamented covering of modern apologetics.

That there is evil in the world goes without question, and men generally think of evil as that which is harmful or fatal to their welfare—that is, they figure evil variously as lack of food or shelter, storm and flood, pestilence, attacks by wild animals, failure of harvest, etc., and have personified evil under numerous names. Set was the name of the Evil One to the ancient Egyptians; the Assyrians knew him as Tiamtu; to the ancient Persians he was Ahriman; the Jews knew him as Azazel; to the Buddhists he is Mara, and the old

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Scandinavians and Teutons knew him under the name of Loki. To Christians he is Satan, the Devil, Old Nick, Old Harry, the Foul Fiend, Lucifer, the Prince of Hell, and the patron saint of lawyers.

Having imagined the Devil, the Christians had perforce to imagine an abode for him, and the conception of hell was the result. This does not mean that the Christians were original in their ideas of devil and hell; they simply elaborated on previous notions of the like; in short, they put a more frightful face on the bogey, and said that their hell was bigger and hotter than any hell that ever was. Notwithstanding the assertions of the Christians, the notion of hell did not at first imply that it was a sort of superlative kitchen fitted with multiple roasting-jacks. Primarily, hell simply meant the abode of the dead. In it the members of the great majority spent their time for ever doing nothing. It was the place of eternal rest; its inhabitants had been in the rack and turmoil of earthly life, and had dropped out of it into nirvana. Those who thought of the dead thus were kindly, but along came the prototypes of the Christians and flung terror into the place of the dead, and the Christians have easily outdone their tutors in the art of theological frightfulness.

Thus does Omar Khayyam address the "Father of all mercies, who is the architect of hell":—

> 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-allay'd
> Sue for a Debt he never did contract,
> And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!

Old Omar Khayyam thus answers the question, Is there a hell?

> I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
> Some letter of that After-life to spell:
> And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
> And answer'd "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell.

JAMES H. WATERS.

Acid Drops.

This from the leader-writer of the *Times Literary Supplement*:—

> The Kaiser's God is one who approves of German conduct. It is impossible for us to believe in a God who does that; but, if our hope fails us, we may believe in a Godless universe to which the Germans are better adapted than any other people; and we may see in all their successes and our own failures and blunders a proof that they are better adapted. That is the state of mind that they wish to produce in us ..... and we can defend ourselves against it not by cultivating particular hopes as a help to victory, but only by means of a universal hope opposed to their universal despair. With that hope we shall believe still, in spite of particular disappointments, that the nature of things is with us, not against us; that it is our enemies, not ourselves, who are living and acting against the grain of the universe.

If there is a God, and if he has a sense of humour—Sir Oliver Lodge believes he has—this is the sort of thing that will afford him cause for laughter. It is impossible for us to believe in a God who favours Germany. Granted; but then it will be equally impossible for Germany to believe in a God who favours us. And the logic of the situation on both sides is that both are warning God that if he wishes for the support of Germany or the Allies, he must make up his mind which he will help. He must make up his mind to lose one, and if he persists in a neutral attitude he looks like losing both.

The suggestion that, if brutality pays, it must be a "Godless universe" is in the true style of Christian advocacy. The thesis is: "If you don't believe in God, you must believe in brutality; and if brutality pays, the universe must be godless." This is the gutter method of Christianity in high places. And it conveniently ignores the fact that the greatest of all brutalities has been because of the belief in God. After all, the brutalities of Germany do not exceed those which the Biblical Jews perpetrated by the direct command of God, and the Germans will have to work very hard indeed to exceed the barbarities committed by one section or another of the Christian Churches.

The truth is, of course, that brutality does not pay; not because there is a God, but because the nature of human and social evolution is such that the dice are loaded against it. It is not the "grain of the universe" that is in question—that is a wholly stupid expression—but the structure of human society. And in a social structure, the parts of which are more or less interdependent, all conduct which excites an emotional and intellectual reaction is bound to yield to conduct that excites feelings of approbation. There is nothing occult or supernatural in this; it is a question of social efficiency. It is no more than the social parallel that the biologic law of an organism in which the laws are not well adjusted to serve the interests of the whole is doomed to disappear. The pity is that such a pretentious piece of ignorance as the example cited should find a leading place in one of our leading papers.

The farcical character of the apostolic succession of bishops is emphasized by a bold advertisement in the daily press, issued by the English Church Union. The notice asks those who wish to protest against Dr. Henson's appointment to the bishopric of Hereford to write to the Prime Minister. It looks as if Mr. Lloyd George, who is a Welsh Baptist, has a voice in nominating the successors of the apostles.

Mr. Edward Clodd, in his searching examination of Spiritualism, the *Question*, has some excellent stories. One of the best is that of the Christian Scientist lady who called to see a sick friend. To the servant who answered the door she said: "Your mistress is not ill; she only thinks she is." She called again, and, in reply to her question, the servant said: "My mistress thinks she is dead."

Men of God nowadays will discuss anything on earth except the one thing that matters, as far as they are concerned, namely their religion. Christian ministers will discuss Socialism, the War, or anything else that happens to draw audiences. They make their services attractive by including such things as organ recitals, orchestras, and solo singing. But if they are asked to discuss Christianity, they answer: "No, thanks; we're not having any."

Quite a number of churches in London refrained from holding "Watch Night" services on December 31. Perhaps it was for fear of air raids, for prayers are a poor protection against bombs. Perhaps it was because they wished to reserve the full force of the prayers for the National Day of Prayer, and it would have been unwise to bombard the Lord thrice in one week. Any way the services were dispensed with. And no one was any the worse. Perhaps the example will be followed on other occasions during the year.

We are glad to see the President of the Transvaal Teacher's Association, as reported in the *Rand Daily Mail*, speaking out plainly against an attempt to further clericalize the schools. He says:—

> For ages the teacher has been looked upon as the factotum of the parson. His has been the duty of running the Sunday schools, of training the choir, of playing the organ, and generally of being at the beck and call of the parson. The recent incident on the East Rand, where an attempt was made to coerce Government teachers to do these very things, shows that this idea of the position of the teacher still holds the field in many quarters.
>
> Whatever may have been the case in the past it is no longer the case that the teacher is in any way inferior to the parson. On the contrary, he is frequently superior in education and outlook; he is engaged in a nob'er and more useful work;

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and he is not inferior in morals, industry, and the conscientious discharge of his duty.

We have before noted the different signs of a Freethought advance in South Africa. We do not think we shall be wrong in taking this as another symptom.

In his prayer at the City Temple on Christmas morning, 1917, Dr. Fort Newton said the following: "Surely Thy goodness and mercy have followed us all the way, even running ahead of our need, anticipating our prayer, and making our loftiest dreams come true before we dream them." What an utterance in this time of war-bread, long and often vain waiting to get a few ounces of margarine, shortage of meat, and the fiendish sacrifice of millions of young men on the altar of the God of Battles.

The London *Evening News* of January 1 states that "house-to-house invitations to the watch-night service were sent out by a South London church." What a change from the time when attendance at church was compulsory and abstention meant a fine!

The same paper states "the Nonconformist bodies of Waltham Abbey have agreed to unite in a joint service with the Anglicans in the Abbey Church on the National Day of Prayer." This does not mean that Anglicanism has capitulated to Nonconformity, or that Nonconformity has surrendered to Anglicanism. It means simply that their customary acerb relations have been sweetened enough to allow of their joining for one hour in the hocus-pocus of prayer.

The same newspaper reports of Dr. Taylor Smith (Chaplain-General to the Forces) that, when asked at a united thanksgiving and intercession at Queen's Hall, What won Jerusalem for us last month? replied: "The same thing that won Jericho in days of old. Not by men, not by munitions, not by money. It was the Household of God who prayed and who hoped that before Christmas Jerusalem might be ours. The prayerful Commander marched in, led by the Lord of Hosts." Munition makers and workers will go into a blue funk when they hear of this. Incidentally, it shows that the modern priest is still the ancient witch-doctor but thinly disguised.

"There is no peace outside heaven," declares a Sunday paper. Unhappily, heaven is not in the atlases.

So we are being warned that the decisive factor in winning the War will be food. And that is what the glory and greatness of war comes to in the face of hard facts. Can the Germans and Austrians starve the women and children of the Allies until they bring the men-folk to peace? Can the Allies starve the women and children belonging to the enemy until he sues for peace? So much for the chivalry and greatness of modern war! A competition as to which can starve the other soonest! If hard facts like these don't disgust the world with militarism, and show it for the mean, brutal thing it is, nothing will.

This is not alone what modern war has come to; it is what war between Christian nations has come to. Divided only by a narrow sheet of water, German Christians can read with gratification of the probable starvation of forty or fifty million people in Great Britain. And here British Christians can read, with a sense of something good accomplished, of millions of Germans suffering death and disease from a shortage of food. And each knows quite well that in this game of starving out it is the weakest that will suffer first. So long as there is food, the wants of the fighting men will be supplied. It is the children, the delicate, that will have to suffer before others. And only when their suffering has reached the point that strong men can endure the sight of it no longer, will the game cease—to be followed by thanksgiving services to God for having granted the winning side so glorious a victory. So much for all these centuries of the Christian religion.

January 6, 1918, was, by Royal appointment, a Day of Prayer to God by the British people. In this connection the following list, published earlier in the War by the *Philadelphia North American*, containing descriptions of the Deity by several of the belligerents, is not without interest:—

God of our Fatherland.—NICHOLAS.
God of our Dear Fatherland.—WILHELM.
God of all French.—POINCARE.
God our Defence and Bulwark.—FRANZ JOSEF.
God of our race.—GEORGE.
God our Right Arm.—ALBERT.
We can take care of ourselves.—SERBIA.

On Prayer Sunday—we suppose we may call it—the Edinburgh Food Control officials had the courage to work, with voluntary assistance. When the intention to do this was announced, however, the Rev. G. W. Taylor, of Leith, condemned the proposal in respect that the day had been set apart as a National Day of Prayer. A compromise was arranged. The Food Control people had an interval in their work, when a service was conducted by Bishop Walpole. But why not the Rev. G. W. Taylor?

We have the following story from an "Official" source. There are between 500 and 600 officers at Eastbourne Command Depot. As it was the Day of Prayer last Sunday, and the Mayor was holding a special service, he asked that seventy-five officers should attend. Only twenty-three volunteered out of 600. Then the authorities ordered a Church parade and detailed enough to make up the required seventy-five. We venture to say that a deal of what these conscripted worshippers did say during the service was *not* in the prepared prayers. But what God must think of the Eastbourne Command must be very distressing. It would serve these officers right if the Bishop of London was brought down to preach to them.

Among other by-products of the War, according to the Bishop of Durham, is the turning of Sunday into a day of unrest. In a New Year message to the Lord's Day Observance Society, he says: "Munition work and alleged necessities of military drill have contributed to the break-up of Sunday. Yet let us not lose heart. I, for one, am sure that a strong tradition of reverence for the Sabbath still lives in the common English heart, and is open to appeals." Doubtless the bishop does not despair of the full attainment of the English Sunday with all shops closed, happily Nonconformist chapels as well, and everybody compelled to attend church, in spite of the Protestant doctrine that God endowed man with free-will.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley, writing on New Year resolutions, says that the "greatest of all" religions is "that which finds its expression in the service of man." This is a long way from the popular Christian ideal of saving men from "the immortal fry, of almost everybody born to die."

What is coming to the *Daily News?* In its issue for January 4 it published the following four quotations:—

The act is in God's hand, as is our whole struggle. He will decide on it and we will leave it to Him. We must not argue with His ordering.

We owe it to those who have given their lives in the holy cause to endure to the end and to abstain from grumbling, pessimism, and carping criticism, taking as our watchword "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Because the cause in which we are fighting is the cause of right, we may fearlessly ask God to pardon our faults and to bless our efforts.

We stand firm, faithful to our task and to the fulfilment of our duty. There is no doubt on which side lies the right. Therefore this conflict has become a holy conflict.

Two of these are from the Kaiser's speeches, and two from Captain Guest's hints to clergymen, for use in their sermons on January 6. The *Daily News* invites its readers to try and pick out the Kaiser's words from Captain Guest's. We think they will be puzzled to discriminate. When it comes to pietistic humbug, the Kaiser and our own religious "Prussians" run neck and neck. But what made the *Daily News* publish them? Has its religion also been shaken up by the "Holy War"?

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 13, London; January 20, Southampton; January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 20, London; January 27, South Shields; February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND, 1917.—G. Wallace, 9s.; P. Lamb, 8s. 9d.; Pte. G. H. Harrison, 2s. Per H. Courlander—T. A. Batten, £1 1s; A. Phillips, £1 1s.; H. Courlander, £1 1s. Per F. Rose, Bloemfontein—Nicolaison, 10s.; F. G., 10s.; A. C., 5s.; S. C., 5s.; N. G., 10s. 6d.; E. W., £1 1s.; B. E., £1 1s.; H. M., £1 1s.; I. B. C., 10s. 6d.; B. Gluck, 10s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. F. Rose, £1 1s.

MAJOR WARREN.—MSS. received, with thanks. We have had it on our mind for some time to write on Hammond's book, which is really an important piece of work. We may fulfil our intention very shortly.

(MRS.) E. TAYLOR.—We were both pleased and interested in your letter, and regret not having the pleasure of meeting you on Sunday at Manchester. Your stand for your opinions does you credit, although it has doubtless brought a great deal of satisfaction—in spite of the annoyance to which you may have been subjected. Nor is it surprising that you have gradually won the goodwill of your neighbours. In such cases character usually tells.

C. F. J.—Received. Shall appear as early as possible.

DIE PROFUNDIS.—We do not mind sending any of our *own* publications for use in the hospital in which you are placed.

S. L.—The hypothesis of evolution is itself subject to growth, and during the last twenty years there have been very considerable advances made, which involve some modification in its statement. But the principle of evolution is in nowise affected thereby. That remains a datum for all useful scientific work and thought.

W. ROWE.—Received. The matter is quite all right.

E. B.—You are quite correct. We have written the party concerned.

F. ROSE (Bloemfontein).—Draft received, and apportioned according to instructions. When you say that your opinion of our conduct of the *Freethinker* is shown by getting as many new subscribers as possible, you are returning thanks in the form we most desire. The new subscribers are having their papers sent them.

T.C.—The drawing together of the Churches is, as you suggest, an indication of their weakness, since only the feeling that they are getting too weak to stand alone, would lead to such a move. On the other hand, it contains a threat to all reformers, since their united strength is still enough to threaten real freedom and progress. Our best reply is to go on making more Freethinkers.

G. WALLACE.—It is cheering to have the opinion of a twenty-five year's reader of the *Freethinker* that there is "no paper or magazine published at present of so much importance." It will not be our fault if a much larger public than it addsesses at present does not arrive at the same conclusion.

DR. B. DUNLOP.—Subscription received with thanks. The expression you note is rather cryptic, perhaps we had better not venture an explanation.

D. H.—Pleased you found our notes on religion in history so helpful. We have had in contemplation a small volume on that topic, and may do it one day.

C. MEADOWS.—You say that no one could ever convince you of the reasonableness of Atheism. After reading your letter we agree that the task would be an impossible one.

J. REES.—We do not know of any book on the same lines as the Bible Handbook dealing with other religions. Will send specimen copies of *Freethinker* to address given.

W. FITZPATRICK.—We intend raising the whole question in the *Freethinker* before long. Thanks for notes.

W. BAILEY.—Papers are being sent. Sorry a cold prevented you being at Manchester. Hope the indisposition will soon pass.

N. STRIEMER.—Next week.

H. IRVING.—See reply to E. B.

MRS. J. M. HINDLEY.—Looks like a patent medicine advertisement. But prayers *are* very often funny things. Glad to find you appreciate "Views and Opinions" so much.

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

G. R. HARKER.—Thanks for quotation. You do not say what use we are to make of the enclosure.

H. LIBRENTEN.—A good and useful letter. Will use later.

F. W. A.—Will hand on the information.

J. BARTRAM.—Your clerical correspondent evidently doesn't understand the bearings of Utilitarianism. He evidently possesses the wisdom of discretion.

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.

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

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 had two fine meetings on Sunday last. The evening meeting was the largest held in Manchester for some years, and the lecturer's comments on the futile imbecility of a Day of Prayer met with the keenest appreciation. There was a good sale of literature, some new members made, and the energetic Secretary, Mr. Black, was as busy as ever, and evidently gratified with the results of his labours.

The second of the course of Sunday afternoon lectures at the West Central Hall, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, will be delivered by Mr. Cohen. His subject is "Some Curiosities of Christian Evidence." The lecture commences at 3.15. Freethinkers would do well to bring along a Christian friend—or two.

Mr. Cohen will address two Freethought meetings at Southampton next Sunday (Jan. 20), the first delivered there for many years. A Branch of the N.S.S. has been formed, and Mr. A. Wildman, of 100, Clovelly Road, Southampton, will be pleased to hear from any one wishing to become a member or to help in any other manner.

Mr. Lloyd opened the new course of lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, on Sunday last, with a crowded house. This is as it should be. And we are not surprised to learn that, as Mr. Lloyd was in his best form, the audience was delighted with his address.

The *Shields Daily Gazette* reports that a meeting of the Tyne Dock Branch of the National Union of Railwaymen passed unanimously a resolution in favour of the restriction of education in all State-aided schools to subjects defined as "secular" in the Education Code. We notice the name of our old friend Mr. R. Chapman as one of the speakers to the resolution. This is good work, and we hope Freethinkers everywhere will see to it that similar resolutions are carried wherever possible, and moved whether carried or not.

At a not very distant date we hope to deal with the whole question of the part that might be played by Freethinkers in connection with public affairs. It is quite certain that much could be done; and it is certain that if applied Freethought, if one may use the expression, is to operate, it can only be by Freethinkers everywhere expressing their opinions as Freethinkers. This would be educative so far as Christians are concerned, and helpful in breaking down whatever boycott exists.

It is early yet to record the response to our appeal for a New Year's gift in the shape of a thousand new readers, but we are glad to note that some letters have reached us to the effect that a start has been made. A Bristol friend writes that he secured two new readers before the old year had

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expired, and from Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Cambridge we have also good news of fresh readers. So it is clear our friends are on the move. And we daresay those who try will be astonished at how many readers may be obtained at the price of a little effort. For, after all, there is only one *Freethinker* in England. And if there is another journal in England with more "fundamental brain power" than this one, we have yet to come across it.

The *Daily News* has at length decided, in view of the scarcity and cost of paper, to double the price at which it is to be sold. This is only one of quite a number of papers that have taken, or taking, a similar step during January. One of these is the *Schoolmaster*, which, we believe, is subsidized by the Union of Teachers. Meanwhile, we are wondering how much longer we can struggle along unchanged. The task gets steadily harder, and even from a personal point of view we are beginning to feel the pressure. But we don't like to give in if it can by any means be avoided.

We hope we may be excused pressing the claims of the Fund to meet the expenses incurred in fighting the L.C.C. We are a little disappointed in the response given by London Freethinkers and London reformers generally. The matter, while having a very general application, should appeal with special force to them. It was a very important fight, and we won a very decisive victory. All interested in outdoor propaganda ought to help. In any case, we think we ought to close the Fund within the next two or three weeks.

Swansea friends will please note that Mr. Harry Snell lectures twice to-day (January 13) in the Docker's Hall, High Street. The lectures are under the auspices of the local branch of the N.S.S., and we hope to hear that Mr. Snell has the audiences he deserves.

We congratulate Mr. John Galsworthy on his refusal to accept a knighthood in the New Year's Honours (?) list. Titles have long since ceased to afford any presumption of personal worth or of national service. Good men who accept such distinctions are only helping to keep alive a source of corruption and demoralization. The whole system of titles is in the nature of a survival from barbaric or semi-barbaric times, and men of worth should leave them severely alone.

We venture to again draw attention to the fact that all N.S.S. subscriptions are now due on the first of January of each year. We hope that all members who have not yet remitted to the General Secretary should do so. And if they are moved to send in addition to their usual subscription, as a kind of thank-offering for "Providence having preserved the N.S.S. during the War," so much the better. A Society, such as the N.S.S., can always do with an enlargement of its financial resources.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THE purpose of this Fund is to raise the balance of expenses—estimated at between £80 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:—£34 10s.; J. Neate, £1; West Ham Branch N. S. S., £1 1s.; Anno Domini, 9s. 6d.; W. R. Munton, £1; F. W. Lloyd, 2s. 6d.; H. Bull, 2s. 8d.; O. Friedman, 10s.; F. H. Dell, 4s.; Willesden Freedom League, 5s.; W. Benn, 5s.; Mrs. E. Taylor, 2s.; L. Berryman, 10s. 6d.; Miss Harriet Baker, 1s.; Ed. Parker, 5s.

The Morality of Robert Burns.

Born January 25, 1759; Died July 22, 1796.

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

IN Scotland and elsewhere the annual spate of post-prandial oratory is somewhat diminished by the exigencies of the "great War." Such things, like clouds, obscure the stars. It passes, and the heavens are clear again, and brighter than before. The constellations are undimned. Not a star has fallen from the sky. But even during the War the "Immortal Memory" will be pledged over many a cup, and, in annual resurrection, the poor ghost must listen to those "interminable—not eternal—speeches," full of fulsome adulation, mouth honour, breath, which the poor heart would fain deny but cannot.

Do not let the awkward squad fire over me, he is said to have remarked, with almost his last breath, referring to the local volunteer corps; but the poet has suffered since from the blank cartridge discharge of many a feeble volunteer. No hectic of a moment clouds the marble brow of the unresentful dead. No; not even when the orator sorrowfully pauses to refer to that blot on the escutcheon of Bonnie and pious Scotland—the morals of Robert Burns! Totally misunderstanding the "virtues" of his hero, he, of course, as completely misunderstands his "vices"; and he forgets that, even in the sphere of morals, he is, perhaps, not fit to tie the shoestrings of the wicked bard. One would think, to hear those rustic moralists and reverend purveyors of pious platitudes, that Burns was not only his country's greatest poet, but its greatest sinner, which is false, of course; but even were it true, his virtues would still outweigh those of the purest pietist the world has ever seen. In sense and worth he was always supreme. What faults he had—and he advertised them well—were the mere excess and overflow of an immense and vigorous vitality. Let it more greatly be said of his, as of the morals of Voltaire, "Is it strange that a vessel which has taken the ocean aboard should have battered decks and broken masts?" (M. Mangasarian). And further, as the same writer says:—

> Even as a great chimney consumes its own smoke, a great man—a Goethe, a Voltaire—converts his own defects into fuel for his genius. Genius is intensity in seeing, feeling, and doing. The genius is ourselves—on a larger scale. He has our virtues and vices—but so much more of them. He thinks, speaks, and acts with a thrill. The blood boils in his veins. "Daily his own heart he eats." Let us understand before we criticise.

Or, as the poet himself puts it, laying the responsibility at the proper quarter:—

> Who made the heart, 'tis he alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord—its various tone,
> Each spring—its various bias;
> Then at the balance let's be mute,
> We never can adjust it;
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted.

Burns sensed Determinism, and was on the brink of a great discovery when he wrote of erring humans:—

> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving *why* they do it.

Religion was conventional with, rather than credible to, Burns; at best a loyalty to an ancient and native tradition. There was no greater doubting Thomas than he. This paradoxical utterance proves it. Questioning the reality of Christ and heaven, he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop these burning words:—

> Would to God I as firmly believed it as I ardently wish it.

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But the strong mind of the reasoner would not allow the wish to be father to the thought. That ardent wish, and not a selfish and particular one, only put him on his guard against a too facile credulity.

But Burns shone at his brightest when, like Omar, he had divorced old, barren Reason from his bed, and sent the beldame theology packing to bear her uncongenial company. Then came *The Vision*, clothed in an atmosphere transcending both reason and religion, glowing with the light that never was on sea or land, in heaven or hell; but illumining, permeating, transforming the crude material of one poor clodhopper of the Ayrshire fields, making the man a god; and who rose up mightily, and henceforth poured his soul in song. He had found his true *Metier*. He had dimly glimpsed his own greatness. And yet the light was from himself, or focussed in him from all time, all space, and all experience. Talk of the fierce light that beats upon a throne! and, compared with this, you talk of a rushlight shining on a bauble. First and foremost always was the light of love, and its twin-soul liberty, and mingled in one serene splendour with humanity, friendship, true patriotism, courage, independence; with lightning gleams of humour, pathos, irony, and scorn—all as those elements so mixed in him; or personified in that "tight, outlandish, hizzie braw," whose "half a leg was scrimply seen," and who confessed:—

Of these am I, Coila my name.
. . . . . .
"And wear thou this," she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head;
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought she fled
In light away.

COILA.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

IX.—NEARER THE CROSS.

WHERE palm-trees spread their fans, and balsam-trees produced sweet ointment, and water-springs bubbled down slopes, the city of Jericho stood; and many were its white villas; and the land on one side was the flat vale of Jordan, and, on the other, cliffs and hills rose up.

A crowd followed Jesus into Jericho. The Twelve were with him also. Some say that Judas, the worst man of the Twelve, was born in this city.

"Son of David, son of David! help me, son of David!"

This yell came from a blind man, seated at the wayside. He had heard the tread of a host of feet, and asked the reason, and had been told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He called to the Wonder-worker, as if calling to a king, the son of a king.

Presently, the wayside beggar was marching with the rest along the high street of Jericho; he had received his sight.

As Jesus walked by a shady tree, he saw a man sitting astride of a bough. It was the tax-gatherer, Zacchæus, who, being short, had not been able to see the Prophet over the heads of the crowd; so he had climbed the tree.

"Quick, Zacchæus!" said Jesus, "hurry down; I am coming to your villa."

Down the little man scrambled; and he ran to his house, and bade the servants spread a good table; and he felt as proud as an emperor as he sat with the Son of David and the Twelve Messengers. Of course the Lecturers and Pious Men murmured jealously.

Zacchæus stood, and said,—

"My lord, I do what I can in my humble way. I give half my income to the poor folk; and, if ever I find I have collected more than the just tax from any citizen, I give him back four times as much as I took."

"Salvation has come to this house," exclaimed Jesus to the people around, "this man is a true Jew; he is a son of Abraham. Some of you count him as a lost soul; but I came to seek the lost, and to save them."

A few hours later, the procession of country folk that had gathered in the train of Jesus was tramping along the narrow pass among the high rocks which led from Jericho to Jerusalem. 'Twas the road where the Good Samaritan assisted the man who had fallen among thieves.

At length, they saw the walls, the towers, the roofs of the Holy City, and the spires of the Temple of Yahweh glittered in the sun; and they began to swarm over the Mount of Olives, and some peeped over the fences of a pleasant garden, where olive groves grew dense. This was the Garden of Gethsemane.

Two of the Delegates ran in front, found a young ass tied to a post or wall, begged the owners to lend it for the Lord, David's son, and, before long, Jesus the Master of the jinn and Preacher of the Kingdom, was riding along the mountain pathway towards the gate of Jerusalem. The peasants pulled cloaks and tunics from their own shoulders, and flung the garments on the stony way, for the royal rider to pass over. A roar of cheering and praise echoed across the valley, and was heard in the city streets,—

"Glory, glory! Hail, hail! Blessed is the King that rides in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven! glory in God's high heaven!"

"Sir," cried a group of Pious Men, "tell your people not to call you by such divine titles."

"They *must* shout," replied Jesus. "If they did not, the very stones would shout. It is the moment for a shout."

He paused when he saw all the ramparts and turrets of Zion, the City Beautiful, so beloved of all Jews; and his friends saw tears trickling down his cheeks.

"The day will come," he sighed, "when men of war will batter these walls to earth, and not leave one stone upon another."

Then on the multitude swept, across the valley, up the slope, through the gate, along the street to the Temple. At that point, the Preacher of the Kingdom leaped from his ass, and rushed into the fore-court of the House of Yahweh. Men were busy at tables and stalls, selling and buying such articles as country visitors to Jerusalem might be attracted by. The place was like a market or a fair, and Jesus was greatly angered.

"Out, out, you thieves and profiteers," he commanded, as he struck right and left. "This is a House of Prayer, and you have made it a Den of Thieves!"

Much racket and hustling followed; tables rattled to the ground, and the marble floor was littered with this, that, and the other. When all was quiet again, the King from Galilee was telling parables to the listening crowd, and the Pharisees and Lawyers looked on, grim and scowling.

Day after day, this scene was repeated.

The scribes were furious when they heard the Preacher say to the people,—

"Beware of the learned Lecturers on the Law. Have a care, good folk! These pompous scholars strut in long robes, and love to be salaamed to in the market-place, and they sit themselves down in the grandest seats in the synagogue, and they shove themselves into the front seats at feasts. The miserable make-believes that they are! They squeeze the last farthing of rent out of poor widows; and then they come out in the

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street, and bawl long prayers to Yahweh for you, my friends, to listen to. I tell you that, in good sooth, their doom will be hard and stern."

But very different was his voice when he watched an ill-clad, pale woman go up to the collecting-box in the Temple porch, and quietly drop in two very small coins.

"Did you see that?" he asked his disciples. "Rich men threw in handfuls of gold and silver. That widow gave two copper mites for the service of God. I tell you, she really gave more than all the rich gave, for she gave her little all."

The Lecturers, Temple-Clergy, Long-Prayer-Makers, and Talkers about Yahweh hated the preaching of Jesus; and they held meetings to discuss what to do. This fellow, they agreed, was an agitator, a shaker-up of the common folk, an over-turner of good manners; he must be got rid of. The Roman Governor Pilate must take him in hand as a rebel. Yes, Governor Pilate; and no doubt King Herod, the slayer of John the Baptist, would be ready to crush this pretended King from Galilee! A man who talked of a Kingdom as this agitator did must be an enemy of Cæsar and the Romans. Once let the Romans think this ranter and shaker dangerous, they would soon hang him, or behead him—or hammer him to a cross!

As thus they talked, there came in a man with stealthy glance, and a curious pursing of lips. It was Judas Iscariot. Why he had turned against the Master nobody knows. He told in a low voice how the Prophet went out to the garden of olive trees at dusk with a few comrades, and how easily he could then be captured.

The bargain was soon struck. Thirty pieces of silver would be paid down as soon as Jesus was arrested.

One day Peter the Pilot and John the Fisherman followed a man who bore on his head a water-pot; they tracked him along a back street of the Holy City till he halted at a humble house. The Wonder-worker had told them they would see such a man, and he—being a friend of the Kingdom—would let them have a large upstairs room in which the board could be laid for the supper of the Spring-festival, or Passover. In the evening, Jesus and the Twelve Apostles reclined on seats at this table. The Jews would usually have roast lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened cake, sweet sauce, red wine. Peter and John seem only to have provided wine and bread.

"I very much wished to eat this Passover with you," said the simple King. "This is our last supper before the Kingdom comes."

They all sat silent,

"We thank thee, O Father, for the Holy Vine," murmured Jesus.

Then he filled a cup, and bade all the Twelve drink from it.

Again he spake thanks as he broke a cake of bread, and he gave morsels to his friends, saying,—

"This is my own body. Eat."

They ate without a word.

"Your hands," he said, "rest on the table. One of those hands will betray me."

They looked at one another anxiously. Who could the traitor be? Judas gazed blankly, as if he was the most innocent man on earth.

"Lord," cried Peter, "have no fear. I, for one, will go with you, if need be, to prison, or to death."

Jesus smiled sadly.

"My good Peter, before the sun rises and before the cock crows, you will three times swear that I am no friend of yours."

"Here are two swords, Master," exclaimed one of the Apostles. "We can defend you."

"Two will be enough," he said.

Oh, yes, two would be quite enough, when only one man among them would be ready to draw a sword for defence.

* * * *

Love feasts, or suppers, were held by societies of Romans and other people, who had joined together in friendly guilds or burial clubs (for paying funeral expenses of members), or religious companies. Old Roman pictures found in the underground passages (catacombs) of Rome show men seated at supper tables, on which lie fowls, fishes, and bread-cakes crossed like our Good Friday buns. And Roman soldiers often held meetings for eating bread and drinking water in honour of the God of Light and Life, Mithra.

An ancient book, called the "Teaching," speaks of pious folk meeting for a meal which was begun with a Eucharist, or Giving-of-thanks, thus: "We thank thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy servant."[1]

When the Gospel of *Luke* relates how Jesus said: "This bread is my body," it makes us think of many religious customs of olden times.

People thought of trees and corn plants as having a living soul inside them, and just as one man may be kind or unkind to another, so the tree-spirit or corn-spirit might be kind to give sap, or juice, or grain, or withhold the precious food and drink from hungry man and his children. So people tried to please the spirit or god by offering gifts in sacrifice; first, human sacrifices, and, afterwards, when people's feelings rebelled against this dreadful sort of offering, they would make imitation sacrifices, such as puppets of dough. Even till our modern times, country folk in Sweden would, in the days of harvest, bake a loaf in the shape of a little girl, to be eaten at the harvest supper. In Mexico, before the Spaniards arrived, the Aztec people would make bread images of their great god twice a year, and eat the bread in a very solemn supper. And such things have been done in many parts of the world. People would think that, in eating these sacrifices, they were doing what they wished the god to do, and so, in a way, they were made one with the god, and were even eating his food, and eating him. This is why learned men speak of Early Men, and of savages in our own day, as "Eating the God."[2] And, of course, the sap or juice of plants, such as the vine, would be thought of as the blood of the god. Thus, when the followers of Jesus set up a custom of the Eucharist, and ate the body and drank the vine-blood, they were doing, in a new manner, what was done in many religions in various regions of the earth.

F. J. GOULD.

[1] The *Didache*.

[2] A chapter is so entitled in Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* series. See vol. ii. of the *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*.

Correspondence.

ST. GEORGE OF ENGLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Someone has been good enough to send me a copy of your issue of December 9, in which a contributor, who hides his identity under the pen-name of "Mimnermus," offers some disparaging remarks concerning St. George and his identity. I need hardly say that his statements and surmises are not only stale and unprofitable, but lacking in originality. Now, one who would instruct others should surely take the trouble to gain all possible information concerning his subject. But your contributor, presumably a Freethinker, allows his judgment to be biased and fettered by the opinions of Gibbon and by those who, like himself, have adopted that great historian's fallacies concerning the patron Saint of England. A Freethinker should surely be a fair thinker, a searcher after truth, striving to enlighten,

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and not to obfuscate, the intelligence of those possibly as ignorant and careless as himself. Smartness may make good "copy," but abuse, while it may occasion merriment, is neither fair nor honest, and without educational value.

If, on some future occasion, you will allow me the hospitality of your columns, I shall be happy to tell, more especially your English readers, something about St. George, and why he is held in such veneration and associated with the rapidly growing observance of "England's Day."

HOWARD RUFF, *Hon. Sec.*,
Royal Society of St. George.

[Our columns are open to Mr. Ruff for a brief statement of the case for St. George.—ED.]

SOCIALISM AND MALTHUSIANISM.

SIR,—I trust you will find room for a protest against Dr. Drysdale's assertions, coupling, as he does, all Henry George's doctrines—true and false—together. I am a Socialist and a Malthusian, and while I admit that Socialism, apart from an immediate and practical application of the law of population, would be necessary when any socialistic system of society is attempted, or else I believe full use is certain, I do not admit that there are any failures in the doctrine of Socialism. Many Socialists are of my way of thinking, but deem it best to lie low at present about the matter. I don't. I think it very urgent. The bulk of Socialists, I regret to say, are violent opponents of Malthusian doctrines. They will have to learn by experience, as John Stuart Mill points out.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

SIR,—When Malthusians say that, if population increases without limit, there will not be food enough to go round, they state what is perfectly obvious. I will even go further and say that, especially under the existing capitalist system, the restriction of the family by every married couple of small means is, in their own interests, highly desirable. Where I disagree with Malthusians (or the majority of those who write on their behalf) is in their apparent use of this doctrine as an argument against Socialism.

If it is true (and I do not admit that it is) that the food at present producible on the earth, under peace conditions, is insufficient to maintain the present population of the earth in moderate comfort, then it follows that the earth is like a besieged city, and should, in the interests of humanity, be treated as such: the available food being rationed, even in time of peace, among the population. This can only be done on Socialist lines.

If, on the other hand, all Malthusians maintain is that the present rate of *increase* in population will, if continued, outrun in a certain time, the possible *increase* in the production of food, then two things are necessary: (1) the restriction of the increase in population, and (2) the increase of food production up to the limits of physical possibility. (1) I understand, the Malthusians propose to achieve by propaganda. Vain talk! The middle classes already practise family limitation: the excessive increase, of which complaint is made, occurs, as a fact of common observation, principally among the very poor. Now, what do Malthusians think they will gain by going and telling the very poor to limit their families? You have a class who, thanks to your economic arrangements, are perforce deprived of all the pleasures of life except two—the pleasure of convivial drinking, and the pleasure of connubial intercourse. Teetotalers want to take away one, and Malthusians (in effect) propose deprivation of the other. Naturally the very poor answer, as one of them answered a good lady of whom I know: "What, ain't we to enj'y ourselves?" It is no use telling very poor people that they may, if they like, enjoy themselves without resultant offspring: people who have to count every halfpenny they spend are not in a position to purchase what middle-class people, and even skilled artizans, can afford. Mere Malthusian propaganda, then, is clearly no use.

Only two things can meet this difficulty; a general levelling-up of poverty by Socialism, when the same forces that operate to limit the birthrate among the middle-classes will be free to operate among the (present) very poor; and the economic independence of women, which will enable women, without exception, to choose for themselves whether they will have children, and, if so, how many, since unlimited child-bearing will no longer be, for the majority of women, the sole means of livelihood.

The remaining desideratum, the maximum public increase of food production, equally presupposes a Socialist reconstruction of society. Under the existing system of production for profit, production is only undertaken if there is an "effective demand" for the commodity to be produced, *i.e.*, if there are people with money to pay for it. The allocation of labour is thus determined by the distribution of wealth; and there is no doubt whatever that much labour is now directed to the production of luxuries for the rich which, given a more nearly equal distribution, could and should be employed to produce food, clothing, and decent comfort for all.

The Malthusian theory, therefore, so far as it accords with facts, is not destructive of Socialism, but corroborative of it. Unfortunately, many Freethinkers seem to have inherited from Charles Bradlaugh, besides his great and excellent qualities, his one unhappy defect, which was his total failure to understand Socialism. Otherwise we should not find Dr. Drysdale seriously writing in the *Freethinker*, as if Socialism meant the destruction of capital in the sense of "dwellings, factories, tools, railways, ships," etc. And, by the way, Henry George was not, and did not profess to be, a Socialist.

ROBERT ARCH.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

SIR,—The following extract from the *Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, by J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, recently published by Longmans, Green & Co, throws a bright light on the teaching of Malthus and its baneful results: "We are concerned not with what Malthus taught the world, but with what the upper classes learnt from him. For them his teaching was simple and soothing enough. The doctrine that poverty was inevitable and incurable put a soft pillow under the conscience of the ruling class. But his teaching offered still greater consolations to the anxieties of the benevolent, for it seemed to show that poverty was the medicine of nature, and that the attempts of Governments to relieve it were like the interference of unintelligent spectators with the skilful treatment of the doctor. The relief of poverty meant the increase of poverty, for if the conditions of the poor were improved, population would quicken its pace still further.....

For some years the influence of Malthus was supreme and fatal. Shelley, in his preface to his *Prometheus Unbound*, says that he had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus. It was a strange heaven that Malthus, as he was interpreted by the rich, offered to the poor."

Your readers will do well to study this book and also *The Land and Revolution*, by R. L. Outhwaite, M.P., if they want to understand the actual facts as regards the unnecessary starvation of the people by the infamous Enclosure Acts, whereby they were deprived of access to the old common lands. And, in the *Times* of 3rd inst., Mr. H. M. Hyndman indicts the Duke of Montrose and his fellow-landlords for playing the game of the Huns in bringing scarcity, and probably famine, upon our people.

G. O. WARREN, Major.

Society News.

In spite of the counter attractions provided by King George, and the unreasonable behaviour of the weather on Sunday afternoon, the West Central Hall was well filled.

Mr. Harry Snell was in his happiest mood, and, at the close of an excellent address, received a perfect ovation of applause. Many questions were asked, and the audience generally expressed the hope that it would not be long before Mr. Snell lectured for us again. Friends are requested to note that these lectures start at 3.15, and that a general

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movement of chairs after the lecture has begun is disconcerting to the speaker.—E. M. VANCE, General Secretary.

North London Branch.—The debate of Sunday evening last was a huge success both in point of attendance and of quality. On Sunday, January 13, our genial friend, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, opens a discussion on Freewill. Opposers, please note! On Thursday, the 17th inst., a new departure will be made by a week-night debate in the large hall of the St. Pancras Reform Club, when Mr. Colette Jones, N. S. S., will meet Mr. Horace Leaf, of the Spiritualist Education Council. A large attendance of both Spiritualists and Freethinkers is expected, so come early. All seats are free, but we shall take up a collection for incidental expenses.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

Credulity.

PLEASE don't unveil the naked truth,
To which mine eyes are closed, forsooth!
I do not care to see
Obtrusive facts that would impinge
Upon my mind, and quite unhinge
My bland credulity!

Don't let me see where I have erred
In holding views that are absurd—
Withhold such truths from me.
Hard facts, 'tis said, "are stubborn things,"
And truth, unveil'd, disaster brings
Upon credulity!

The sweets of life are truly grand!
And *heaps* of lucre are at hand—
To which access is free
For those who trouble not in mind
Concerning truths that are unkind
To my credulity!

Now go thy way, O man of light!
Thy truths are vivid—much too bright.
As hostile aircraft flee
Into the darkness of the sky
Before the searchlights, so does my
Dismayed credulity!

My thoughts lay bare *this* view of you:
You cutely weigh the false and true
In scales of scrutiny;
And thus you probe and nose about
For findings which you mean to flout
At my credulity!

From thought-provoking fuss depart!
For Thought will sever head from heart,
And make them disagree;
Then Doubt, with all his weight and stress,
Will make, indeed, a sorry mess
Of my credulity!

J. F. CORDON.

The clergy used to assert constantly that England's greatness depended on Sunday observance. Now that the British armies are so busy on the Sabbath, as on other days, they observe a discreet silence.

The Pope has sent a protest to Vienna against the destruction of two churches at Padua by aeroplanes. Poor old Providence is too old to safeguard his own houses.

Oh, those journalists! A paragraph referring to the Archbishop of Paris's announcement of special prayers for the Allies was headed: "France's Day of Prayer."

The playfulness of Providence has not been affected by the World-War. Guatemala city has been destroyed partially by earthquake, and 125,000 persons rendered homeless, and thousands killed.

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.

LONDON SOCIETY, Morality and Nature (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, N.W.): 3.30, Mr. Dribbel, "Germany as Seen by a Neutral." Lecture in French.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, C. Ratcliffe, "Freewill" Open Debate. Thursday, January 17, "Does Man Survive Death?" Affirmative, Horace Leaf. Negative, Collette Jones.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, Chapman Cohen, "Some Curiosities of Christian Evidence."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Kells, Swasey, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): H. Snell, 3, "The Nation's Prayer Day: Sense or Nonsense"; 7, "Secular Education—The Priest and the Child."

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
War and the Churches.—The Editor	33
"Lord, Increase Our Faith."—J. T. Lloyd	34
A Pennyworth of Prophecy.—Mimnermus	35
Atheism and the French Revolution.—(The late) G. W. Foote	36
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	38
Acid Drops	39
That New Reader!	40
To Correspondents	41
Sugar Plums	41
Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.	42
Answers to the "Day of Prayer"	42
The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer	42
Freedom.—G. O. Warren	44
Letter to the Editor—What is Capital?	45
N. S. S. Executive Report	45
Obituary	45

Views and Opinions.

War and the Churches.

It requires but little study of the daily and weekly press to perceive that the Day of Intercession on January 6 was anything but a pronounced success. Save where a special advertising policy had been adopted, the Churches do not appear to have been much fuller than usual, and the non-church-going public—which is the larger portion—was quite unaffected, where it was not disgusted. Most of the papers described the Day of Prayer as having been "widely observed," when it was not width but thickness that was required. A pound of butter may be widely spread, but its width gives little satisfaction to those who eat it. And now that the Day of Prayer is over, things seem to be going on much as usual, except that the food question is growing more acute. The nation looks more like standing in queues than going on its knees. And if it opens its mouth, it is in the hope of filling it with food, rather than to return thanks to a God who has allowed *his* world to get into its present state, and who, while able to save stone crosses from shell fire, is powerless to prevent the destruction of food or the sinking of hospital ships.

* * *

The Impotence of Deity.

If anything, the Day of Prayer seemed only to emphasize the impotence and worthlessness of the Christian Churches. The function of a Church, if it is to have any useful function at all, should be that of keeping aloft the light of the ideal. In this War, more perhaps than in previous conflicts, there has been a greater readiness to ignore those elements of truth, justice, tolerance, and humanity, upon which the permanent welfare of the race depends. Step by step the process of demoralization has gone on, and those who have shrieked loudest about, but have not perhaps felt most keenly, the brutality of the German campaign, have been most anxious for us to imitate German methods, by way of out-deviling the Devil. In such circumstances, the Churches had a clear part to play, if they would only have played it. What part have they played? Let anyone glance over the reports of the services held during the "Command" performance of a Day of Prayer, and what will he see but, in the main, an appeal to force as the arbiter of national destiny? The prayers are for victory, chiefly by force of arms. No prayers were offered that God would change the heart of the Kaiser or open the eyes of the German people, and so once more give the people peace. Apparently that is given up as hopeless. Christ, who can change the heart of the converted burglar, is powerless against the Emperor William. God, who could move the American people to come into the War, cannot, apparently, move the German people to get out of it. He can only operate to nerve men to keep up the fighting. The Christian Deity is still a God of war, in England as in Germany; not so openly proclaimed here as there, but a God of war nevertheless.

* * *

A False Standard.

Quite significant of the mental characteristics encouraged by the Churches was the classification of the peoples of the world. "We pray thee for the small peoples as well as for the great," we will "maintain the freedom of a great people as well as of a small people" (this from the *Church Times*), and so on through endless variations. But who are the great peoples, and who are the small peoples? The only standard in Christian countries, and in the Churches on Prayer Sunday, is that of money and arms. By what other standard is England greater than Switzerland, or France greater than Denmark, or America greater than Holland? A nation is not necessarily *greater* because it is forty million strong instead of ten, or because it can raise a million soldiers instead of ten thousand, or because it can count its wealth in millions instead of in thousands. Size is not greatness. Multiply armies and navies, and wealth, and population as you will, and in the absence of other and more valuable things, you are only multiplying evil and misfortune. Germany's criminal folly was that it took world-power, huge armies, and a colossal commerce as the marks of a nation's greatness. It has yet to realize that the Germany which achieved these things was a *littler* Germany than the one that knew them not. But in defence of Germany, it might be said these were the ideals of Christendom. They are the ideals expressed in the prayers for the "great" and the "small" nations. It is an ideal that rests upon the belief in force. Christian nations, and the Christian Churches, have not yet reached the point of classifying nations as "great" or "small" in proportion as they are morally developed and mentally enlightened. The Churches do not yet see that the only way to kill one passion is by arousing another; the way to weaken one ideal is to develop another; and that German militarism can only be successfully killed by destroying the ideas and ideals by which it lives.

* * *

Russia to the Rescue.

It is for these reasons that the one event of profound significance in this War is the Rnssian revolution and its

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outcome. This may have been a set-back to the Allies' military operations; the duty of an army is to beat its opponent, and anything that stops this is properly enough regarded as a disaster. But with this aspect we are not concerned. In the Russian revolution, and, for the first time, a great idea has come definitely and commandingly to the front. It has already borne fruit. It has drawn from President Wilson the clearest and finest expression of war aims yet published, and one on behalf of which, so long as it is fairly interpreted, soldiers abroad and civilians at home, may fight without misgiving. For the first time in this War all the peoples engaged therein have a clear cut idea before them. Are we to continue to live in a world dominated by the glamour of "possessions," of alliances cemented not by mutual esteem and confidence but by distrust of others, or are we to work for a new world that shall take the form of a community of nations in which the presence of a standing army shall serve as a reproach, if not as an actual disgrace? Whatever be the outcome of Russia's present plight, she has set this ideal before the world. And nothing can undo that. It is the 1789 French Revolution over again. Monarchical and Christian Europe hurled itself against the French people. Every country—our own included—strove by wars and repressive laws to prevent the ideas of 1789 gaining entrance. But with only very partial success. The Revolution might be suppressed at home, and much of its advance lost, but the ideas lived on. They were all over Europe; they were persecuted, but they defied annihilation. The Freethinking revolutionary leaders of Russia are doing to-day for the world what, over a century ago, France did for Europe. These leaders may be false to their own ideals, the revolution may be crushed, but the work it has already done will remain and fructify.

* * *

The Blunder of the Churches.

It is in this direction that the Churches have shown their weakness and their worthlessness. If they taught ideas they were wrong ones. They have held up the idea of force as bravely as the crudest of politicians. Always ready to sell themselves for an advantage of the moment, they have never realized that in human affairs the ultimate and the decisive force is the force of an idea; that the real task before the world was not to get bullets into German bodies, but to get better ideas into German heads. Had they realized and preached this right through the War, an institution such as the Church, which can reach every town and village in the kingdom, would have had a claim on the respect of men, even though they could not believe in its theology. The Church has done its best to strengthen men for the War; it has done nothing to strengthen them in the direction of ending this War in such a way as shall make future wars impossible. And when the War is over, impartial students are not likely to forget this. They see now that the force upon which many counted as being able to curb the passions of men is in every country in the world at the service of the Government it serves. It preaches a German God in Germany, as it preaches a national deity in whatever country it exists.

* * *

The Power of Ideas.

Finally, the Church would not have "hindered" the War had they acted thus. They would only have clarified men's minds, nerved their spirit, and made the "war aim" clear to all. For there is nothing in the world for which men will fight so desperately, and so cheerfully, as for an idea. The very history of religion itself proves this. When Garibaldi called the youth of Italy around him, with the offer of nothing but a crust and hard blows, it was for an idea. When the ill-trained, ill-fed, ill-clothed armies of Republican France swept over Europe, it was as the propagandists of an idea. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, proved more powerful than pay, plunder, and patronage. When Bruno went calmly to the stake, it was for an idea. When free-thinking men and women braved Christian prisons and outrage, it was for the idea of free speech and a free press. The man who fights for an idea holds the future in pawn. But the Churches have no hope in the future. They know this holds nothing in store for them but condemnation. They are condemned by their past. They are condemned by their present. Nothing is left for the future but to pass sentence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Lord, Increase Our Faith."

SUCH is the prayer for the New Year which the *British Weekly* for January 3 urges its readers to adopt as a motto for these troublous times. Jesus was enjoining his disciples to the practice of forgiveness. Dora Greenwell says that "We might have expected, when a moral duty difficult to the natural man was in question, the words would have been 'Lord, increase our charity.'" But what the disciples seem to have realized is the alleged fact that forgiveness is too difficult for the natural man to exemplify in his own strength, and being fully aware of this they naturally prayed "for an increase of the faculty through which alone the Divine aid can be made available by the soul." Hence, in its first issue for the year, the *British Weekly* devotes its leading article to a stirring commendation of faith as the Alpha and Omega of religion. Nothing can be truer than the statement that without faith supernatural religion is a natural impossibility. He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he hears and can answer those who call upon him. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, for the article under consideration is presumably from his editorial pen, is perfectly justified in assigning to faith the supreme place in religion, and in regarding it as a distinct gift from above. The natural man does not possess it, nor does he feel the need of it. Faith is a faculty of a new, spiritual man, created by Jesus Christ. Sir William thinks there "may be lives so smooth and easy that faith is apparently little needed, the outward tokens of prosperity and peace amply sustaining the soul." The truth, however, is that the natural man, whether in prosperity or in adversity, has no sense whatever of the supernatural. He is a citizen of this world only, and it is this world that supplies all his wants. The difference between the natural and the spiritual man is that the former is pre-eminently a knower and walks by sight, while the latter is pre-eminently a believer and walks by faith. Faith should never be confused with knowledge. Sir William affirms that "by faith we know God;" but, as a matter of fact, God is never known at all. Were he an object of knowledge faith would be superfluous. Even believers are never absolutely sure of him.

Sir William tells us that "we must have faith first of all in God's moral government of the world." The distinguished editor is fully aware that this is exceptionally difficult, for "often it seems as if God had abandoned his own creation." The prosperity of the wicked, he admits, tries everybody's faith, as it did that of the Psalmist long ago. Then he says:—

> Faith may be sorely tried by the apparently impregnable lines of the enemy. They have thrown up fortifications which to all eyes but the eyes of faith appear to be impassable. Again and again the faithful are com-

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> pelled to spend their lives under the tyranny which appears to be in perpetual possession, and they die in the day of its strength.

That is a very old complaint, and often it is nothing but a pious excuse for radical inefficiency. Generally, prosperity is the reward of well-organized industry, but "the faithful" derive much consolation from the belief that their non-success in life is due to their superior honesty and godliness. There are people who seem born to be trampled upon. They are unfortunate in all their ways. As Sir William puts it:—

> Nothing prospers in their hands. A blight seems to have come upon them. They lose the brightest and the dearest by untimely deaths. They fail in business. Cloud follows cloud, and storm follows storm, and when the end comes it is welcomed as a deliverance from a burden too heavy to be borne.....There is before us the prospect of many sad to-morrows, each bringing its own weight of anxiety and anguish. Need we wonder that in these circumstances faith is often very difficult? It may diminish. Questions are put to which no direct answer can be returned. There may come instead of faith a morously sullen or defiantly rebellious mood.

The troubles described in that extract are peculiar to those who have more or less religion. They believe in God, but doubt that his providence extends to them. It is not the existence but the goodness of God that they are inclined to question. A morously sullen or defiantly rebellious mood is possible only to lukewarm believers. If they only used their reason and consulted history, they would understand that the circumstance of their life and the trials that overtake them are easily explained without any reference to supernatural agencies of any kind.

The writer of the article informs us that "faith is called to superior contests in this our day," and that "by faith we may overcome the world even when we seem to be defeated." Here we have the testimony of neffectual and unconvincing pietism. Take this sample of the reasoning:—

> Times have been dark and bloody before this and faith has won through. If we are to give over believing we sin against the whole Israel of God. We offend the generation of God's children. We abandon that precious tradition of faith which is the sacred treasure of the world. We desert the forlorn hope of the righteous. We renounce fellowship with the martyrs and saints who have fought for the good cause from generation to generation. Many of them died fighting, and all the hope of the world is with them.

That passage is a sentimental appeal to the emotionally religious class, and the unethical or anti-ethical nature of its argument is patent to all. Should we continue to believe against evidence and against the direct testimony of common sense merely in order to avoid hurting the feelings of those who do so believe? Is not Sir William aware that the tradition of faith is precious only in the estimation of believers, while to honest unbelievers it is by no means a sacred treasure? There are thousands of men and women in London alone whose conscience backs their intelligence in the rejection of what Sir William terms "the good cause," and are they to disregard the testimony of the highest and best within them for the sake of remaining in "the fellowship of saints"? Or, are we not to give over believing in order not to "desert the forlorn hope of the righteous"? Surely to employ words which imply that the righteous pursue a "forlorn hope" is to give the Christian case wholly away. Some four years ago we read a series of *British Weekly* articles, contributed by the editor, on "The Difference Christ Has Made," in which the triumph of the Cross was depicted in extravagant terms, and a positive assurance was given that whilst we might still have wars, they would be conducted in a much humaner and milder manner than any wars of the past; but since then we have had three years and a half of the bloodiest and most brutal war on record, and now it is admitted that the Christian hope is a "forlorn" one. What is a forlorn hope? "A desperate case or enterprise"; "any enterprise having little prospect of success." The Christ who, four years ago, was declared to have conquered and won Europe, and to have established his kingdom of righteousness and love upon earth, is now seen to be face to face with an exceptionally perilous or desperate situation, with scarcely any chance whatever of a victorious issue. Sir William's tone to-day is radically different from what it was four or five years ago. He says:—

> Our faith sometimes seems to be very weak, sometimes it seems to have vanished altogether. Sometimes we are tempted to close our Bibles and say we will never open them again.

That is a temptation against which Christians struggle with all their might, but which even the saintliest among them never entirely overcome. It returns again and again to the end of life, and the question naturally arises, Why is it so difficult to believe, and what accounts for the never-ceasing tendency of faith to decline? The Christian answer is that the cause of unbelief is the sinfulness of human nature, the natural depravity which has been the lot of humanity ever since the Fall in Eden. The temptation to disbelieve comes from the Devil, who has easy access to our souls; and somehow or other there is that in us which falls in with his evil suggestions. This explanation satisfies the theologians; and their message to those whose faith is weak, and getting weaker, is "Pray for grace to resist the Devil and compel him to take his flight." That is Sir William's way of escape. Faith is increased by prayer. "In answer to prayer we are visited by the breathing of the spirit of Christ." But the Christian solution of the riddle is not a true one. The truth is that belief in the supernatural is difficult because it is unnatural, because the spiritual man so enthusiastically introduced and eulogized by St. Paul is a sham, existing only in imagination; and faith, being a faculty of the spiritual man, is likewise foreign to our nature, and can never form a part of our life as children of the earth. St. Paul's natural man is really the whole man, and his whole duty consists in being a useful, sympathetic, and helpful member of the race to which he belongs.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Pennyworth of Prophecy.

Hotspur.— At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and at my birth,
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward.

Glendower.— Why, so it would have done
At the same season, if your mother's cat had
But kittened, though yourself had ne'er been born.

—*Shakespeare*, "*Henry IV.*"

THOMAS MOORE, the poet, was nearly choked with indignation by being asked by a lady at dinner how he got his forecasts for his famous almanac. Yet the fact remains that "Old Moore," the prophet, counts more readers to-day than the author of *Lalla Rookh*, a poem much admired on publication, and for which the author received ten thousand pounds.

Prophecy, it used to be said, found a man mad, or left him so; but an exception must be made in the case of "Old Moore," the most genial and kindly of prophets, whose almanac is known to everybody. Not long ago, there rose up, in an idle week, the old newspaper dispute

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over the names of the twenty greatest men now alive and famous. Reputations tossed and rose and fell. There were odd folk who were not quite sure of Mr. Lloyd George. Over the merits of the Bishop of London and Billy Sunday there were unkind comparisons; but none of the correspondents ever questioned the right of "Old Moore" to be considered a great man.

His is a fame that flourishes wherever the English language is spoken. He has shown to hundreds of thousands the annual vision of the future, and he has carefully observed the secret of anonymity. As for the public, the prophet serves us well. His manly utterances set us right at the moment when a new bacillus swims into our ken; when we are anxious over a coming eclipse; or the press-gang screams over the inadequacy of the defences of the country.

"Old Moore" should know something of the stars, for he has been in active communion with them for over two hundred years. At least one of the editions of his almanac claims to be in its 221st year, whilst another is said to have a circulation of over a million copies annually. It is true that the name of "Francis Moore, Physician," is not in the Medical Directories, but, probably, on account of his patriarchal age, he is on the retired list. He must have seen many ups and downs during his interesting career, having started in business as a prophet prior to the reign of good Queen Anne.

"Old Moore's" Almanac for the present year suggests that the "voices of the stars" are very clamorous, although, like the clerical prophets of Armageddon, the seer's anticipations are delightfully vague on matters of real consequence. The prophet's principal hieroglyphic for 1918 is a fearsome and a wonderful sight. To the uninitiated onlooker the chief features seem absolutely weird. In the top corner Uncle Sam, who represents America, is seen putting his head in a lion's mouth, but, fortunately, the animal seems unusually well-fed and good-tempered. Close at hand is an American flag, very much the worse for wear. On the right is a boy in a bathing costume, carrying a crucifix up a hill-side on which a bonfire is burning. Underneath, a lady, attired like one of the witches in *Macbeth*, is attempting to lassoo a good-sized tiger; whilst in the centre a cock is crowing over some skulls, and three Scotch soldiers are giving an open-air concert. The foreground shows a number of workmen engaged in pulling down a jerry-built church. The accompanying letterpress conveys the distressful information that "during the year religious matters will endure a good deal of rough usage," but, lest any reader should get cold feet in consequence, the prophet adds, "there will be a great revival in spiritual concerns." The military concert is interpreted by the prophet as a sign of peace, and "Old Moore" concludes his remarks on his chief cartoon with the inspiring and patriotic words, "God Save the King."

The dozen smaller hieroglyphics, thoughtfully provided for the twelve months of the year, supply considerable food for reflection, and amplify the larger drawing. From the attached letterpress we learn that "during many months of the year" the question of drink "will call for special attention," and that a duke will shuffle off this mortal coil in February. More saddening still, the unexpected death of a well-beloved clergyman will throw a gloom over the merry month of May. A celebrated actress will be beckoned from the stage of life in July. Of more interest to general readers is the autumn forecast that the question of excessive smoking among soldiers will be investigated. In December there will be "a bad railway smash," but, lest this calamity should induce pessimism, we hasten to point out that "trade will be good and cash plentiful," and "grand weather may be looked for."

That is how a twentieth century "prophet" looks out on the unknown year that stretches before us. It cannot be said to be an inspiring message in the unprecedented days in which we live, when the world has plunged back into "chaos and Old Night," and murder is the principal industry, and the preaching of hatred between men is the tender gospel of the Christian Churches. But "Old Moore's" pathetic commonplaces are no worse than the imbecilities of the spiritual leaders of the Christian world, which have varied from the boisterous braggadocio of the German pastors to the timid silence of our own Archbishops, the baby-talk of the Bishop of London, and the determination of the Pope to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. It will never be forgotten that the clergy have stood aside from the world struggle, and have been exempted from military service. The Churches have been organized on a national basis in every country, and they have acted the same as other official bodies. Hence the edifying spectacle in all Christian countries of the paraphernalia of religion being subverted to political ends, and the clergy of the hostile countries appealing to "God" for support for the machinations of the politicians, and subordinating the Christian religion to the secular necessities of the State. It can have but one result, and that is to reduce to the lowest ebb the prestige and influence of the Churches, which only continue to flourish in those half-educated stratas of the community which welcome "Old Moore" among the prophets.

There are so many people out walking in the streets who are celebrated, or notorieties, that it is a pleasure to find a prophet whose features are veiled, and whose private life is unreported in the daily papers. In these days, in this Bagdad of ours, no Haroun al Raschid can venture abroad undistinguished and escape the snapshotters of the illustrated journals. But "Old Moore's" fame is still safe without his portrait being reproduced alongside those of the Bishop of London and the star artists of the music-halls. Let the gloomy deans, and the still more gloomy laymen, give us as careful and as comforting anticipations, and there will be an end of the slump in prophecy.

MIMNERMUS.

Atheism and the French Revolution.

IN itself the capture of that prison-fortress, the Bastille, by the people was not a wonderful achievement; it was ill-defended, and its governor might, had he chosen, have exploded the powder magazine and blown it sky-high. But the event was the parting of the ways. It showed that the multitude had got the bit between its teeth, and needed a more potent master than the poor king at Versailles. And the event itself was a striking one. Men are led by imagination, and the Bastille was the symbol of centuries of oppression. Within its gloomy dungeons hundreds of innocent men had perished in solitary misery, without indictment or trial, consigned to death-in-life by the arbitrary order of irresponsible power. Men of the most eminent intellect and character had suffered within its precincts for the crime of teaching new truth or exposing old superstitions. Voltaire himself had twice tasted imprisonment there. What wonder, then, that the people fixed their gaze upon it on that ominous fourteenth of July, and attacked it as the very citadel of tyranny? The Bastille fell, and the sound re-echoed through Europe. It was the signal of a new era and a new hope. The Revolution had begun—that mighty movement which, in its meaning and consequences, dwarfs every other cataclysm in history.

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But revolutions do not happen miraculously. Their advent is prepared. They are as much *caused* as the fall of a ripe apple from the tree, or the regular bursting of the buds in spring. The authors of the Revolution were in their graves. Its leaders, or its instruments, appeared upon the scene in '89. After life's fitful fever Voltaire was sleeping well. Rousseau's tortured heart was at rest. Diderot's colossal labours were ended; his epitaph was written, and the great Encyclopædia remained as his living monument. D'Holbach had just joined his friends in their eternal repose. A host of smaller men, also, but admirable soldiers of progress in their degree, had passed away. The gallant host had done its work. The ground was ploughed, the seed was sown, and the harvest was sure. Famished as they were, and well-nigh desperate at times, the men of the Revolution nursed the crop as a sacred legacy, shedding their blood like water to fructify the soil in which it grew.

Superficial readers are ignorant of the mental ferment which went on in France before the Revolution. Voltaire's policy of sapping the dogmas by which all tyranny was supported had been carried out unflinchingly. Not only had Christianity been attacked in every conceivable way, with science, scholarship, argument, and wit; but the very foundations of all religion—the belief in soul and God—had not been spared. The Heresiarch of of Ferney lived to see the war with superstition carried farther than he contemplated or desired; but it was impossible for him to say to the tide of Freethought "thus far shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The tide poured on over everything sacred. Altars, thrones, and coronets met with a common fate. True, they were afterwards fished out of the deluge; but their glory was for ever quenched, their power for ever gone.

Among the great Atheists who prepared the Revolution we single out two—Diderot and D'Holbach. The sagacious mind of Comte perceived that Diderot was the greatest *thinker* of the band. The fecundity of his mind was extraordinary, and even more so his scientific prescience. Anyone who looks through the twenty volumes of his collected works will be astonished at the way in which, by intuitive insight, he anticipated so many of the best ideas of Evolution. His labours on the Encyclopædia would have tired out the energies of twenty smaller men, but he persevered to the end, despite printers, priests, and governments, and a countless host of other obstructions. Out of date as the work is now, it was the artillery of the movement of progress then. As Mr. Morley says, it "rallied all that was best in France round the standard of light and social hope."

Less original, but nearly as bold and industrious, D'Holbach placed his fortune and abilities at the service of Freethought. Mr. Morley calls the *System of Nature* "a thunderous engine of revolt." It was atheistic in religion and revolutionary in politics. It challenged every enemy of freedom in the name of reason and humanity. Here and there its somewhat diffuse rhetoric was lit up with the splendidly concise eloquence of Diderot, who touched the work with a master-hand. Nor did this powerful book represent a tithe of D'Holbach's labours for the "good old cause." His active pen produced a score of other works, under various names and disguises, all addressed to the same object—the destruction of superstition and the emancipation of the human mind. They were extensively circulated, and must have created a powerful impression on the reading public.

Leaving its authors and precursors, and coming to the Revolution itself, we find that its most distinguished figures were Atheists. Mirabeau, the first Titan of the struggle, was a godless statesman. In him the multitude found a master, who ruled it by his genius and eloquence, and his embodiment of its aspirations. The crowned king of France was pottering in his palace, but the real king reigned in the National Assembly.

The Girondists were nearly all Atheists, from Condorcet and Madame Rowland down to the obscurest victim of the Terror, who went gaily to their doom with the hymn of freedom upon their proud lips. Danton also, the second Titan of the Revolution, was an Atheist. He fell in trying to stop the bloodshed, which Robespierre, the Deist, continued until it drowned him. With Danton there went to the guillotine another Atheist, bright, witty Camille Desmoulins, whose exquisite pen had served the cause well, and whose warm poet's blood was destined to gush out under the fatal knife. Other names crowd upon us, too numerous to recite. To give them all would be to write a catalogue of the revolutionary leaders.

Atheism was the very spirit of the Revolution. This has been admitted by Christian writers, who have sought revenge by libelling the movement. Their slanders are manifold, but we select two which are found most impressive at orthodox meetings.

It is stated that the Revolutionists organized a worship of the Goddess of Reason, that they went in procession to Notre Dame, where a naked woman acted the part of the goddess, while Chenier's *Ode* was chanted by the Convention. Now, there is a good deal of smoke in this story and very little flame. The naked female is a pious invention, and that being gone, the calumny is robbed of its sting. Demoiselle Candeille, an actress, was selected for her beauty; but she was not a "harlot," and she was not undressed. Whoever turns to such an accessible account as Carlyle's will see that the apologists of Christianity have utterly misrepresented the scene.

Secondly, it is asserted that the Revolution was a tornado of murder; cruelty was let loose, and the Atheists waded in blood. Never was greater nonsense paraded with a serious face. During the Terror itself the total number of victims, as proved by the official records, was less than three thousand; not a tenth part of the number who fell in the single massacre of St. Bartholomew!

But who caused the Terror? The Christian monarchies that declared war on Freethinkers and regicides. Theirs was the guilt, and they are responsible for the bloodshed. France trembled for a moment. She aimed at the traitors within her borders, and struck down many a gallant friend in error. But she recovered from the panic. Then her sons, half-starved, ragged, shoeless, ill-armed, marched to the frontier, hurled back her enemies, and swept the trained armies of Europe into flight. They *would* be free, and who should say them nay? They were not to be terrified or deluded by "the blood on the hands of the king or the lie at the lips of the priest." And if the struggle developed until the French armies, exchanging defence for conquest, thundered over Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the orange-groves of Spain to the frozen snows of Russia—the whole blame rests with the pious scoundrels who would not let France establish a Republic in peace.

(The late) G. W. FOOTE.

NO FAVOUR SHOWN.

On Hogmanay a queue was formed outside the premises of a licensed grocer, in Glasgow, waiting to get in their supplies for Ne'er Day. A minister who happened to be passing, with the usual curiosity of his kind, went forward to one of the queue to inquire the cause for such a crowd, when one of the women of the queue shouted out: "Hey, you there, gae awa' back to the end o' the queue. Minister or no minister, ye'll hae tae tak'yer turn wi' the rest."

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Writers and Readers.

"THINKING," says one of the talkers in Wilde's witty dialogue, "The Decay of Lying,"—

> thinking is the most unhealthy exercise in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease. Fortunately, in England at any rate, thought is not catching. Our splendid physique as a people is entirely due to our national stupidity. I only hope we shall be able to keep this great historic bulwark of our happiness for many years to come; but I am afraid that we are beginning to be over-educated; at least everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching.

I am reminded of this amusing paradox, which is really more than half a truth, by a book which I have just finished reading. It is called *Poets of the Democracy* (Headley Bros.), and the writer, Mr. G. Currie Martin, seems to be one of the earnest and well-meaning teachers that Oscar Wilde had in mind. He has a commendable enthusiasm for poetry—in itself something to be thankful for nowadays—and for those ideals and aspirations which are not unfrequently misnamed democratic. If he had been wise enough to put off his desire to teach until he had served his apprenticeship to learning, the result, I imagine, would have been more weighty. Yet it would be unfair to be too hard on a writer who is invariably modest, if not always wise. The chapters first saw the light in the pages of a popular journal, and seem to have been enjoyed by the men in the trenches—a sign, at least, of a mild interest in ideas. But I am afraid that Mr. Martin has not thought it necessary to think out his subject. Democracy, he holds, is a "spirit and an atmosphere"; its essence, "trust in the moral instincts of the people." Such definitions are a hindrance rather than a help to clear thinking. Democracy, like Socialism, and some other words in popular use, has anything but a precise meaning. We find it applied at one time to a state of society, at another to a form of government; or, it may be, to a combination of both. The United States, Mexico, and the South American Republics have democratic government; and yet, socially, they are less democratic, in many ways, than is England with a limited monarchy. In fact, the world has never had *the* democracy—that is, a pure democracy. A better title for the little book would have been *Poets and some Democratic Ideals*. Equality, freedom, the brotherhood of man, and all that are implied in these ideals, are not really peculiar to popular government. They depend upon thought, and perhaps more upon sympathetic imagination. For Mr. Martin, however, it is these ideals that constitute *the* democracy, and he accordingly hails as a democrat any poet who gives expression to them.

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What, then, one may ask, are the signs of democratic poetry? Mr. Martin imagines that he is helping us when he quotes with approval Dowden's *dictum* that aristocratic art is "selective and exclusive"; implying, I suppose, that democratic art is not so. I can hardly imagine Dowden as standing to so absurdly wrong-headed a conclusion. Even the dull chronicles of our realistic fictionists or the poetry of Whitman's English disciples is not haphazard. The democratic writer must choose his subject, and must exclude vigorously everything that does not help him to express his ideas. Certainly, he may widen the scope of his art; but he cannot change its nature. Whitman called his poems *Leaves of Grass*, in order to suggest, I suppose, that democratic poems are, or ought to be, as much alike as two peas, or two blades of grass. I am ready to admit that with some writers I could mention the democratic process of levelling down is pretty successful; but I am glad to say that Whitman's practice was better than his theory. No poet has ever been more intensely individual. He sang the "powerful uneducated man," we are told. Precisely. Not the average uneducated man, mind you! but the exception; the uneducated man with a powerful brain, and strong emotions and will. It is the "superman" of our aristocratic friends in another form; the hero of Shakespearean tragedy translated in terms of democratic sociology. The art of Whitman is as selective and as exclusive as that of Shakespeare. It has more in common with the imaginative sympathy and broad philosophic serenity of *The Tempest* than with the sentimentalism and factitious simplicity of *Towards Democracy*. In fine, all art is in essence the same; it is the representation of the universal by the particular, and this process is always one of selection and exclusion.

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Democracy, as we understand it, found little expression in early English verse. The *Canterbury Tales* reveal a tolerant sympathetic humanism; but Chaucer's standpoint was distinctly an aristocratic one. He did not take the plebeian as seriously as he did the man of high birth. The only poet of the fourteenth century who felt deeply the intolerable burden of poverty was the satirist, William Langland. The voiceless and long-suffering labourer in the fields of England found in him another Ebenezer Elliott. But the traditional ideals of English poets remained unaltered. For Shakespeare, and for the play-writers generally, the populace was an unwashed turbulent rabble, fit material only for comedy or broad farce. The only bright exception I know is Thomas Decker, who shows a sympathy with fallen and struggling humanity equalled only by that of modern Russian novelists, his song in praise of honest toil being one of the jewels to the crown of our lyric verse. In Gray, Goldsmith, and Cowper, the democratic ideals are present in varying degrees, but are not, I think, sufficiently pronounced to make a body of democratic thought. They are seen better in some lyrics of Burns, and in the whole work of Crabbe. We have the more philosophic side of democratic thought in Shelley, whom Mr. Martin thinks too difficult a poet for his readers. He shows his consistency by asking them to study Meredith, who is fifty times more difficult.

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It is a misnomer, I think, to call Meredith a democrat. He had many opportunities in his novels of proving what he was made of, and, strange to say, he took pains to avoid them. His rustics are amusing puppets—never serious human beings. It may be said that Rhoda Fleming and her sister are a farmer's daughters. It is true; but, for all that, they are not less aristocratic than are any of the fine ladies of the novels. Meredith's commoners are either not commoners at all, or are treated with the traditional aristocratic mixture of condescension and good-humoured contempt. Meredith is said to have been a Radical; yet no Tory could have ridiculed Radicalism more effectively than the creator of old Dr. Shrapnel in *Beauchamp's Career*. Then consider what an opportunity he missed in *Evan Harrington!* It will be remembered that the problem to be solved is this: How is a son, whose father, a tailor to the aristocracy, has died, leaving behind him some thousands of pounds of debts, to pay off the creditors? The mother, who is the only democrat in the piece, says he must carry on the business; but the son who has been brought up to luxury and has fallen in love with a country gentleman's daughter is not in love with trade. Meredith solves the problem in the old snobbish way by making him marry an heiress. There is a similar democratic problem in *Richard Feverel*, the solution of which is just as carefully avoided. What would have happened if Lucy had not been the daughter of a naval officer? Meredith,

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I am inclined to think, for all his pumped-up interest in *Juggling Jerries* and *Old Chartists*, had no inkling of what democracy means for most of us.

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The lover of English poets—more especially the beginner—will find in Mr. Martin's little book a stimulus to an intelligent study of it in connection with democratic ideals, but he will do well to be on his guard against the sentimentalism of the writer, and must take some of the statements with a grain of salt. For instance, he says of Meredith that "he believed that the real strength of life consists in spiritual communion and fellowship, in truest brotherhood, in education, *and in prayer*." The prayerful mood was certainly not cultivated by Meredith, who, if he was not a democrat—and if I do not blame him for his aristocratic bent—was a convinced Freethinker. Apart from such stupidities of criticism, some banalities of phrase, and a syntax that is anything but aristocratic, Mr. Martin's book is worth reading if only for the attention it draws to the fine work of Mr. W. W. Gibson, who is far and away the biggest democratic figure we have in modern verse. I hope to return to him at another time.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Acid Drops.

The House of Lords passed the Woman's Franchise Clause in the Representation of the People Bill by a majority of sixty-three. More remarkable still the bishops voted for it. And the Archbishop of Canterbury gave the reasons for their doing so. He said it was a "plunge in the dark," but there was a "great change of public opinion," and they had to consider the consequence of placing themselves in opposition to public opinion. That might mean, in a few weeks, "a humiliating surrender." So they voted for what it was not safe to oppose. There is one thing about a modern bishop, if he has no ideas to get saved by, he has none worth being damned for, and he will always give way if the pressure be strong enough.

What we should now like, is to see the bishops attempt would be to justify the historic teaching and practice of the Christian Churches in relation to women. No other institution has so uniformly and so universally denied to women legal equality as the Christian Church has done, and no institution was so powerful in moulding public sentiment in this direction. How Freethinkers, who inaugurated and carried on the fight for the equality of the sexes in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, would smile if they were here at the vote of the bishops. They would agree it was due to the pressure of public opinion, and an opinion they were instrumental in forming. An idea may make headway slowly, but provided it be a sound idea, it is as near being indestructible as anything we know. The next step of the bishops will be to prove that the legal equality of the sexes is in the Bible.

The Bishop of Peterborough, in his New Year diocesan letter, says that labour should put all the cards on the table. Presumably in order that the ecclesiastics should trump them.

Romanoff Omar, a Brahman, charged at Marylebone with concealing a deserter, was described as a crank who claimed divine powers. In a letter he had written he claimed to have healed wild tigers, and to have cured persons of diseases. Evidently his assumption of divine powers was worth very little, for his career has been stopped by the police.

How is it that the dear Bishop of London always talks like a negro preacher? Speaking at the London Opera House on Intercession Day, the Bishop said: "We need courage like that of the servant girl in East London to whom I said during the last raid: "I hope you are not afraid," and who replied: "I am, Bishop, but I keep it under. They do say there is no God, but I say there must be some one above the Devil." Is it a matter of surprise that such theology no longer appeals to educated persons?

Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity. The Intercession Day has been followed by a "Week of Prayer," with many of the same performers in the bill.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, is in the habit of saying foolish things, but the other Sunday he surpassed himself in the pursuit of that art. He said: "The God of Germany is a false God. The God of England is the true God." Amazingly prodigious is the self-conceit of some people. We believe that all Gods are equally false; but, certainly, a believer in God has no right to differentiate between the God of Germany and the God of England, for they are both identical. It is high time the reverend gentleman learned that when he utters a word about any God he wickedly exceeds the limits of his knowledge.

Is not Mr. Phillips aware that every time he talks in that extravagant, irresponsible style, he is playing the fool, and involving himself in a sea of inconsistencies and contradictions. In the first place, England is at present without God, for we read that "when God comes many things will have to go." God is in Germany now, only he is "largely Pagan and altogether German." The chief function of the German Deity is "to secure victory for the Central Powers." What will be the function of the English variety when he comes? Will it be to give the English an inglorious defeat, in spite of all their praying that their enemy may receive his knock-out blow?

Mr. Phillips, evidently, is blind to the fact that if Germany possesses a separate God, he seems to have had things pretty much his own way up to the present. He wanted war and got it, while the God of England wanted peace and failed to get it.

Mr. John MacLeod, M.P., says he is not troubling about the soldiers when they come back. He is only concerned about the people at home. Mr. MacLeod is afraid of what the soldiers will think when they find us neglecting the things that the Christian religion stands for. This pious M.P. may possess his soul in courage. Judging from the men who are home on leave, they bear up with remarkable fortitude. They are even considerate enough not to attend church during their fourteen days in "Blighty." But probably that is because they don't want to appear to reproach the wicked ones they are visiting.

What Secularists those Christians are! A Sunday periodical prints a motto in each issue, and a recent one ran: "This old earth, that is what we have business with, how to shape her into something more worthy of our best." This is saner writing than beautiful nonsense about the Star of Bethlehem.

Since it has been patronized by Royalty, the Salvation Army has become very respectable. Further evidence of its respectability is shown in the display of Booth's posters outside the Law Courts, in the Strand, and outside St. Paul's Cathedral, the latter announcement being pasted on the statue of Queen Anne, near the west door of the cathedral. Innocent country folk will begin to think that the Government religion is the "Blood and fire" brand.

A new drama bears the captivating title *Out of Hell*. It ought to interest a number of pious folk.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley has a pawky wit of his own. In an article in a Sunday paper, published on Intercession Day, he said: "To-day the nation is supposed to be at prayer." A palpable hit!

Mr. H. B. Irving has been advocating the opening of theatres on Sundays, and pious people are angry. Yet who

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can say that it is more wicked to sit attentively through a play of Shakespeare's than to sleep through a sermon.

The piety turned on to order by the press on the Day of Intercession was not all of that childlike variety beloved by the clergy. Some of the newspaper comments were critical, as, for example, the remarks by the *Weekly Dispatch* (London) on the closing of the cinemas: "So the people of London who never go to church will now spend their day of intercession walking about the streets. There were never enough churches to hold them, even if they ever went."

First the men, then the women. First the boys, then the girls. Many pious headmasters of secondary schools have been lamenting of late that the boys have small sense of religion. Now the head mistresses are following suit. Their Association has been discussing the amount of "vague scepticism" among their pupils. This exists among girls who come from Christian homes. With the others, we assume, the scepticism is not "vague."

The conclusion reached by the Association was that religious teaching should be given in an earnest way by teachers who believed it. That looks like picking out the dullest members of the teaching staff, and advertising their dullness by giving them this special work. Further, there should be no desire to evade or exclude the results of scientific research, but they should be used "to fortify religious truth." But that is an impossible conclusion. If a teacher sticks to scientific teaching, "bang" goes religion. If it uses scientific teaching to "fortify" religion, it must distort, or evade, or misrepresent science. Why don't the teachers make up their minds to leave religion alone? Perhaps one cause is the number of parsons who can influence their appointment or determine their promotion. The first requisite for a good teacher is independence. And they will never get that while the parson is permitted to influence their career.

The *Daily News* is quite surpassing itself in its daring references to religion. In its issue for January 10 it cites the following from Mr. Siegfried Sassoon:—

The Bishop tells us "When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honoured race.
They challenged Death, and dared him face to face.

"We're none of us the same!" the boys reply,
"For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find
A chap who's served that hasn't found some change.
And the Bishop said: "The ways of God are strange."

Mr. Sassoon is a commissioned officer and writes, so to speak, from the inside. But to find the *Daily News* satirizing on God's ways is something of an advance.

It is very hard for a clergyman to surrender anything really stupid. Here is the Vicar of Selby, Yorks, resurrecting the Angels of Mons. He says it was quite clearly the "intervention of God" that turned back the German Army. It is a pity God wasn't equally attentive on Italy and Russia, or Cambrai, when the Germans counter-attacked. But what a back number the Vicar of Selby must be.

The *Church Times* got furiously angry over the appointment of Dr. Henson as Bishop of Hereford in succession to Dr. Percival, but our contemporary evidently forgot that it represents only one of the parties in the Anglican Church, and that the other parties have equal rights with itself. The Catholic party is exceedingly zealous, but it is also extremely bigoted, and sadly lacks the grace of toleration. These ecclesiastical wrangles highly amuse outsiders like ourselves, and afford a fresh example of the rarity of Christian charity under the sun. The Bishop of Oxford goes the absurd length of advocating the Christian duty of refusing to consecrate the new-elected prelate. One of Dr. Henson's chief offences is that he has demeaned his sacred office by preaching in Nonconformist pulpits!

The Protestants of Germany have issued a manifesto demanding that Courland and the Celtic provinces of Russia shall be annexed by the Fatherland in order that German religious influence may be extended. This suggests Christianity by compulsion, but it does not imply that the Germans are "Atheists."

There has been trouble in Inverness over Sunday concerts. The Town Council had permitted the use of a music-hall for a Sunday concert in aid of a hospital for wounded soldiers. The latter were pleased, but the "unco' guid" were not. And so a protest meeting was held—supported by a number of clergymen, of course—to denounce the Council. The chairman said they had many privileges in this Christian land, and amongst others the Bible and the Sabbath; and Scotsmen were noted for their love for these two things. And so the gathering of parsons protested vigorously against the desecration of the "Sawbath" even to aid wounded soldiers. There is no cause for surprise in the protest being made, but that the Sunday concert should be arranged in far-off Inverness is surely an event worth recording. And when the Scot moves he is not likely to go back. Slow to move, but firm to stick.

"Providence" goes its usual way in 1918. On January 4, in bitter wintry weather, a hospital ship was sunk by submarine action in the British Channel. The cold-blooded brutality of the act makes one almost sick. And the callousness of "Providence" runs a good second to German cruelty. Perhaps some of those who spent their time in stupid prayers on January 6 will give the matter a little serious thought.

Most decently intelligent persons will be pleased that the proposed Government "air raid" on the British Museum has failed. And now one is left wondering at the psychology of those who could see in the British Museum, with its irreplaceable wealth of art and literature, nothing better than an office for a war service. May we suggest to the Government that if public buildings must be commandeered there is St. Paul's, the City Temple, Westminster Abbey, and a large number of nearly unoccupied City Churches. And what about Buckingham Palace or Carlton House?

That New Reader!

No one is quite certain where he is. He may be sitting next to one in train or tramcar. He may be one's next door neighbour; he may be an old acquaintance with whom we have never exchanged opinions on religion. All we are certain is that he is somewhere near us, and that he can be discovered.

Finding a new reader for the *Freethinker* is quite an interesting occupation, and not by any means so difficult as many imagine. There are thousands of potential readers up and down only waiting to have the paper brought to their notice. They only want looking up, and they are quite grateful for being discovered. That is why finding a new reader for the *Freethinker* often means making a new friend. It is a pleasurable experience on both sides, with a helpful outcome so far as we are concerned.

Last year our friends helped us considerably in securing new readers. We feel sure that this year most of them will not mind emulating last year's efforts. And they will be helped by the many new friends made since.

We want to see the *Freethinker* well read in every town and village in the country. There is no reason why it should not be. There is every reason why it should be. All that is required is for us to say that it shall be—and to see that it is done.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 20, Southampton; January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 20, London; January 27, South Shields; February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

P. G. TACCHI.—Literature is being sent. Certainly we will come to Inverness, if arrangements can be made. It is a deuce of a journey: but as we have been told we are going to the Devil, it is as well to get used to long journeys.

S. G. (Bristol).—The data needs very careful scrutiny. The statement that so many cases of hereditary disease were noted may mean only that the disease in question occurred in parent and child, and may ignore the fact that certain predisposing conditions remained the same in both cases.

T. MOZLEY.—Thanks for papers. You will see we have used them. Getting your newsagent to show an extra copy of the *Freethinker* is an excellent way of helping. Hope to meet you again before long.

G. WALLACE.—We remember the fight at Stockton well. It was warm, but enjoyable all the same.

J. BURRILL.—Sorry your letter came to hand too late for a reply last week. You have put up a brave fight for your opinions, and in a community which placed any real value on opinion, that would command success. We believe things in the future will be better than you anticipate. There is never action without reaction. We hope to see you when we again visit Manchester. The Society about which you inquire has suspended operations.

HELEN LUCAS.—We have sent your interesting letter on to "Mimnermus." He will greatly appreciate its contents.

S. THOMPSON.—We are inclined to agree with what you say; but tastes differ, of course. We hope to issue some leaflets and pamphlets soon on the lines you suggest. The great obstacle is the cost of production.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Quite ready to take the will for the deed.

A. F. DICKINSON.—We regret we have mislaid your address, but if you will forward it to this office we will put you in communication with one of our readers who may be able to supply the copies of the *Freethinker* you need.

R. NISBET.—Thanks for securing two new readers in the first fortnight of the New Year. Keep it up, and your total will be fifty-two for the year. The calculation is quite simple, and its realization is often not very difficult.

W. BATT.—Pleased our lectures at Manchester gave you so much pleasure. Yes, they did lead to some new members, but the Secretary is still unsatisfied.

TAB CAN.—Not only was Gibbon "Bowdlerized" to suit the Christian palate, but Hume was served in the same manner. And we drew attention a few years back to the Bowdlerizing of Melville's *Typee*, issued by Mr. John Lane, for, apparently, the same reason. Christians appear to be without compunction in such matters.

T. C. writes:—"In the *Daily News* of Jan. 10 the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell has a long article on 'A Strange Epiphany,' in which he takes a somewhat mournful look round. He is severe on the state of England just before the War, and considers that the twentieth century has not markedly improved upon the eighteenth. And he has no certain hope even from what was mediæval, superstitious Russia. But a few weeks ago he declared that his spiritual home lay in *Jerusalem*. May we not, therefore, consign his ideas to Jericho?"

S. COPLEY.—You acted quite rightly, and hope you will persist in your attitude. Are we at liberty to make the facts in your letter public? Sorry that *God and the Air Raid* is out of print. We may reprint shortly.

HASTAZLE.—Pleased to learn that your newsagent is selling more copies of this paper, thanks for your co-operation. We are greatly obliged for such cheerful help, so readily given.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—M. B., 10s.; W. Dodd, 12s. 6d.; H. Good, 6s; P. C. Harding, 7s. 6d.; G. R. Harker, 10s.

E. C. F. JAMES.—Next week.

ALICE BEACHEY AND J. H. LAYCOCK.—Crowded out this week.

G. L. BRADSHAW.—Paper sent as requested.

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.

To-day (January 20) Mr. Cohen breaks new ground at Southampton. He will deliver two lectures—the first Freethought lectures in Southampton for many years—in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road. The morning lecture at 11 is on "Do the Dead Live?" The evening one at 7 is on "Christianity and the Logic of Life." Local friends are doing their best to secure good meetings, and for the sake of the cause, we hope they will be successful. Next week Mr. Cohen visits Swansea.

Mr. Cohen often receives letters asking him what is his "fee" for lecturing. It may save time, and serve a useful purpose, if it is said now that he has not, and never has had, any regular "fee." When there is anything coming after lectures are delivered he takes it gladly. When there is nothing he takes—the situation—cheerfully, if not gladly. But he has never made the payment of a fee a condition of the delivery of lectures for any Branch of the N.S.S. He has always felt that Branches will pay when they can, and if they can't, well, no useful purpose would be served by not having lectures on that account. Mr. Cohen's services are at the disposal of the movement when ever any good is likely to accrue.

We have several times commented on South Wales as a favourable ground for Freethought work, and we are glad to have independent—even if unwilling—testimony to the work we have done there. The *Plebs Magazine* for December contains a communication lamenting that "many of the active minority" in South Wales are being claimed by Freethought. We are pleased to record this endorsement of what we have said, and we hope to provide further cause for complaint in the near future.

The above leads us to say that we have long been desirous of setting things moving in Cardiff. The difficulty there is in getting a suitable hall. Can any Cardiff reader help us in this matter? We feel certain of success if only a start can be made.

Mr. Lloyd delivers the third of the course of lectures at the West Central Hall, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, this afternoon (January 20) at 3.15. Londoners have too few opportunities of listening to Mr. Lloyd, and we hope they will make the most of the occasion. It will be an afternoon well spent.

Our appeal to Freethinkers belonging to various organizations to see that the question of Secular Education is kept to the front is bearing fruit. In addition to those instances already announced, Mr. F. C. Warren writes us that Branch No. 22 of the Furnishing Trades Federation passed a resolution, without dissent, in favour of Secular Education, and ordered that a copy of the resolution be sent to the Minister for Education. Other Societies, please copy.

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Mr. F. J. Gould is lecturing for the Birmingham Branch on Sunday, 20th inst., at the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, at 7. Subject: "Lamennais, the French Democratic Priest." Mr. Gould's many friends and admirers in Birmingham will, no doubt, do their best to see that the theatre is well filled.

Mr. S. Scott writes from Setland:—

> In renewing my annual subscription to the *Freethinker*, I desire once more to express my satisfaction at the admirable manner in which it is conducted.....I, for one, have nothing but thanks and congratulation to offer for the help and comfort the brave old publication has been—and is—to me.
>
> I first made the acquaintance of the *Freethinker* in 1884, when I was living for a time in London. I had never seen or heard of it before; but when I read that first number I said, "This is just the thing I want, and have often longed for." I have never missed an issue since then. I have met many other readers of the *Freethinker* during my lifetime, and all say the same. All *love* the paper. I do not believe there is any other periodical, "sacred or profane," in the United Kingdom that has so devoted and affectionate a circle of readers. The *Freethinker* is absolutely unique in this respect. And long may it be so. Long may it flourish and prosper, and deeply may its flashing blade gore the filthy and cruel flanks of superstition and imposture.

Quite a cheery letter with which to start the New Year. A knowledge of the affectionate regard in which the "one and only" is held by its readers acts as a constant inspiration to all concerned in the upkeep of the *Freethinker*.

Manchester friends will please note that Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwich to-day (January 20), afternoon and evening. We hope the hall will be well filled on both occasions. We are glad to learn that the recent "social" held by the Branch was a complete success. Another one is in contemplation before the close of the season.

We are asked to announce that Mr. Miller will open a discussion at the St. Pancras Reform Club, under the auspices of the North London Branch of the N.S.S., on "The Religion of Russia and the Revolution." The subject is an interesting one, and should attract a good audience.

The Executive of the Miner's Federation of Great Britain recently passed a resolution protesting against military drill in elementary schools, pointing out, at the same time, that this was not to be taken as involving a protest against Swedish drill. We believe this to be a wise move, and hope that other organizations will follow suit. Germany, to use a famous phrase, turned its schools into training stables for the Army, and the world sees the consequence. If we *are* fighting against German methods of militarism, our first step ought to be to see that they do not effect a lodgment in the schools of the nations.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive permission was given to form a new Branch at Nuneaton, and thirty new members were admitted to the Society. This makes eight new Branches opened within the past two years, while the number of new members enrolled almost equal the number on the books at the opening of that period. This is good progress, particularly when one bears in mind that the work has been carried on under conditions of unprecedented difficulty, and with a great increase on the cost of railway travelling. We are expecting more Branches in the near future. Meanwhile there is Nuneaton and Birmingham with Coventry between. The latter is without a Branch of the N.S.S. We hope that omission will be repaired shortly.

Freethought is cropping up in all sorts of unexpected places. Thus, in a recent issue of the *Licensed Vehicle Traders' Record*, we observed a reprint of the late S. P. Putman's "blasphemous" poem, "Why Don't He Lend a Hand?" And A. G. G.'s article, "The War and the Churches," in the *Daily News* for January 5, read very much as though portions of it were reprinted from some of our own articles on the same subject written about six or seven months ago. These things, added to the passages one finds cited from the *Freethinker* in the provincial press, make one wonder what is happening. Hope we shan't get *too* respectable.

"The nominee of the Baptist Prime Minister" is, apparently, giving the bigwigs of the Church of England an attack of mental indigestion. The election of Dr. Henson to the Bishopric of Hereford will, says the *Church Times*, "be as the letting out of waters." Let brotherly love continue.

For the first time during the War period, Mr. J. T. Lloyd is visiting South Shields next week-end, and will lecture twice (afternoon and evening) in the Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, on Sunday, January 27. It is therefore hoped that Mr. Lloyd's numerous admirers will embrace the opportunity of once again hearing his voice in this North-East coast town. Suggestions or inquiries should be addressed to the local Secretary in time for the final committee meeting to-day (Sunday), when the arrangements are to be completed; and, in addition, Mr. J. Fothergill, the Treasurer, will give a brief survey of Professor Bury's famous booklet, *The History of Freethought*.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THIS Fund is to raise the balance of expenses incurred in defending the right to sell literature at public meetings in the London parks. 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 that should specially appeal to all Londoners.

Previously acknowledged:—£40 8s. 2d.; J. Lazarnick, 10s. 6d.; Taxi Driver, 5s.; W. H. Harrop, 2s. 6d.; G. Grove, 1s.; J. Ratcliffe, 10s.; W. H. Shepherd, 2s. 6d.; Pte. W. Perry, 2s.

Correction—"W. Benn," in last week's list, should have been "W. Bean."

This Fund is now closed.

Answers to the "Day of Prayer."

Dec. 1, 1917, to January 6, 1918.—Warning to the people to prepare for prayer, with full notice to "God" that the prayers would be offered.

Jan. 6, 1918.—Level start of the petitioners and the petitioned—People praying—Meat famine all over the country.

" 8.—Sudden fall in temperature—burst water-pipes everywhere.

" 9.—Destruction of British Torpedo Destroyer off the Irish Coast, all lives lost.

" 10.—Twenty-five British Merchant Ships reported sunk by enemy action.

" 12.—Mine Disaster in Staffordshire, 147 men reported "missing."

" 14.—Yarmouth shelled by enemy gunboats.

The Orb of Day.

OUR globe, with all its multitudinous modes of being, derives its existence from the light and generous warmth of the sovereign sun. That mighty and majestic luminary is, indeed, our father throned in heaven. The rain that falls; the winds that blow; the heat which cheers and sustains us; the light, apart from whose beneficent activities no faunal or floral life could exist, are all ultimately due to the prodigious outpourings of the lord of day. Air and ocean alike would promptly freeze were the sun's powers withdrawn, and our planet's vast and varied population of animal and vegetable organisms would perish in the pitiless cold.

With the cessation of the radiant light and heat now received from the sun, our earth would rapidly become

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a floating graveyard. All our hopes and aspirations, all our trials and sufferings, all the grandeur and glory of human achievement, would fade into oblivion. In company with our pale satellite, the moon, our planetary home, tideless and inert, would spin in desolate space, with no mourner surviving to grieve over its departed pride.

Still, the sun does shine, and although until recently it was feared that its benignant activities were destined to near their end in the course of some twenty million years, we now possess cogent reasons for believing that the lord of heaven will continue to shower forth his prodigal blessings on just and unjust for countless ages to come. Indeed, in the light of the now ascertained energies resident in material bodies, Professor Arrhenius, the world-renowned chemist, speaks of the probable duration of billions of years for future expenditure of solar power.

But even now, when from our planet's point of view, the sun probably radiates its maximum heat and light, we experience a striking difference both in light and temperature between night and day. When, on a serene and cloudless afternoon in May, the sun warms the atmosphere almost to summer's splendour, the approach of twilight and the setting-in of night herald a remarkable fall in temperature, particularly when a cool breeze flows from north or east. And what a contrast between sable night and twilight grey, and the rising of the golden sun! As Browning depicts the dawn and sunrise:—

> Day!
> Faster and more fast,
> O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
> Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim,
> Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
> For not a froth-flake touched the rim
> Of yonder gap in the solid gray
> Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
> But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
> Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
> Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
> Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

The sweet light of the sun is a great natural marvel, but perhaps even more wonderful are our luminary's heat-conferring powers. Sir Robert Ball has compared the heat of the solar globe with that of a perfect industrial furnace, in which—

> even steel itself, having first attained a dazzling brilliance, can be further melted into a liquid that will run like water. Let us imagine the temperature of that liquid to be multiplied seven-fold, and then we shall obtain some conception of the fearful intensity of the heat which would be found in that wonderful celestial furnace, the great sun of the heavens.

To enable one to realize the enormous heat radiated from the sun's surface, it is essential to note the titanic proportions of our luminary. The moon journeys round the earth at a mean distance of nearly 240,000 miles. Now, if we were to imagine a hollow globe occupied by our planet, together with the space embracing our moon's orbit, then the body of the sun would completely fill it. And every square mile of that tremendous mass of flame is perpetually pouring forth immense torrents of heat. So gigantic is its energy that it is a fair estimate that the heat which radiates from two square feet only of its heated surface would be sufficient, and more than sufficient, to propel the engines of a huge Atlantic liner in its voyage from New York to Liverpool.

The sun's heat is flung into space with reckless prodigality. It is said that the light and heat daily expended by the solar orb might illuminate and warm 2,000,000,000 planets each as large as our earth. In the light of this truth, the theological theory that the sun was designed to shed its light upon this globe is palpably preposterous. Well may Ball, the astronomer, inquire, as he does in his *Earth's Beginning*:—

> What would be thought of the prudence of one who, having been endowed with a fortune of ten million pounds, spent one single penny of that vast sum in a profitable manner, and dissipated every other penny and every other pound of his fortune in aimless extravagance? But this is apparently the way in which the sun manages its affairs, so far as our earth is concerned.

And even when we consider the sun's output of energy from the viewpoint of the entire retinue of planets, we discover, according to Dr. Sampson, the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, in his work on *The Sun*, that "the only portion that produces any known effect is the minute fraction intercepted by the discs of the planets, and this is about the hundred and twenty millionth part of the whole." So far as science can ascertain, the inconceivably vast remainder is utterly wasted.

The mind almost reels when one seriously contemplates the problem of the manner in which the sun's colossal expenditure is sustained. For we cannot escape the conclusion that this prodigious expenditure has been proceeding for untold ages. We know from common experience that, no matter how vast a conflagration may be, it ultimately dies down unless constantly replenished with fresh fuel for burning. Professor Langley informs us that an entirely incredible quantity of fuel would be required were the sun's daily outpouring of heat maintained by processes of combustion. If all the immense coal measures of Britain were completely exhausted, and even if all the vast coal fields of China, America, and all the earth besides were entirely utilized for the purpose of supplying the sun with fuel; and were we to imagine the titanic task of plunging into the sun the whole of the coal reserves of the world in one stupendous effort, this huge mass of highly combustible material would immediately be reduced to ashes, and, doubtless, an unspeakable quantity of heat would be generated. One might conjecture that a mass so vast would at least suffice to sustain the sun's heat for an appreciable period. But it is a sober scientific truth that all our planet's stores of coal, estimated to serve the wants of the human race for centuries to come, which, if consumed at one time on our tiny earth, would cause a conflagration so vast as to be almost inconceivable—this colossal accumulation of coal would, nevertheless, fail to evolve as much heat as the sun normally expends in the tenth part of every single second of its existence. In the course of a few minutes a quantity of heat arises from our potent and majestic luminary, and is urged into space, which is some 5,000 times as great as the totality of heat that has ever been generated, or ever can be generated by the burning of all the coal our globe has at any period possessed. And when we reflect that during long long ages, prior even to the appearance of life on our planet, this boundless prodigality of heat and light has been proceeding, and seems likely to proceed for unspeakable æons of future date, the magnitude of the problem confronting us almost defies the most comprehensive imagination. The sun must have inherited a stupendous fortune to enable it to maintain its splendour through the ages undimmed despite its unrestrained and, apparently, improvident expenditure. How can the sun persistently squander two thousand million times as much heat and light as that which the world receives? And yet the insignificant portion received by our globe is sufficient for our needs in temperate regions, while, in the tropics, the heat is insufferably intense.

A fairly accurate estimate of the daily radiation of the solar orb has been secured through the researches of

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several scientific investigators. These inquiries have proved both delicate and difficult ; but the results have been fruitful in no small measure. The unit of heat employed for the purpose of determining the temperature of the sun is the quantity essential to raise the temperature of one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit. What is termed the solar constant is the number of heat units which impinge "in one minute, on one square foot of a surface placed at right angles to the sun's rays, and situated at the mean distance of the earth from the sun." After allowing all due deductions for the sum of heat absorbed by our atmosphere, the quantity derived from the sun at its mean distance of 93,000,000 miles is determined. The result thus obtained teaches us that one square foot of the terrestrial surface exposed to the solar beams at right angles, is the recipient during each minute of such exposure, of sufficient heat to exalt the temperature of one pound of water fourteen degrees Fahrenheit. This radiation arrives from the solar surface, and it is mathematically certain that the number of units of heat requisite to furnish this result prove that the total heat units "emerging each minute from a square foot on the sun's surface must be about 640,000."

The meaning of this statement will be clearly seen when we ascertain the amount of coal necessary to evolve the same quantity of heat. It can be conclusively shown that the heat discharged by each square foot of the sun's surface in one minute is equal to that generated by the consumption of forty-six pounds of coal. From this it follows that the annual radiation of one square foot of the solar exterior equals that obtained in the combustion of 11,000 tons of high quality coal. To annex Ball's vivid illustration :—

> If we estimate the annual coal production in Great Britain at 250,000,000 tons, we find that the total heat which this coal can produce is not greater than the annual emission from a square of the sun's surface of which each side is fifty yards. All the coal exported from England in a year does not give as much heat as the sun radiates in the same time from every patch on its surface which is as big as a croquet ground.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

Freedom.

THE most precious thing that men can have, because with it all other good things are obtainable, is that for which most of us care the least. I mean *freedom*—freedom to think, freedom to speak, freedom to act, to labour and to rest in whatsoever manner and at whatsoever time we please, provided only that in exercising our freedom we do not interfere with that of others. To have such freedom would be to live naturally, and, therefore, according to the highest physical, mental, and moral laws of our being. Few persons understand this, and for that reason few persons desire the priceless treasure. Most people think that freedom means lawlessness—the absence of all restraint. They think that it would lead to every form of crime—theft, lasciviousness, and bloodshed. They have been dominated by artificial religions and cunningly devised statute laws so long that they have no faith in natural religion and natural laws. They are like a man who has been taught to walk on crutches from infancy, until he has come to believe that crutches are better than legs. Most of us have grown to love creeds more than thought, and to trust the decisions of the Courts more than in the laws of the universe. Many of us have grown to believe that nothing is true except what is decided by the particular Church to which we belong, notwithstanding that almost every doctrine that has been declared true by this authority has been shown by facts to be false. Infallible men, infallible books, or infallible majorities are blindly followed, although they are almost always wrong. He whom the world calls an infidel is more likely to be right than the Pope. The minority is generally nearer to the truth than the majority. And the truth is to be found best of all in facts—the facts of the universe external to us and the facts of our own mentality. Unfortunately, few people know much about either, and so they believe that the individuals who compose society would not know what they ought to do, and would not do it if they did, were it not for statute laws with policemen to enforce them. The next time you see a member of Parliament, a judge, a parson, or a town councillor, gaze upon them studiously, for these constitute the conscience of society ; and when you see a soldier with his gun, and a policeman with his club, mark them well, for they constitute our moral motive power.

Statute law is our conscience. Brute force is our moral motive power. Is it any wonder, then, that we have to watch each other like hawks, for fear of being robbed? or that we can hardly allow our daughters, sisters, and wives to be out after dark, when the real conscience has shrunk into the person of the man who makes our laws for us, for the interest of himself and his friends ; when the still small voice has degenerated into the policeman's club?

This would not be so if people cared for freedom. But they do not. Rather than use their own brains, they prefer that the parson and the lawyer should think for them. It is a bother to think, and it may be expensive. It sometimes costs money, and often costs friends. It sometimes leads to prison, and even to death. It is so peaceful to believe, and so distressing to doubt. Let the parson find the way for me ; I will ask no questions. It is so hard to know how to treat my neighbour. He might get the better of me if I settled our affairs with him alone. Let the lawyers fight it out between them—his lawyer and mine. What the Courts decide will be right.

Is it any wonder that the world is overrun with fools and rogues when most people relegate the whole subject of religion and morals to others? And not only to others, but to those least likely to know anything about them? Those who know least of religion, as a class, are the parsons and priests ; and those who know least of morality, as a class, are the lawyers. Theology is the death of religion, and statute law is a device to escape doing right.

Neither do most people desire freedom of speech. They do not wish him who does think to speak. No sooner does he begin to say what he really thinks than his best friends, as well as his worst foes, try to shut his mouth. They urge him to keep silent for his own sake as well as for the sake of society. There is noone society fears more than he who speaks the truth. There is nothing society fears so much as the truth. And the cause of this dread is that people have no real confidence in the present Church and the present system of society, for it is manifest that the outspoken truth could not injure either true religion or a state of society based on justice, because true religion is devotion to the truth, and just society is fraternity in accordance with the truth.

Strangely enough, and yet not so very strangely, when you consider how both the parsons and the politicians have conspired to stifle thought and manhood, the very victims of our barbarous industrial system do not care for freedom. Here is an agricultural labourer, with a wife and six children. He works hard and cleverly, and gets 18s. a week as wages.

"Are you contented?" I ask him.

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"Content and thankful," he says.

"But you are very poor."

"It is the will of God."

"But you have to do without many things you want, and your wife and children have barely enough to live on."

"That is true, but I am glad of that, for if we had plenty we might forget God. By-and-bye we shall be in a world of eternal bliss."

"When you are dead?"

"Oh, sir, we shall live for ever in heaven."

"Then it does not matter how much you suffer in this world?"

"No, sir."

"But this great landlord who employs you he is not poor?"

"Oh, no; God has blessed him with the power of getting plenty of money without doing any work."

"But does it never occur to you that you and your fellow-workers produce all the goods, while he and his fellow-idlers get most of the money, and that it is a little queer that the men who make all the goods should not also get all the money?"

"No, sir; I never thought of that. But it must be quite all right because God is good. Besides, I have blessings that he knows nothing of. He has only two children while I have six. He has several fine mansions while we live in a poor hovel, but you know what is said about love in a cottage."

When will such poor fellows learn that contentment under injustice is a crime? Poverty is the mother of every crime and vice. Poverty is a disgrace to every community, because there is not the smallest natural reason for it. And he who is contented so long as his fellow-men are wronged and imbruted is irreligious, immoral, and heartless. If we did not pity him for his ignorance, we should hate him for his cowardice.

And this is what the present Church and State have done for men. They have pushed them down so low in body and mind that the love of freedom is nearly dead—the aspiration to know more and to be more is nearly gone.

But there is much now to look forward to, for this great War has stirred the dry bones of feudalism and monopoly as no mere preaching ever could have done. The brain of the great giant Labour is awaking to the sense of his enormous power by which only can peace again be permanently ensured to a tortured world. And in the coming days when the workers enjoy free access to the soil, and the inestimable boon of their own bank, supplying them with a paper currency based on their own productive power; in that day when man will labour and enjoy the full fruits of his labour, his brain will grow, his heart will grow, his character will grow, his span of life will be happy and prolonged, he will be no longer debased by the sordid industrial struggle of the sorrowful to-day. Then there will be no poems but those of Labour and of Love, because the workers of every nation will have come to recognize that their interests are identical—that he who robs and oppresses any of them is the enemy of all—and that the scourge of War was fabricated solely by the cunning hands of those who wanted to perpetuate industrial slavery.

G. O. WARREN.

Correspondence.

WHAT IS CAPITAL?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* for January 6, Dr. C. V. Drysdale accuses Major G. O. Warren of having been captured by that "plausible compendium of economic fallacies, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*." It would be interesting to learn by what "plausible compendium of economic fallacies" Dr. Drysdale has been captured.

In his letter, Dr. Drysdale defines capital as dwellings, factories, tools, railways, food, etc., and then triumphantly asks "how many people would be employed or able to work at the end of a month if capital were destroyed."

What is a negro slave? A man of the black race. This explanation is on all fours with Dr. Drysdale's explanation of capital. A negro is a negro; only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton; only under certain conditions does it become capital.

Let me here condense Karl Marx's definition of capital. Capital consists not only of means of subsistence, instruments of labour and raw material; not only of material products, it consists just as much of exchange values. All products of which it consists are commodities. Capital, consequently, is not only a sum of material products, it is a sum of commodities, of exchange values, of social magnitudes. Capital remains the same whether we put cotton in the place of wool, rice in the place of wheat, etc., provided only that the cotton and the rice, the body of capital, have the same exchange value, the same price, as the wool and the wheat in which it was previously embodied. The bodily form of capital may transform itself continually, while capital does not suffer the least alteration. The sum of commodities of exchange values becomes capital when as an independent social power—*i.e.*, as the power of a part of society, it preserves itself and multiplies by exchange with direct living labour power.

It is only the dominion of past accumulated materialized labour over immediate living labour that stamps the accumulated labour with a character of capital.

In conclusion, can Dr. Drysdale explain why, if his explanation of capital be correct, many past systems have not been known as capitalist systems?

NAT STRIEMER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JAN. 10.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Braddock, Eager, Lazarnick, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, and Thurlow; Miss Stanley, Miss Kough, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

Thirty new members were admitted for Birmingham, Goldthorpe, Manchester, North London, Nuneaton, and the Parent Society.

Permission was granted for the formation of a new Branch in Nuneaton.

Various items of correspondence were read and dealt with. The adjourned discussion *re* finance, carried at the Interim Conference, was resumed. Mr. Brandes (South London delegate) presented some suggestions on the matter, and finally the motion of Mr. Samuel, adjourned from the last meeting—"That the Editor be asked to start a Shilling Fund in the *Freethinker* for the N. S. S."—was carried.

The Secretary reported a successful opening of the afternoon meetings at the West Central Hall, and it was resolved to continue these meetings in London, if halls could be obtained.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Obituary.

Just as we are going to press, we receive with the greatest regret news of the death of Lance-cpl. L. H. Evans, the only son of Mr. N. J. Evans, of Palmer's Green, N. We regret that considerations of space prevent our inserting a fuller notice in our present issue. We insert this brief note in order to explain its non-appearance to those interested.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, R. Miller, "The Religion of Russia and the Revolution." Open Debate.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, J. T. Lloyd, "Is Secularism Dead?"

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Swasey, Dales, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, F. J. Gould, "Lamennais, the French Democratic Priest."

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, "Selections from Voltaire."

LEICESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "New York in Wartime." Lantern Illustrations.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mrs H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, "Christianity and the Child"; 6 30, "Religion and Liberty."

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Chapman Cohen, 11, "Do the Dead Live?" 7, Christianity and the Logic of Life."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6 30, J. Fothergill, "The History of Freethought."

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(Under the Auspices of the National Secular Society)

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WEST CENTRAL HALL,

31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.

January 20. Mr. J. T. LLOYD.

"IS SECULARISM DEAD?"

„ 27. Mr. A. D. HOWELL SMITH, B.A.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Demobilization.—The Editor	49
Pulpit Recklessness.—J. T. Lloyd	50
The Real Burns.—Mimnermus	51
No More Miracles.—Arthur B. Moss	52
A Thought from Hibpolyte Taine	53
Anno Domini.—W.	54
Acid Drops	55
To Correspondents	57
Sugar Plums	57
Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.	58
The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer	58
The Cairn Revisited on "Thanksgiving Day."—A. M.	59
Letters to the Editor—Freethought and Birth Control, 60; A Plea for Justice, 61; The Evidence of the Churches	61
Obituary	61
Society News	61
Notice of Meetings	62

Views and Opinions.

Demobilization.

On all sides it is admitted that the difficulties facing the world immediately after peace is proclaimed will be hardly less serious than those fronting it during the War. Getting millions of men back to civilian labour will be no simple task, nor will it be easy to induce contentment with those hundreds of thousands who are in positions of "official" importance because of the War, and will hardly be pleased when they are called on to sink back into a position of unimportance. A uniform—civil or military—has a fatal fascination for many; medals, decorations, and titles are hardly less attractive—even when the latter are scattered about so profusely that one hardly knows whether one's dustman may not be a Knight Commander of something, or one's charwoman a Grand Dame of the Empire. Peace will appear drab to some, tame to others, and the psychology of the after the War period will provide an interesting and a profitable field for study.

* * *

Why not the Clergy?

Demobilization of the military and civil forces, organized for the prosecution of the War, will be so great a task that it may well involve reconstruction on many new lines. And if new ventures are to be attempted, the end of the War would be the most favourable occasion. Therefore, we venture on a suggestion which may or may not be adopted by the Government. We have a khaki Army, and we have a "black" Army. The nation is ringing with the deeds of the first, it is more likely to grow vocal over the misdeeds of the second. The first has offered its bodies for the safety of the nation; the other has received a comfortable salary, or, when it has donned khaki—for other purposes than fighting—has received an officer's rank and pay. In pre-war days, many people who were under the delusion that the Black Army was essential to the safety of the nation, have now had their eyes opened. People will, moreover, be prepared for considerable rearrangements. No such favourable movement is likely to present itself again. So, we say, let us demobilize the clergy.

* * *

The Black Army.

The Black Army numbers about 50,000 men. At present they are of no "earthly" use. Their true function is a heavenly one. Their real business is to prepare us for the next life; and if people really believed in it, and them, the present would be a very busy time for the clergy. How much money this Army costs, no one can exactly say. It is certainly not less than twenty millions annually; it may easily be half as much again. And they are always clamouring for more. The cry of the "poor clergy" is always with us; and even the Bishop of London once explained that, after paying for food, housing, firing, lighting, and servants, all he had left from his salary was a beggarly twenty-eight hundred a year for, apparently, clothing and pocket-money. Before the War, many of us knew the clergy were of no use; but others were under the delusion that, somehow or other, they helped people to live together peaceably, and stood generally for what was vaguely called the higher things of life. Now everyone knows that is not the case. The clergy are as useless in war as in peace. They cannot pray the world into good behaviour. They cannot pray an opposing army out of existence. They cannot pray for society with any prospect of profit. They can only *prey* on it, with disastrous results. So, once more, while we are demobilizing the Khaki Army of five millions, let us add the "Black Army" to the number, and demobilize the lot.

* * *

Work for the Clergy.

Now, in making this suggestion, we are not deprecating the use this army of educated men might be to the country. We are only desirous of putting them to greater use. Fifty thousand men, giving the whole of their time to the instruction of their fellows on any kind of social topic, would exert an enormous influence for good. And what they taught would not be of so great importance as the kind of subjects to which they were directing attention. The land question, the population question, the marriage question, the relations of employer and employed, sanitation, education—all of these are vastly important subjects, and the really important thing is to get people thinking and talking about them. Set people discussing things, and it will not be long before some solution to every problem will present itself. So, after demobilizing our Black Army, we should do with them exactly as we say we are going to do with the soldiers—draft them into some form of social employment of recognized utility and service. They could help to teach people how to live, instead of explaining to them how to die. They could emphasize the state of London, or Manchester, or Liverpool, instead of the New Jerusalem. Their work would be to train citizens for healthy human intercourse instead of making them candidates for heaven. They would teach people to rely upon their own intelligence and strength instead of upon the expected help of an antiquated tribal fetish. The

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soldiers will be demobilized when the German, as an enemy, ceases to exist. But the enemy of the clergy, the Devil—or was he their friend?—ceased to exist long ago. Or, if the clergy still have an enemy to fight, it is common sense. And in the name of common sense, we say, let us demobilize the clergy.

* * *

In Defence of the Pulpit.

Of course, there may be objection raised to this being done. It may be argued that in demobilizing the clergy we should be inflicting an evil on society instead of removing one. Thus, it was once urged against the Church that it absorbed the best intellect of the nation to the impoverishment of life in other directions. That charge cannot with truth be brought against the Church at present. It may be urged, on the contrary, that the Church to-day, by attracting to its service a class of intellect not the best fitted for serious mental work in either science or social life, relieves the community at large from the direct weight of the burden. In any other walk of life it is clear that nothing like the salaries paid to leaders of the Churches could be earned by them. And there is in addition another aspect to be faced. Most people would admit that were the methods of the pulpit carried into social life the results would be disastrous. The habit of reckless statement, the unqualified condemnation of those who disagree with them, the inattention to facts, and the neglect of careful observation so emphasized by science, all these things are so patent with the clergy, that it would be disastrous to throw men to whom these things apply into the general stream of life. The Church, it may be said, with some justification, by acting as a selective force and confining to the pulpit a type of mind that would scarce be tolerated in either business or scientific circles, is performing a real service to the community. Demobilization might not, if this argument be admitted, then, mean the release of a serviceable body of men, it might only mean the casting adrift of a body of men, the major part of whom are by nature and training unfitted for any better work than the kind they are doing. Society has a certain responsibility towards even the clergy. We find suitable occupations for the mentally afflicted. Have we not some kind of duty towards those who are marked out by nature for the pulpit?

* * *

Payment by Results.

In any case, if we cannot demobilize the clergy, why not adopt the principle of payment by results? That would be quite fair to everybody, and the clergy are continually appealing to experience. The Prayer Book of the Church of England provides plenty of cases that could be tested. There are prayers for the sick, for the wounded, for a nation in times of War, for good harvests, for those at sea, etc. If the clergy can produce a beneficial result in any of these cases no one will grudge them either payment or honour. Why not place them in charge of a ward of wounded soldiers—provided the latter could be induced to agree—and then see what benefit their prayers are to the men? Or place the Archbishop of Canterbury in power at the Admiralty, and then note whether there is a marked diminution in the number of vessels lost. There are scores of ways in which we could test the usefulness of the clergy, if we only made up our minds to do so. We need not insist upon success in every case, a fair average would be enough. And if the clergy are honest in their profession of faith they would have no objection. At any rate, it would put the matter on a more satisfactory basis than is the case at present. But one of the two courses should be adopted. Either payment by results or demobilization. The first would be an interesting experiment, the second would throw the "poor clergy" on their own resources. In either case, society would be relieved from the upkeep of a body of men of whose utility no one seems assured, and whose honesty even is often open to serious question.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Pulpit Recklessness.

PREACHERS are unique specimens of humanity, and form an exclusive category. They claim to be ambassadors of a monarch whose very existence is insusceptible of demonstration, with the result that for their ministrations of every kind they are, in reality, responsible only to themselves. Ministers of Christ, they call themselves; but as Christ is their own creation, it follows that their service is rendered only to the Church which appointed them. They pride themselves upon being Heaven's spokesmen, but are merely the expounders of man-made creeds. The other Sunday the Rev. Charles Brown, D.D., of Ferme Park Baptist Church, occupied the pulpit of Westminster Chapel, London, and endeavoured to justify the ways of God with man. As reported in the *British Weekly* for January 17, he said:—

> The vital question for all of us is, Can you trust God? Can you commit yourself to him with security? Can you believe that, among all convulsion and change, his goodness abides? . . . We must trust God. People are asking to-day in bitterness, "What is God doing?" and they think something has gone wrong with the government of the world.

"*We must trust God.*" Such is the dogmatism of the pulpit. But why must we trust God amid all the abominations and horrors of a world war? Dr. Brown's answer is that the world has always had its full share of suffering and sorrow. On "a green hill far away," two thousand years ago, Jesus was crucified as a common criminal; *and it was God who did it.* Now listen:—

> What was God doing there? He was saving the world, and he is saving the world to-day. When I think of the great tide of sorrow, growing ever swifter and deeper, my only comfort is that through this agony of war the Divine Father is saving the world. There is no other way of destroying militarism than by taking upon our hearts the burden of it all.

By cruelly murdering his only begotten and beloved Son on Calvary two thousand years ago, we are told, God was saving the world; but saving it from what, and to what end? Can Dr. Brown honestly point to a period of time when the world was in any sense saved? It is true that Europe became nominally Christian under Constantine the Great, and has continued so to this day; but nothing is more absolutety undeniable than that a Christian world is a fundamentally different thing from a saved world. Indeed, Dr. Brown himself tacitly admits that for nineteen centuries God's attempt to save the world was a dismal and total failure, inasmuch as he is still working at the job by means of the most brutal war on record. Clearly the reverend gentleman, if correctly reported, is guilty of using words in the most reckless manner conceivable, and we conclude that he is able to do so simply because the God he pretends to represent exists only in his own imagination.

Dr. Brown is evidently a professional talker who has no inconvenient sense of responsibility. Being simply a product of the human fancy, God never interferes with his self-elected champions, no matter what they may say about him. So the reverend gentleman is allowed to blaspheme with a vengeance:—

> "Why does not God intervene?" you ask. He is intervening. "Why does he allow this war?" He cannot help himself, unless he were to take from man

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that prerogative of freedom which alone gives value to right-doing.

Is God free? Could he do wrong if he felt inclined? If not, his right-doing possesses no value whatever. The law that applies to man must be equally binding on man's Maker. Dr. Brown deliberately ignores this, and commits himself to the laughably absurd doctrine that man's freedom implies the capacity to do wrong; which means that unless he can tell a lie, his truth speaking can have no value. Of course, this doctrine is a theological subterfuge, resorted to for the express purpose of exonerating the Supreme Being from all blame or responsibility for the evils so prevalent in the world. Very discreetly, the reverend gentleman contents himself with stating without defending the strange doctrine of human free-agency, and then proceeds thus:—

> Amid this awful resurgence of wickedness in the world I still believe that God sitteth on the circle of the earth. I know that in history wrong has sometimes triumphed for a time, but it has ever been the conviction of the best and wisest men that right would ultimately reign. I believe in a God who suffers with his Universe. When we remember the horrors of the world, its sin, shame, and suffering, let us not forget that God is bearing it all.

Why does God sit on the circle of the earth if not to guide its every motion? Why does he sit as King for ever if not to reign over mankind? Why is he supposed to reign at all if not to have his will done both in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth? But Dr. Brown holds that the freedom which he has conferred on man precludes the possibility of his being absolutely supreme in his own Universe.

Dr. Charles Brown belongs to the orthodox school of theology, with all its prejudices and bigotries, and is completely out of touch with the spirit of the age, being one of the kill-joy fraternity. The Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, of Old Meeting Church, Birmingham, however, is a New Theologian of some note, from whom we would naturally expect utterances of a much more liberal and tolerant character. But the fact from which there is no escape is that all divines, in their attitude to outsiders, are significantly alike. The *Birmingham Gazette* for January 14 contains the report of a sermon which Mr. Thomas recently delivered before the University of Birmingham, in which he deplores the world's tragic alienation from Christ. Even the Church has gone terribly astray, and must be brought back. As in Dr. Brown's discourse, so in Mr. Thomas's, the central thought is that two thousand years ago "One offered himself in lowly life and agonizing death to heal the woes of mankind, and reconcile man to man and all to God," and that now, after so long a time, "men were again reconsidering and accepting the meaning of Christ." According to the testimony of more competent judges, there is no sign whatever of an approaching religious revival; but be that as it may, the fact remains that for fully nineteen hundred years Christ has not succeeded in healing the woes of our race, and that, judging by appearances, he is less likely to succeed now than ever. That Mr. Thomas is not a reliable guide even in plain matters of fact is shown by the following statement:—

> I hope I am not mistakenly sanguine; but I believe that our very scepticisms and agnosticisms are changing their tone and quality. They are becoming modest, and, if not yet believing, willing and even eager to believe.

Either Mr. Thomas is insufficiently acquainted with present-day unbelief or he deliberately misrepresents it. We know some hundreds of Agnostics who are neither eager nor willing to believe, and who, if more modest than their fathers, are more zealous advocates of freedom of thought and expression. Mr. Thomas is an ecclesiastic to the back bone. Whilst fervently hoping that "the mediæval subjection of University life to ecclesiastical authority is gone for ever," he is the sworn enemy of the policy of Secular Education. He says:—

> I believe it were far better for humanity to restore the mediæval relation than to permit the interest of scholarship and education to be subordinated to secular ends. The independence of learning must be jealously safeguarded. It will be safe only when it is inspired throughout by the Christian spirit. Not education only, but every department of life, must respond to the appeal. It was not the business of the Christian Church directly and officially to interfere in activities that were best carried on in unhampered liberty, but it was its business so to inspire every human soul, so to Christianize the functions and activities of all Christians that their life was always flowing out from Christian motives, and measured by Christian standards and permeated by the spirit of Christ.

Mr. Thomas must be perfectly well aware that the Church has always hated and discouraged education as such, and done its utmost to suppress it. The sciences of chemistry, geology, and astronomy in particular, were bitterly denounced and opposed by ecclesiastical authorities, and there are those living to-day who distinctly remember the hostile reception to the *Origin of Species* on its first appearance less than sixty years ago. The divines were in a state of the utmost frenzy, and the then Bishop of Oxford utilized all his oratorical gifts in the effort to persuade his fellow Christians that it was a work calculated to subvert the Christian religion; and had the Inquisition been still in force, Darwin would have been burnt as the most dangerous of heretics. And yet Mr. Lloyd Thomas would rather see the Spanish Inquisition restored than that our education should be conducted on Secular lines. The age of persecution is past, but the spirit of persecution is still alive. The pulpit is as intolerant as ever, and if it had the power, its intolerance would be as drastically expressed as it used to be six and seven centuries ago.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Real Burns.

Two Essays. By Professor W. P. Ker, LL.D. Maclehose, 1918.

ROBERT BURNS has been dead over a century, and his fame is far wider and more secure than when he died. His life is now celebrated as an important event, and his poetry is rightly regarded as a glorious contribution to the world's literature. Admittedly, Scotland's greatest poet, he has been subjected to extreme adulation from his countrymen. Had he been a lesser genius than he was, this fulsome praise would have exposed his name to derision.

Professor Ker's essay on Burns will flutter Caledonia's dovecotes. Greatly daring, he transforms Burns from a Scottish singer into a British poet. Burns, he contends, was the poet of a nation whose capital was not Edinburgh, but London. This is a direct challenge to those critics who declare that Burns depends upon dialect, and that when he tried to write English, he fell into mediocrity, fettered by the difficulties of an alien tongue.

This time-honoured contention is part only of the truth, and shows that Burns, like many another classic, is more talked of than read. One or two brief quotations, taken at random from his works, will modify this idea effectually. Take this from a love song:—

> O my luve's like a red, red rose
> That's newly sprung in June!
> O my luve's like the melodie
> That's sweetly played in tune.

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Here is another from a battle-hymn, one of the best ever written :—

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free.
Lay the proud usurper low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do or die!

How much do these two striking quotations depend on dialect? Or does this?

A fig for those by law protected,
Liberty's a glorious feast.
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

Then turn to those lines which are admitted to be among the very finest that even Burns ever wrote :—

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Do those superb lines derive their force from their one solitary word of dialect? Burns has suffered grievously at the hands of hiccoughing Highlanders and maudlin ministers, but professed critics might well give the corpses of defunct heresies decent burial.

Professor Ker has much to say concerning Burns's political views, but he says little of the poet's views on religion. In view of Christian cant on this subject, this is a pity. For Burns's heresy was "four square to all the winds that blow." Oliver Wendell Holmes, indeed, expressed surprise that puritanical Caledonia could take Robert Burns to her straight-laced bosom without breaking her stays. For Burns, like Paine and Voltaire, was a Deist. Of other religion, saved what flowed from a mild Theism, he scarcely showed a trace. In truth, one can scarcely call it a creed. It was mainly a name for a particular mood of sentimentalism, the expression of a state of indefinite aspiration. The Holy Willies of Orthodoxy have made the basest uses of this emotionalism; but Christians cannot read Burns without unloosening the shackles of their faith. David Hume's young Freethinking contemporary did not merely express his dissent from Calvinism. He struck at the heart of the Christian superstition. Seeing plainly that priests trade on fear, he sounded a true note when he said scornfully :—

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order.

How he lashes the rigidly righteous :—

Sae pious and sae holy,
Y've nought to do but mark and tell
Your naeboor's fauts and folly.

And, again :—

Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, and lang, wry faces,
Grunt up a solemn, lengthened groan,
And damn all parties but your own,
I'll warrant then ye'er nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

Burns never hesitated to make a frontal attack on religion :—

D'yrmple mild, D'yrmple mild, th' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snow,
Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye
For preaching that three 's ane an' twa.

The "Merciful Great God" of the Christians excites his derision and indignation :—

O Thou wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel'
Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for any guid or ill
They've done afore Thee.

The real Burns is not the popular Burns of the Scottish manse and drawing-room. When the peasant poet was received by the "unco' guid" aristocracy of Edinburgh, he was afloat on a treacherous sea. The company that professed to admire him stood on the land and drank the poor poet's health, and Burns raised his glass and bowed his acknowledgments on his frail raft. In spite of all the glib phrase-making of the critics, Burns belonged to a very different world to that which his patrons inhabited. The insuperable barriers between Burns, the rare genius, and his stupid, if well-meaning, patrons, is not got rid of by pretending that they do not exist.

Like all pioneers, Robert Burns was so much alone. So early was he in the field that he could do little more than anticipate Carlyle's bitter "Exodus from Houndsditch," or his caustic apostrophe to Christ, "Eh, man, ye've had your day!" But what he did was sufficient for his generation. He fought at fearful odds, and as Carlyle says, "Granted the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged, the pilot is blameworthy, but to know how blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

The noblest quality in Burns's magnificent poetry is the eternal quality of honest indignation. It comes always with no veil of invention; it is blunt, simple as daily speech, the man himself talking before us. It is this quality that makes his "Jolly Beggars," a poem which stands alone in literature, not only unmatched, but unmatchable. The beggars are not merely rebels; for them the laws and conventions of society have no existence. And so with Robert Burns himself. He rises above the network of clerical authority like a skylark. Every Freethinker will say of him what warm-hearted Burns himself said in his epitaph on his friend, "With such as he, where'er he be, may I be saved or damned."

MIMNERMUS.

No More Miracles.

I MET "Uncle Joe" the other evening coming home from an expedition round the streets of South London in search of food for Sunday's dinner and for the following days, one of which had been arranged by the Food Controller to be "a meatless day."

Uncle Joe, it may be explained, is a conventional Christian. At one time he was a Sunday-school teacher connected with the local church; then he became a churchwarden; but in recent years, under the stress by strain of the great War, he has fallen away from the paths of grace by attending the theatre or the cinema palaces, and getting what relief he was able by a little innocent amusement.

"Well, Uncle," I said, when we met, "how have you got on with regard to food—got any margarine or butter yet?"

"No," he said; "I've been round to about fifteen shops, and they've all sold out."

"Ah," I replied, by way of chaff, "time for some miracles now."

"No, my boy," he answered, "you always will bring that subject up. I have told you over and over again that the day of miracles is over—that the last miracle was performed by Jesus Christ himself—and to-day we have to rely upon human effort and natural forces for all that we get on this earth."

"Yes, Uncle, but what I always find is that you, like so many other Christians, forget what your Bible teaches and what ecclesiastical history has to say on the question. Don't you know that the New Testament says that Paul raised a man from the dead after the death of Jesus, and

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that hundreds of miracles are alleged to have happened in the early history of the Christian Church? Besides, what do you pray to God for—to stop the War, to turn the hearts of the enemy to a nobler purpose—if you believe that the age of miracles is past?"

"Well," responded Uncle Joe, "it does seem a little bit inconsistent I-know; but who expects consistency in any man to-day?"

"Well, Uncle, you think yourself hard done by because you can't get a little margarine to put on your bread. Now I know a poor woman who has nine children under fifteen, and her husband only earns about two pounds a week—which in war-time means only about a pound—and her children have been out all day waiting in the various queues to get small quantities of tea, sugar, and margarine; while the mother is trying to get a small piece of meat of some sort to stew for Sunday's dinner. Now, I ask you, would not a nice little miracle come in handy for such a poor creature as that?"

"Well, what would you suggest?" said Uncle Joe.

"God used to drop manna from the skies for the benefit of hungry Israelites thousands of years ago, why cannot he drop—I don't suggest legs of beef or shoulders of mutton because, if they hit you, they might put you out of action for a time—but like the fairy in pantomine, he might transform a lot of useless articles into nourishing food for the benefit of starving creatures all over Europe. Could he do that-if he would?"

"Certainly he could do it," said Uncle Joe, "if he chose; but you don't suppose for a moment that God Almighty is going to be dictated to by puny man; certainly not."

"Then God is responsible for the starvation of thousands of innocent women and children in all the so-called civilized nations of the earth to-day."

"How do you make that out?" said Uncle Joe, in a tone bordering on anger. "God did not cause the War; man did that."

"But God did not prevent the War, and therefore he is responsible for it, and you admit that he could if he had chosen. What is the good of you praying to him to stop it now, when he could have done so at the beginning, if it had not met with his approval?"

"You Atheists, I admit," said Uncle Joe, "are so rigidly logical in everything, you leave nothing to faith; it never seems to occur to you that God knows a great deal better than we do what is good for us."

"Do you say that starvation is good for any of us?"

"No, I do not say so. I do not know. But that may be God's way of punishing us for our sins."

"All I can say is, that it is a very cruel method. Our Heavenly Father ought at least to be as humane as the best of our earthly fathers. They would never think of adopting such methods."

"I don't know," responded Uncle Joe. "Some of them would."

"Yes, and they would be prosecuted for cruelty, and get long terms of imprisonment by a magistrate, who would be simply carrying out the feelings and sentiments of an outraged community."

"But let me refer you for a moment to some of the alleged miracles of Jesus. He is said to have fed five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two fishes. Could'nt he do something of that kind now?"

"As I have said," responded Uncle Joe, "he could if he chose."

"But he doesn't choose. Very well. He is alleged to have opened the eyes of the blind. Could he do that now?"

"Of course he could. He is Almighty."

"Very well," he does not do it. Don't say there is no occasion for such a miracle. Look at the thousands of soldiers that have come home from the War—not only blind, but deaf and dumb from shell shock. Cannot he restore sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb to-day?"

"He could if he chose."

"But he doesn't do it. It is left to the skill of the doctors, and they cannot accomplish such tasks. They cannot perform miracles."

"But they are performing wonders, you will admit. Their skill is marvellous," said Uncle Joe.

"They cannot perform miracles, it is true—they would if they could; they do their best, and they do it all without the aid of the gods. Their methods are purely natural. Men are making the lame to walk by the aid of artificial legs, and artificial arms are being supplied to those who have had the misfortune to lose them."

"Yes, I admit all that," said Uncle Joe, "and I rejoice in their achievements. I have actually seen a man who had lost his nose supplied with an artificial one. War is a terrible thing, but how can we stop it? Christians are as much against war as you are."

"Not quite. Freethinkers are uniformly in favour of peace, and are never in favour of war, except in self-defence, or in defence of unoffending people fighting for their rights against a powerful tyranny. But the Church has always been in favour of war—not one Church, but all the Churches. Read their history. There has never been a war fought that has not had the sanction of the Churches and the approval of the bishops and the clergy—at least not in my time—and, I think, not within living memory."

"But the Churches," said Uncle Joe, with an air of triumph, "are not Christianity."

"Christianity has an existence quite apart from all the Churches."

"Yes, I admit that, but you cannot think of Christianity without thinking of the people who profess it, and they belong, for the most part, to some Church or other, to some sect or other, however obscure and insignificant. Those who belong to no church—are indifferent—they are what I call nothingarians, and, I think, they form the largest part of any community."

"That may be so," responded Uncle Joe, with doubtful acquiescence.

"Well, and now we have discussed these matters, come with me to the Town Hall, and I will find out for you where you can get your margarine and other articles without the performance of any miracles. Come!"

With this exclamation I took "Uncle Joe" by the arm and accompanied him to the office of the Food Inspector, who soon put us on the track of the articles of food he required.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

A Thought from Hippolyte Taine.

UNTIL the age of fiteen I lived in ignorance and tranquillity, I had not yet thought of the future; I knew nothing of it; I was a Christian, and I had never asked myself what this life is worth, where I came from, and what I had to do.....Reason appeared to me like a beacon light, I began to suspect that there was something beyond what I had seen, and to grope as in the darkness. My religious faith was the first thing which fell before this spirit of inquiry. One doubt provoked another; each article of belief dragged another down with it in its fall.....I felt within myself enough honour and strength of will to live as a good man, even after losing my religion, I esteemed my reason too highly to believe in another authority than its own; I refused to recognize rules for my life and the conduct of my thoughts from any other person; I became indignant at the idea of being virtuous through fear and a believer through obedience.

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Anno Domini.

I WAS "down on my luck," with no immediate prospects, and being a member of a Christianized nation, I ought to have trusted myself to Providence, and allured consolation by resorting to plagiarized platitudes. I did neither, which to my early ecclesiastic shepherd would seem damning evidence that his prophecy was nearing fulfilment. He had warned me on one occasion when I had asked a rational question (receiving the stereotyped irrational prevarication) that I was "lost," and augured well to deserving a bad and untimely end.

That my end was not near has since been fully evinced, but the times, I must admit, were both bad and untimely. It had been the same for weeks, continually hoping and expecting, and—disappointment. The wearying effects of daily endeavours all coming to naught were gradually transmuting optimism to cynical pessimism. This, in spite of the unassailable reputation I held of being a ridiculous optimist, and I well deserved the appellation, for usually I never found it difficult to be happy-go-lucky. It is easy, however, to show off a Touchstonean levity to patronizing associates, but in strange surroundings, alone and with rapidly dwindling means, the rose-water fragrance of makebelief and illusion no longer charms the drab of cogent circumstances.

I do not think any man can be really optimistic if cast alone with his thoughts when things go against him. He may talk to himself and circumvent facts with admirable subterfuge until he generates consolation—temporarily. I have tried it. I have interrogated my reflection in the mirror to the jingle of a few shillings and coppers—the whole of my financial backing—but the result did not encourage inspiration. Perhaps I ought to have tried the old-fashioned remedy of silent invocation in humble genuflection, but, secretly, I prefer the barbaric simplicity of seeing to whom, or to what, I am appealing.

The day of my story was the culmination of a gathering morbidness. I rose late and did not advance far with my toilet, for after washing myself I lounged all day, collarless, and with slippered feet. I smoked heavily until my tongue became most disagreeably furred, all the while restlessly endeavouring to read and play patience alternately. As a matter of fact, I had resolved not to do any work that day, and at least I was consistent in that.

By way of a brief explanation of my circumstances, I should say that, possessing an artistic temperament, I had centred my attention on advertising as a means of subsistence, but it was clearly becoming evident that nothing short of a Nazarine touch would prove my venture anything but an abortive speculation.

The rain had pelted down all the afternoon, and helped considerably to intensify my splenetic condition; yet, when evening came, I determined to face the aqueous elements and find convivial attraction elsewhere. I soon made ready, and set off with a dogged persistence. The street in which I was staying was a sort of bottle-neck communication, joining up a slum district with the busy thoroughfare of a middle-class neighbourhood.

I had not walked far before my well-worn clothing was reduced to a pitiable appearance. The weather was atrocious, and even in my state of mental insubordination, I recognized the futility of defying the wrath of Jove, so I decided to turn into an ale saloon that I should directly pass. I had been there before, and knew what to expect; but the sin of misfortune is a wonderful leveler. Whatever the conditions, I knew that I should be tolerated and receive a certain kind of welcome.

Through the swing-doors a sanded, uneven-flagged passage led forward to a zinc-topped counter, serving in a crude way—with a ridiculously small enclosure behind—as a bar. Around, there were sprawled two or three coarse-looking men, and an emaciated old woman, whilst the landlord was sitting down, looking lascivious with vulgar prosperity. On one side of the passage was a very small room with "snug" painted on the door, and presumably this retreat was reserved for any "select" company who may call. It is really peculiar how class distinction exists in the most strange and out of way places. Opposite the snug, near the bar, was a much larger room, from which could be heard a babel of voices and snatches of music-hall ditties.

The landlord nodded as I entered, and somewhat counteracted my rancorous mood. I ordered "a steady" (a pint of common beer) as I turned into the large room to join the noisy company, consisting of young people of both sexes, with the exception of a huddled heap in a corner near the door. It was a bundle of degenerate senility—a man about sixty years old—who could tell! The ages of the rest ranged from sixteen to thirty.

I sat down on a form that stretched the length of the room along the wall, and received a tacit recognition from a few of the company, for they were habitues, and I had seen them there before. Probably they now recognized in me a fellow-Bohemian and outcast, and accepted my presence as a charitable reciprocation.

But what a company! Animate frames—draped. Even my apparel made an aristocratic comparison, for filth and rents were complements to their attire, and I felt quite an interloper, wearing a very soiled soft collar. Several of the people were in a partial state of intoxication, but their mirth was innocent—sadly innocent, though ribald. Their world was a remote planet in the effulgent constellation of society. They did not know the other spheres. What instruments had they with which to astronomize; with which to probe the secret of contemporary cosmos? The means, where were they?.....Where? Thumb-marked by chanting parasites and rapacious legislators, what chance had they? Exemplifications;—living monuments of a deific chastity!

A besotted slattern, flushed with voluminous talking and singing, her hair falling in matted lengths over her shoulder, came and sat beside me. She sniggled and ogled stupidly. My acquired sense of respectability revolted; but why? Why should I? The primitive streak was still within me, and it conquered. After all, it was only abstraction that separated us.

The girl was not more than twenty, but her voice was fogged with repeated inebriation. She leered gapingly as I cut some tobacco (I had been forced to economize by using a rank substitute), and presently asked me to buy her a bottle of stout. I did, and it was gone in one drink! But her depravity was insatiable, for next she asked me for a "chew 'o' 'bacca."....To what depths.....!

Those who live in the glass-house of religious jurisprudence will roll their eyes, and denounce my shameful aiding and abetting of such disgraceful morality. But puritan censure was always flaccid and superficial. There is no cavilling in the "backwash" of life. Driven into a state of abject passivity by the flagellation of circumstances, their meagre store of vitality finds expression in sordid extravagance.

I stayed an hour; an hour with unfettered primordialism. Bawling voices crossing the time of a metal-toned piano; freakish laughter and reeking jests. The girl danced up and down the sanded floor presumably imitating some music-hall star. It was mirth and melody to that shrunken crowd. Hellish! you say? Better that than the grind they would go to on the

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morrow! Convention, propriety and discrimination were discarded. They were automatons of irresponsibility revelling in the freedom of a Bacchanalian licence—just human beings without the veneer.

This, the twentieth century A.D., and still the alliterate combination—parsons and politicians—meddle on! "O Thou, the Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, look down upon these, Thy children, and rejoice!" So chants hypocrisy.

W.

Acid Drops.

Perhaps it was only fitting that the Day of Prayer on January 6 having been ordered by the King, for the Government to issue "Instructions" to the clergy as to prayers and sermons. These "Instructions" were, it appears, issued by Captain Guest, Mr. Lloyd George's Whip and Patronage Secretary. This is all that was needed to make the elaborate farce of a Day of Prayer complete. And what is one to think of a clergy who receive "Instructions" in this manner? If the clergy don't get the contempt of decent men and women, they at least work hard to deserve it.

The clergy are asserting constantly that the World-War will benefit Christianity, but a few of them are beginning to have doubts on the subject. No fewer than seventeen Army chaplains contribute to a volume of essays, of which the scope is indicated by the title, *The Church in the Furnace*. Freethinkers will smile at the suggestion that the Church, which has consigned so many people to the immortal bonfire, is in the furnace herself.

Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance has set aside £500 as a fund for war bonuses to curates in the diocese. This special act of Christian charity may cause joy in heaven, but it will bring but little happiness to the numerous poor curates, who will remember, prayerfully, that the Dear Archbishop struggles to keep up appearances on £15,000 yearly, and that the bachelor Bishop of London exists on a paltry £10,000 annually.

At an inquest at Kensington on the Rev. Francis Sparkling it was stated that the deceased had been addicted to drink, and that death was due to chloral poisoning. The restraints of religion are not very evident in this instance.

We are glad to see protests against the compulsory religion of the British Army growing. In the *Daily Chronicle* of January 16, Miss Winifred Stephens writes a letter in which she says:—

> Our soldiers and sailors are making unspeakable sacrifices for us. Ought we merely for the sake of orthodoxy, which will never save the military situation, to demand from any of them sacrifices of conscience? Ought we to require from the few, who are endowed with the mental activity and the moral courage, necessary for the facing of fundamental problems, the sacrifice of that liberty for the sake of which in the political world they are already risking their lives?
>
> These were the questions which leapt to my mind when I recently heard how an able officer at the front, after having been twice vainly reprimanded for absence from Church Parade, was summoned to answer for his offence before his superior officers. He frankly explained that, being a convinced agnostic, Church Parade would be for him rank hypocrisy. He was told that if he persisted in his refusal to attend he would be tried by court martial.
>
> Doubtless this case of a patriotic Englishman, who volunteered on the outbreak of the war, and who has ever since served abroad, having lately been promoted to high rank, is only one out of many.
>
> Such treatment of those who are fighting for political and national freedom, ever anomalous when we have the French who know nothing of such things for our Allies, grows still more glaring now that we have at our side in the field our American cousins, who would never consent and who would never be asked to submit to such religious tyranny.

It is one of the ironies that, amid all the talk of freedom, men should be compelled to assist at a religious service which so many of them regard as an outrage on common sense, and very few of them attend willingly.

The pill of religion has to be gilded nowadays. Listen to this account from a soldier: "We stroll down to the Y.M.C.A. tent, and have a gossip or a game of cards, meanwhile drinking enormous quantities of tea. We get fairly decent concerts at the Y.M.C.A. Saturday nights. One night we had a miniature bioscope featuring one of the "Exploits of Elaine." What a difference between this alluring picture and the attitude of the clergy in the ages of Faith: "Believe, or be damned."

Booker Washington, the negro educationist, in his *Up from Slavery*, tells of an old darkie who suddenly stopped work in the cotton field, and, looking towards the skies, said: "O Lawd, de cotton am so grassy, the work am so hard, and the sun am so hot that I believe this darkie am called to preach!"

An Anglican Church correspondent, referring to two extempore prayers, says that "the Almighty was given certain unnecessary pieces of information"; but, surely, the same thing is true of all prayer, whether extempore or not. The Creator is offered the insult of being told what vile, miserable creatures we are, how he has aided us in the past, and what he ought to do for us in the future. Yes, prayer gives God quite unnecessary pieces of information and instruction, and is in its very nature an impertinent but, fortunately, futile attempt to interfere with the course of things. All Christians affect to believe in it, though not one in a thousand ever practices it.

The newly appointed Governor of Jerusalem is the son of the Dean of Rochester, who was for many years vicar of the fashionable London church, St. Peter's, Eaton Square. When he left for Rochester, he said that he held so many offices he scarcely knew who he was. "I am vicar of St. Peter's," he remarked, "I am a surrogate of the Diocese of London, and Rural Dean of Westminster. Until the other day I was an honorary chaplain to the King. For a few more hours I am a Prebendary of St. Paul's." This is a striking example of the way some clerics take up their crosses and follow their Saviour.

The triumph of the Women's Suffrage Movement is a victory for Freethought, and the belated recognition of the rights of women is a tribute to the pioneers from Mary Wollstonecraft to John Stuart Mill. The completeness of the present victory is shown by the attitude of the Bishops in the House of Lords, for these right reverend fathers-in-God have been compelled by the logic of events to admit at last that women are human beings.

Canon J. G. Hannay—"George A. Birmingham"—as reported in the *Daily Mail*, does not believe that the War has brought any profit to Christianity. "The parsons," he says, "have messed their job":—

> The War had not shown the nation, he said, to be in any way Christianized. This was what had come to the mind of the thinking man in the Army, according to his experience at the front: "If there's one for me it'll hit me, and I don't see that a man's religion makes much odds when there's high explosives knocking around."
>
> That a man should enjoy shouting "Onward, Christian soldiers," was no kind of evidence that he was a Christian soldier. Some hymns had quite as agreeable tunes as "Keep the home fires burning."
>
> Religion ought to have made Crusaders of our men. It seemed to have done no such thing. Never was there a greater contrast than between "Tommy," blasphemous and cheerful, and the knight of Mallory's chivalry at prayers before battle in a forest hermit's chapel.

But we only see Mallory's knights through a veil of romance. As a matter of fact, we have no doubt but that the Mediæval Christian knight was just a swashbuckling, foul-mouthed, lecherous ruffian. Our own Richard Cœur de Lion was not a bad specimen of this class.

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Rev. Dr. Grtffith Jones says that much damage is being done the Churches and the cause of religion by members stampeding into the country in the case of air-raids. But what are they to do? If "Providence" attended to its business, it would at least see that its supporters were cared for. But it allows German bombs to drop about in the most promiscuous manner. Neither they nor "Providence" seem to pay any more attention to good Churchmen than they do to Atheists. And such gross negligence is quite inexcusable—from the religious point of view.

We take the following from *Reynolds'* of January 20:—

> Dear Gipsy,—Did you expect anybody to recognize you when you masqueraded in the Honours List of the British Empire Order as Rodney Smith, Esq.? Our old friend Ben Tillett has evolved into Mr. Benjamin Tillett on the Parliamentary Papers. It is very confusing. But now we have found you out. I heartily congratulate you on having collected £23,000 for the Y.M.C.A. huts.

In other words, Gipsy Smith, the vulgar blasphemer, gets—or rather buys—an honour for £23,000 of other people's money!

The minister of Melbourne Hall, Leicester, Rev. B. G. Gibbon, issues a circular to his supporters in which he says he finds "some people in our neighbourhood forsaking God, and renouncing both public worship and private prayer." We are very glad to hear it, and it bears out what we have said concerning the influence of the War on religious beliefs. Mr. Gibbon finds that, so far as the War is concerned, "nothing has happened inconsistent with the government of God as it is explained in the Bible." Naturally; as Heine said of God and foreigners, that's his trade. But even as it stands, Mr. Gibbon should reflect that the government of God as explained in the Bible is no more to the taste of millions than is the government of the Kaiser or the late Czar of Russia.

The appointment of Dr. Henson to the See of Hereford is causing some plain speaking in the press. The *Daily News* says that the Prime Minister's view is that "he has done the Established Church a signal service by making an appointment which gives much-needed strengthening, both in brain-power and courage, to the Bench of Bishops." The High Churchmen will remember Mr. Lloyd George in their prayers.

The clergy are not exempted from military service for nothing, and they are making the utmost use of their opportunities. In a letter to the President of the Sunday-School Union, the Archbishop of Canterbury writes: "We recognize to the full the vital importance of making right use of this solemn time in all our work with children and young people."

A newspaper paragraph states that a war-shrine at Ramsgate, destroyed by fanatics, has been replaced. How these Christians do love one another!

East Ham Corporation have taken over, and will cultivate, fifteen acres of a cemetery. Time will show whether "consecrated" ground is more productive than other earth.

"The world is a vile place," says Mr. James Douglas The remark is largely true of the Christian world, where bayonets bulk more largely than beatitudes.

Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, London, says that if the Government has the right to conscript a man, it has the right to conscript his conduct. Unfortunately, if bigoted Christians were in the seat of authority, this might mean that men would be frog-marched to a place of worship.

When the War started the clergy and their followers were almost unanimous in describing the Germans as "Atheists" in spite of the fact that every German soldier bears the words "God with us" on part of his uniform, and that for centuries Germany has held a conspicuous place in European religion. Now the clergy are beginning to admit the orthodoxy of the Germans, and speak of her "official pastors." Official! The clergy are the very dutiful servants of the State in most countries.

The late Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, formerly pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and son of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, left estate of the value of £7,173. This sum should be sufficient to keep him out of heaven.

The Headmaster of Rugby, the Rev. A. A. David, deplores that in religious education there is too much insistence on the sufferings of Christ. Surely, to expect cheerfulness in the religion of the Man of Sorrows is as reasonable as to look for icebergs in hell.

The copyright of the popular song, "Eileen Alannah," was sold recently by auction for £1,051. The hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light," fetched £235. Secular music appears to be a greater favourite with the public than the sacred variety.

The *Irish Times*, commenting on the sinking of the hospital ship *Rewa* by a German submarine, remarks that "It was the will of God that the weather permitted the saving of lives." From which one concludes it was the will of God that the ship should be torpedoed and that four of the crew should be killed. And in that case it would seem that the Germans were carrying out the will of God. We wish it were the will of God that something approaching common sense should enter the heads of his supporters.

For my part, let me have people about me who can smile," declares Sir Leo Money. To arrange this matter satisfactorily, Sir Leo had better avoid the society of folk who worship the Man of Sorrows.

The *Westminster Gazette* states that a book will shortly be published by "a well-known man who is a self-styled heretic," which deals with the insufficiency of Orthodoxy. Surely, such modesty is unnecessary when Christianity is in the melting-pot.

Lady Byron has avowed herself a Christian in the public press, and has declared that a man who votes against women's right to vote has no right to call himself a Christian. The lady doth protest too much. The Christian Church has always regarded woman as "the weaker vessel," and most advocates of sex equality have been as heterodox as the freethinking Lord Byron, who was an ancestor of her ladyship.

What a plentiful lack of humour some pious folk have! Harry Lauder, writing in the *American Magazine* on the death of his son, says that he has "two comforts always with me. And those comforts are God and my wife. We wonder if he blushed to make the association.

"A flying machine is a sacred thing," declares Lieut. A. P Thurston, an Air Board expert. We should like to hear the reply of those clergy whose churches have been smashed up by means of these "sacred" machines.

At the trial of Lieut. Aughuet, of the Belgian Army, on a charge of attempted murder, Mr. Justice Darling said that defendant had been acquitted by a court martial "on the plea that the devil counselled him, and that he acted under an irresistible force." This appears to suggest that Satan is still on active service.

In a striking article on "The War and the Churches," the *Daily News* says the clergy "have made no attempt to bridge the gulf between the warring nations. They have only sent up their cries to God to prove himself a German God, or a British God, a Prussian God, or an Austrian God." This is well put, but the discovery might have been made years ago.

Feltham magistrates have decided that a Mormon elder is a regular minister of religion, and so exempt from military service. The clerical umbrella is quite large enough when it shelters celibate Catholic priests and much-married Mormon elders.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 27, South Shields; February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

H. WRIGHT.—We have no copies of *Facts Worth Knowing* in stock. As you say, it was a useful pamphlet.

GUNNER G. LOVELL.—We are sending on a small parcel of literature for reading and distribution amongst your comrades.

PTE. F. PETTIT.—We hope that when this War is over soldiers will insist on their religious—or rather non-religious—opinions being respected. Pleased to know you receive the *Freethinker* regularly.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—H. H., 5s.; New Reader, 5s.; C. L. Knight (Rhodesia), £2; W. Beeton, 2s. 6d.

E. B.—Evidently a misprint. Thanks for cuttings.

D. G. DOLLERY.—We see nothing either hopeless or despairing in the cause we advocate. We are not hopeless, or we should not be trying to impress people with our views. And we certainly do not despair of either human reason or courage. The way may be hard, and progress not so rapid as one would wish, but progress is made, and that is an inspiration to fresh endeavour.

O. J. ROSS.—We are obliged for copy of your "Lord God" address. Quite a useful propagandist lecture.

W. P. JACOBS writes suggesting the need for an annotated edition of *The Rubaiyat*, which will explain all the allusive words and phrases used by Omar. Perhaps some of our readers may know of some such edition.

E. A. MACDONALD.—Received and shall appear. Thanks for good wishes.

TAB CAN writes:—"*The Divine Comedy*—The Hensley Henson row." A distinct hit.

A. MILLER.—Pleased to have your appreciation of last week's "Views."

E. PINDER.—The world would be much surprised if it knew all the Freethinkers abroad; and we can quite believe that John Noble was one of these unknown, or little known, heretics. Glad to have your opinion of the *Freethinker* as "top-hole."

WOULD Mrs. Hinley kindly communicate with Miss Vance, General Secretary N. S. S.?

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—F. W. Curle, 4s. 6d.; G. Bate, 1s.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Jan. 17) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures at Swansea. The afternoon lecture will be in the Elysium, High Street; in the evening in the Dockers' Hall, same building. The change of halls is due to the Elysium—the larger hall—not being available for both meetings; so friends will have to put up with a little crowding. It was hoped to arrange a debate between Mr. Cohen and a local clergyman during this visit, but the arrangements broke down. We understand, however, that some "official" opposition will be offered at the afternoon meeting. *Good* opposition is always welcome.

The new Southampton Branch of the N. S. S. made a good start last Sunday with two lectures from Mr. Cohen. There was a fair attendance in the morning, and a good one in the evening. Both lectures were listened to with the utmost appreciation, and there were many requests for an early return visit. There were also a number of new members enrolled. Mr. Rayner, a very old friend of the Movement in Southampton, officiated as chairman on both occasions.

We received a surprise visit last week from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who was home on leave from the Western Front. His friends will be pleased to know, as we were pleased to learn, and also to see that he was looking quite "fit," although longing to be back once more in the ranks of *our* Army. Certainly no one will be more pleased than we shall to see him there. We were glad to have from him the same cheerful reports of the progress of freethinking ideas among the soldiers, and some very useful recruits for the Cause should be gained from this source when the War is over.

Mr. Lloyd delivers two lectures to-day (Jan. 27) in the Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, South Shields. The afternoon lecture is at 3, the evening one at 6.30. We hope that Tyneside "saints" will make a special note of these meetings, and bring a Christian friend along with them.

For some time—ever since the War started, in fact—we have made it a practice to send out literature to men at the Front whenever we knew it would be acceptable, and as far as our means permitted. And we have every reason to believe that this literature has been well circulated and well read. Mr. N. L. Evans has now placed at the disposal of the Pioneer Press the sum of £10, to be used in sending literature to the troops, in memory of his son, Lance-cpl. Evans, whose death is regretfully recorded in another column. Lance-cpl. Evans was a very ardent Freethinker, and his father believes that in doing this he is paying a tribute to his son's memory of the kind he would have desired. We shall be glad to have from our readers the names and addresses of any soldiers to whom literature would be acceptable, either for reading or for distribution. We have some names on our list, but are open to receive more.

This from East Africa:—

> DEAR MR. COHEN,—I feel that I must write and express my thanks for the many pleasant hours that the dear old *Freethinker* has given me, not only here, but also in dear old blighty. I have only just got the July issue—a bit behind times—but welcome all the same, and I notice in your issue of July 22, 1917, that some one has stated that you have to declare a religion on joining up, let me state that you do not. I know from experience that the recruiting authorities try all they can to make you have a myth, but, if you are firm, you need not take one. I, myself, joined up in 1914, and was attested and sworn in as a Freethinker. I have had a good few hard fights to maintain it, but have managed it so far, and always will. But here no one bothers about it at all. You see there are so many religions that if they remembered one, it might prove awkward, so they just let things slide, and the parson is looked on as just one of us.
>
> As for the idea of God, I do not believe it enters the average Tommy's head. I have seen a few thousands in my time, but have never noticed that religion makes much headway with them, rather the other way about, that Tommy is making too much headway for religion. The way Tommy Atkins looks at the parson is, how many fags has he got, and after that question is answered interest ceases.
>
> I think I can claim to be the first to introduce the *Freethinker* into this part of the world, and it is making headway, can always give it away, the fellows are anxious to get it, and while I have been in the Army, I have made that my plan as soon as I have read it to hand it over to my friend.—Yours sincerely, A. MATTHEWS.

The course of lectures at the West Central Hall, Tottenham Court Road, is concluded to-day with an address by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith. The lecture commences at 3.15, and we hope there will be a crowded hall. Admission is free.

Good audiences are still the rule at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, we are pleased to learn, and we hope that local

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Freethinkers will continue to give the meetings the financial support they deserve. The lecturer this evening (Jan. 27) is Mr. Clifford Williams. His subject is "Freethoaght *v.* Christianity." The theatre ought to be again well filled.

We have received the following letter from Mr. Verinder, who has acted as chairman of the Committee of Protest in the fight with the L.C.C., and to whose unflagging labours the Committee is so deeply indebted :—

> SIR, — I am asked by the Joint Committee of Protest against Prohibition of Sale of Literature in L.C.C. Parks to send you their grateful thanks for the valuable help you have given them in opening your columns to their appeal for funds. May we also thank those of your readers who so promptly and generously responded? The cheque you have just sent me has enabled us to clear off all our remaining liabilities.
>
> Following upon the unanimous decision given in our favour by a strong Divisional Court in the case of Rex v. L.C.C. (*ex parte* Corrie), the Council has granted the permit which Mrs. Corrie asked for, on behalf of the West London Branch of the League of the Blind; and the Parks Committee has drafted Regulations under which permits may be issued to other individuals and associations. Copies of these Regulations may be obtained from the Chief Officer, Parks Department, 11, Regent Street, S.W., 1.
>
> We believe that the Parks Committee is now honestly desirous of restoring the conditions that existed previous to their unfortunate action at the end of May, 1916, and we are sure that all the Societies interested will do all in their power to make the new arrangements work, as the old ones admittedly did, smoothly and without friction.

The annual meeting of the Leicester Secular Society was held at the Secular Hall on Sunday, January 13, 1918. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson (President) in the chair had an excellent balance-sheet to present to the members, showing an income of £570, which the committee had found no difficulty in spending. Two series of lectures had been given during 1917, and many new members have been made. The Society has forty members serving in the Army, and two have been killed in France. A resolution impressing the importance of confining school instruction to secular subjects only was passed at the meeting. Mr. J. T. Lloyd was present and gave a short address.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

WE closed the fund rather abruptly last week, in consequence of a note from the Treasurer of the Committee, Mr. F. Verinder, to the effect that enough had been subscribed. The bill from solicitor and counsel proved to be extremely moderate, and the payment by the London County Council of the Committee's costs to the extent of £78 15s. decreased wonderfully the sum to be raised. So the Committee concludes its labours, for the present, having fully achieved its purpose, and cleared itself of all liabilities. But the Committee has decided not to disband, but to keep itself in being in case it is needed. From the *Freethinker* Fund £41 1s. 8d. was realized, which has been paid over to the treasurer, and for which we hold the receipt. A statement of the Committee's income and expenditure is being prepared, and will be sent to anyone interested in the matter. We have now only to thank our readers for their support, and to congratulate them on the result.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Orb of Day.

II.

(*Continued from p. 44.*)

ON our planet we are indebted to some mode of combustion for all our artificial heat. The phenomena of burning or combustion occur in consequence of the chemical union between the oxygen of the surrounding atmosphere and carbon, or some other inflammable substance. Hence, a definite quantity of heat is evolved from a definite quantity of combustible material. Obviously, if the sun's heat were maintained in this manner its heat and effulgence would soon expire. The sun is composed of many chemical elements, but even if we were to assume that the solar orb is made up of oxygen and hydrogen in proportions in which they combine to form water on our globe, their thermal powers would prove hopelessly insufficient for this purpose. It has been ascertained by means of experiment that the sum of heat generated by the union of definite weights of oxygen and hydrogen will exceed that evolved through the combustion of corresponding weights of any other substances. Were then, the solar mass thus constituted, it is known how large a percentage of the sun's volume would be compelled to combine each hour to produce the quantity of heat hourly radiated by that orb. This calculation discloses the fact that the heat of our luminary, were it sustained by combustion, would be exhausted in the course of 3,000 years. This result places the hypothesis of combustion completely out of court.

That bodies which yield heat must ultimately contract appears to be a principle of universal application. The sun perpetually occupied as it is in pouring forth heat into space must consequently undergo a diminution in bulk. But solar contraction proceeds so slowly in comparison with the sun's enormous diameter of 863,000 miles, that in 40,000 years it has probably decreased nearly 4,000 miles only. This diminution in an orb so vast could only be detected by delicate telescopic measurement. As a matter of fact, were two suns suspended in the sky, one with a diameter of 863,000 miles, and the other with a disc measuring 859,000 miles, no difference could be established by any ordinary test.

Helmholtz contended that this lessening of the solar diameter, which appears to proceed at the rate of sixteen inches daily, completely accounts for the sustentation of the sun's radiation. The enormous sum of heat thus evolved will enable the sun to send forth his heat for countless ages to come. But there is unquestionably a limit to this constant contraction, for were it continued indefinitely the sun would shrink to a mere speck. So far as science can determine, the solar globe is a vaporous body. Neither the telescope nor the photograph reveals anything save volumes of gas in which clouds and vapours are suspended. The temperature of these outer gaseous regions, although immensely high, is probably feeble in comparison with that of the solar centre. This intense internal heat would not merely melt but immediately vaporize the most refractory substances. But it is important to remember that the stupendous condensing pressure to which these solar substances are subjected must so compress them that their density is probably as great as the density of any terrestrial material. Indeed, our terrestrial terms—gases, liquids, and solids—lose all those distinctions so familiar to us, when related to substances subjected to such pressure as prevails in the solar interior.

A far-reaching factor in the maintenance of the sun's heat is the force of gravitation. When attracted by the earth a body falls towards it, and such a body, when falling vertically, commences with a velocity of about 32 feet per second. In the vicinity of the sun, however, owing to that globe's vastly greater mass, the gravitational pull is more than twenty-seven times as large as terrestrial gravitation at our earth's surface. Therefore the solar luminary will impart to any molecule

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near its surface a velocity of some 864 feet per second, and any body, big or little, will tend to approach the sun at this speed. It is immaterial at what velocities particles situated in the sun's neighbourhood are moving, or whether they are travelling to the right or left of the solar surface, upwards or downwards, or even when deflected by collisions with other molecules, the attraction of the sun's mass will tend to drag them towards him with a velocity of 864 feet per second. The velocity of the particles will, therefore, be accelerated. Thus the decision is reached that "the gain of energy by the molecules through gravitation towards the sun compensates for their losses in virtue of radiation." These considerations are held to remove the main difficulty concerning the sun's ability to sustain his tremendous outflow of heat.

Various methods have been adopted for determining the sun's remoteness and mass. But, perhaps, the gravitational process has most to commend it. The solar diameter must be many thousands of times that of our planet. And, although the sun is largely composed of vaporous matter, its mass is necessarily hugely superior to our earth's mass. Having secured the requisite knowledge of the leading physical characteristics of the solar globe, an estimate may be formed of its mass. This ascertained, startling as it may appear, the sun's distance from the earth is at once revealed.

Beginning with a knowledge of the earth's weight, our neighbouring planets, Mars and Venus, aid us in estimating the solar mass. Mars wanders round the sun in an ellipse beyond the earth's orbit. Now, were Mars the only member of the sun's family of worlds, his path would remain unchanged from century to century as he journeys around the solar orb. The other planetary bodies, however, produce perturbations in the orbit pursued by Mars, and in these the earth participates. The sun is, of course, the chief attraction which retains Mars in his orbit; but the earth also exercises an influence in deflecting the ruddy planet from the path it would otherwise pursue. The perturbations to which Mars is subjected prove that our globe's attraction is distinctly appreciable.

Were Mars influenced by the sun's attraction exclusively, the planet would move in an ellipse around its primary. But owing to the disturbances set up by the earth—and these alone we now consider, though several others are involved—the orbit of Mars is really one of considerable eccentricity. As a consequence, the distance of Mars from the sun varies to a greater degree than the distances presented by Venus and Jupiter.

In 1877 and 1892, Mars stood in opposition to the earth at a time when that planet was at perihelion—in that part of its orbit which lies nearest to the sun—and it sparkled in the sky with a brilliant red light. Without entering into complicated mathematical details, we may safely assert that it has been satisfactorily shown that the earth's mass is utterly insignificant when compared with that of the sun. If we assume provisionally that the solar mass is 100,000 times that of our globe, a calculation may be made on this assumption as to the extent of the earth's perturbing influences on Mars. Investigation, however, demonstrates that the earth's attraction causes a much smaller disturbance than that demanded if the sun is only 100,000 times the mass of the earth. Thus far, observations have not been sufficiently prolonged to weigh the sun quite accurately by this method. But there is no question that the earth's mass forms about 1-324,000th part of that of the solar globe. Moreover, once the gravitational pull of the sun on our earth and the other bodies of the solar system has been determined, the precise distance of our luminary stands revealed.

As we have seen, the mathematical astronomer, when he wishes to weigh celestial globes, must ascertain the attraction exerted by the various bodies on each other. This gravitational pull is proportional to the mass of the attracting body. The term "mass" is equivalent to quantity of matter, and thus, in ordinary circumstances, may be regarded as weight. And the astronomer really weighs a planet or sun on the same principle as a salesman when he weighs a ham in a spring balance As Professor Newcomb puts it:—

> When the butcher picks the ham up, he feels the pull of the ham towards the earth. When he hangs it on the hook, this pull is transferred from his hand to the spring of the balance. The stronger the pull, the further the spring is pulled down. What he reads on the scale is the strength of the pull. You know that this pull is simply the attraction of the earth on the ham. But, by a universal law of force, the ham attracts the earth exactly as much as the earth does the ham. So what the butcher really does is to find out how much or how strongly the ham attracts the earth, and he calls that pull the weight of the ham. On the same principle, the astronomer finds the weight of a body by finding how strong is its attractive pull on some other body.

Perhaps it will be well to point out the distinction between mass and weight, as the inability to grasp this difference has proved the source of much metaphysical confusion. The weight of substances is subject to variation. An object which weighs thirty pounds in London would weigh an extra ounce in Greenland, and nearly an ounce less than thirty pounds at the equator. These fluctuations are due to the fact that our planet is not a perfect sphere. Weight is entirely a question of gravity; and as the moon is a smaller and lighter orb than the earth, a body weighing thirty pounds in London would weigh five pounds only on our satellite. For similar reasons, an object weighting thirty pounds on our own globe would, owing to the gigantic gravitational pull of the sun, attain a weight of 800 pounds on that luminary. Thus, the astronomer does not refer to the weight of a body, but to its mass. The weight is relative only, but the mass is a constant quantity.

Although the exact distance of the sun is not yet known, the man of science is steadily nearing a definite determination of its remoteness in space. Measurement by parallax—the determination of the sun's distance by triangulation—yields a distance of 92,908,000 miles. Observations of the lunar motions give a distance of 92,008,000; the earth's mass returns a result of 93,113,000 miles; while the measurement obtained from the velocity of light furnishes a total of 93,075,000 miles. Allowing for the magnitude of the task, the close agreement among the figures obtained through methods so widely divergent serves as a guarantee for the general soundness of astronomical conclusions. Again, the wonderful accuracy with which solar and lunar eclipses, and various other celestial and terrestrial phenomena, are predicted many months, or even years, in advance of their occurrence, necessitate the conclusion that the science of astronomy is certain in the course of centuries to become perfectly exact in all its multitudinous departments.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

The Cairn Revisited

ON

"Thanksgiving Day," January 6, 1918.

We had left a *Freethinker* in the canister in the Cairn. The "Visitors Book" acclaimed the fact that, in the interval, quite a party had been there. One had written

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on the margin of the lonely pioneer journal: "Such papers as this are got up for a purpose; so I leave this copy here in case of extreme emergency." What delicate sarcasm! what magnanimity! Above all, what uncanny acuteness in the inference that such papers were "got up" for a "purpose"? What could one write in reply but "Thanks, awfully, old man!" And on the book we wrote our—

"THANKSGIVING."

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,—
That no life lives for ever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Must somewhere find the sea.

—*Swinburne.*

After which we felt comforted, descended a little, and sat in the lee of an ancient whin (furze) that sighed in soothing sympathy in the boundless awe and liberty of the moors. The low brow, and pitted eyes, and broken semblance of the ancient face in stone was in our thoughts, and seemed to whisper in the wind. And our mother—that most mellow, most loving heart of humankind—we felt, ought to have approached us over the bleached and pathless heath, out of the mists of many years, and murmured to us gently again as in the long ago! But, no; only the memory. But the memory was divine! The moor-fowl derided our sweetly serious musings. They rather deprecated our visit, and flew round us all too near. Why, our large walking-stick might have been a gun! Their pretty breasts were made to receive the hissing hail. So thinks the sportsman, secure at the right end of his weapon. "Bick, bick, birr!" "Hurry up! Hurry up!" "Be quiet! be quiet!" "Huh!" "Scut!" in throaty dissonance, but in the true language of Nature and the wilds. What a friend they had in us; but they were right to be wary. What a friend man has in the *Freethinker;* but he is timid as the birds, or savage as the slayer. The visitors to the Cairn will find that not only the paper has been there, but the Freethinker himself; and in time they may learn the significance of that.

On the sea, past black and lowering clouds, fell a faint glow of dull silver—a little hope in a murky world of despair. This also is significant.

A. M.

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT AND BIRTH CONTROL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I suggest to your readers interested in the recent Malthusian controversy appearing in your columns the desirability of reading *Malthus on the Principles of Population* first hand. The present writer, in reading Malthus, found many of the misconceptions due to deriving opinions second hand disappear, notably, the very prevalent idea that the Malthusian doctrine is advocated with a view to bolstering up the privileges of the wealthy classes. This view, I think, will be found untenable. Mr. Henry George's famous book, *Progress and Poverty*, contains, probably, the best attempt at refutation extant, and the book is well worth its place on any Freethinker's bookshelf. Although a student and admirer of Henry George, I think he failed to overthrow the Malthusian doctrine. Your correspondent, Robert Arch's, reference to Charles Bradlaugh's inability to understand Socialism is the difficulty of many, as there seem to be as many brands of this creed as of Christianity. Bradlaugh, however, was not isolated in that respect among the intellectuals of Freethought—Huxley, Mill, Ingersoll, and Foote, to name a few were in the same dilemma. Marcus Aurelius's advice given on the frontispiece of *Poogress and Poverty*—"Make for thyself a definition of the thing that is presented to thee so as to see distinctly what kind of a thing it is in its substance, in its nudity, in its complete entirety," is sadly needed advice to the people who call themselves Socialists. But if it were understood, would not Socialism, or any reform, in the words of Mill—"let slip the reins that hitherto restrained population," and an equality of misery be the result. At the same time, Malthusians should not forget that the law of rent is equally with the law of population a barrier to economic progress, and if birth control resulted in economic betterment, would it not merely let slip the reins that hitherto restrained the cupidity of the landowners? I have no doubt that the Malthusian doctrine, as Dr. Drysdale puts it, is destructive of the myths of theology and of Socialism as commonly understood. Malthusianism seems to have received its recent impetus and revival from the present War, which, probably, would not have occurred had Germany only half her present population.

S. H. LAYCOCK.

SIR,—I have been intensely interested in the correspondence circling round Malthus's doctrine of limitation and its application or opposition to Socialism.

The disciples of Malthus have been most emphatic in their asserting of the soundness of his doctrine. But what surprises one is that not one writer has, so far, pleaded for limitation of the family on *moral* grounds. Robert Arch accepts the doctrine with reservation: it is good and useful for some—those who can afford to purchase preventatives—but for "the poor," whom, he says, have but two pleasures, "convivial drinking" and "connubial intercourse," and cannot afford the preventatives, to go to them with the propaganda is vain and useless.

But does it not occur to these correspondents that it is time connubial intercourse was lifted a little higher; that it ceased to be looked upon as a pleasure, and that it became what it is—simply a creative function? Cannot the Malthus disciples weave into their propaganda the fact that it is hurtful to the parents' health, and to their children's health, that intercourse should be indulged in indiscriminately? I think so.

Is it not time the followers of Malthus lifted their doctrine a little higher, and commenced to teach that sexual intercourse, used for any purpose but its true one, is a violation of Nature's law, and therefore immoral? The Socialist State of my dreams is peopled by men and women all accepting that.

ALICE PEACHEY.

SIR,—While agreeing in the main with Mr. Arch's letter, there are a few points that seem to call for criticism. By inference, we are left to understand that birth-restriction, as it operates amongst the upper and middle classes, is highly commendable; but for the lower classes, Socialism is the only cure for their ills. The statement that their "pleasures" are limited to "convivial drinking and connubial intercourse" is surely a trifle overdrawn. It is true that individuals may be found in this class of whom this may be said without fear of contradiction; but this type is to be found in every class of society. Generally speaking, this class has, I believe, hopes and aspirations in common with the rest of humanity that raises it above the level of the brute. To those of this class possessing such hopes the value of the Malthusian teaching compares more than favourably with that of the Socialist for this reason—that it offers an immediate improvement in the economic condition of the individual; or, at any rate, shows him how he may strengthen his position in the struggle with the forces that threaten to enslave him by restricting his offspring. Compare this with the prospect of the ideal State that is to be realized in the distant future. He and his offspring will all be dead, and it is not to be wondered at if some of us regard the result of Malthusian teaching among these people as being capable of producing something more tangible than "vain talk." Further, the degree of success with which the Malthusian meets will be shared in by the Socialist, who will find minds better fitted to grasp and grapple with the economic evils as they are exposed to them. On these grounds, it appears a little premature for the Socialist to indulge in mud-slinging.

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The possibilities in food production may be all he claims for them; but people desire to obtain the best standard of life for the present, and they can't exist on possibilities. I agree with Mr. Arch that Malthusianism is not destructive of Socialism, but can see no reason for decrying the doctrine because an individual here and there uses it as a weapon against Socialism.

J. GRAHAM.

[We have received other letters on this topic, including a reply from Dr. Drysdale, which we are compelled to hold over until next week.—ED.]

A PLEA FOR JUSTICE.

SIR,—Now that some Conscientious Objectors are being released from prison, may I crave your space in order to give publicity to the case of Emanuel Ribeiro?

Ribeiro had struggled for a number of years to bring up six children, and in the process he developed certain unfashionable ideas, while his thoughts, at any rate, if not his actions, were allowed to run along on free lines until the War came. It is almost superfluous to mention that he was for fifteen years an opponent, and a very forceful opponent, to *all* and every condition which makes for war. At any rate, he thought that, as he pleaded as a Conscientious Objector, he might have been allowed some consideration; but he was too uncompromising. Arrested and handed over on Jan. 17, he was sent to Bury Barracks, where they put food before him; but, disliking and disagreeing with everything pertaining to the glory of war, he declined. From there he was removed to where he is now, and forcibly fed. For twelve long months he has endured this treatment, and he is allowed to see no one but his wife and an Army "chaplain," whom Ribeiro has sent about his business, but who insisted on coming, until Ribeiro wrote to him, politely but firmly, telling him he had no use for him.

I would say that this man, an admirer of Ferrer and a descendant of the people who produced Ferrer—or, perhaps, it would be better to say that he is a descendant of the consequences of the Spanish Inquisition—is determined that nothing, *nothing*, can break him. No one can buy him, and he is prepared to suffer, and maybe die, for the principles he holds dear.

These facts have been published in the *Guardian*, *Labour Leader*, etc. One man, one woman, and six bright, intelligent little children going through these tortures because the father has a conscience and officialdom has none! He desires no advertisement. All he wants is freedom of thought. Ribeiro has shown his adherence to principle. It is for the Government to see that justice is done.

A. L.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE CHURCHES.

SIR,—I asked the following clergymen if they could give me any evidence for the existence of God.

The Archbishop of Canterbury answered: "Demonstration in these matters is not to be looked for."

The Rev. E. A. Burroughs: "It is not much use discussing questions of colour with the colour-blind."

Father Bernard Vaughan: "I see God in everything here, and hope to see everything in God hereafter, the difference between us is the difference between sight and blindness."

The Natural Religion, p. 56, by the Rev. Vernon Staley, with a preface by the Rev. J. R. Illingworth, M.A., Bampton Lecturer: "In the ordinary acceptation of the word, it may be granted that there is no absolutely convincing proof of God's existence. It may be doubted if any actual demonstration of the existence of a Divine Being can be adduced."

Lord Hugh Cecil says: "Belief in Hell brings before us God once more as the Father of all mercies, not in spite of, but because, he is the Architect of Hell."

Away with such debasing superstition.

E. C. F. JAMES.

A new book bears the title, *God and the Soldier*, and professes to give an account of the religion of the fighting men "as interpreted by two famous preachers." We should greatly prefer to read Atkins's own account of his religious views.

Obituary.

Peculiarly sad circumstances attended the death of Lance-cpl. L. H. Evans, the only son of Mr. N. J. Evans, of Palmer's Green, N. A delicate boy from his birth, it was only by the exercise of the greatest care that he reached manhood, and those who knew him were greatly surprised that a medical officer should ever have passed him for general service. For about twelve months of his Army life he was stationed on the South coast, and, being fortunate enough to be under the command of considerate and humane officers, suffered no ill. Then he was transferred to a Scottish regiment, and sent to the South-West of Ireland. Here he contracted a cold, but was ordered abroad, and towards the end of December came home on embarkation leave. He reached home very ill, and was taken—against his father's wishes—to the Edmonton Military Hospital. There, after three or four days, the doctor diagnosed double pneumonia, which eventuated in death on January 8. A sincere and earnest Freethinker, he could claim among his converts his own father. Quiet and retiring in disposition, and of studious habits, he never missed a chance of dropping a word in season for Freethought. His opinions were formed slowly, but once formed, were clear and definite. At the hospital he faced his doom with all the courage of a soldier on the battle-field. He was conscious to within five minutes of his death, and a few hours before he died said, "I will fight to the last gasp." He was cremated, in accordance with his own desire, at Golder's Green on January 11. One cannot help feeling that the placing of of a man like L. H. Evans, with so delicate a constitution, was a blunder. His power of vital resistance was small, and he was certain to fall before the first assault on his health. We extend our sincere sympathy to his father, whom death has robbed of a son, a companion, and a friend.

Society News.

West Central Hall, London.—Mr. Lloyd was in his best form on Sunday afternoon, January 20, and delivered a most inspiring lecture. Opposition was furnished by Mr. Noah Bailey of Christian Evidence notoriety, who adopted the well-known Christian Evidence tactics of partial quotation. These were instantly demolished by Mr. Lloyd, whose wide-reading and excellent memory, make him more than equal to such attempts. The chair was taken by Dr. Binnie Dunlop. —E. M. V.

North London Branch N.S.S.—In spite of very bad weather there was a large gathering at the St. Pancras Reform Club on Thursday to hear the debate between Mr. Collette Jones and Mr. Horace Leaf. Mr. Leaf, though an excellent speaker and practised debater, completely failed to establish the contention that man survived death, and evaded the points put forward by Mr. Jones. On Sunday Mr. Miller delivered an excellent address on the "Religion of Russia and the Revolution," which was followed with great interest. To-day, January 27, Mr. H. V. Storey is enquiring "What is Now the Chief Duty of the Freethought Party?" and, as opinions may differ widely on this subject, we hope for a good attendance and an excellent open debate —H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

Manchester Branch N. S. S.—Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner delivered two lectures here on Sunday last to a highly appreciative audience, which included several of the old followers of Charles Bradlaugh. In the evening, interest was added to the proceedings by Mrs. Bonner "naming" a two-months'-old little girl. We wish Rosa Jean Foster, the little lady in question, every success in her future life. There was a good sale of literature, and several applications for membership.—H. BLACK, Hon. Sec.

THE CHURCH'S LOSS.

Colonel: "You're a thorough bad egg, your conduct's outrageous. How you ever came to be an officer, I don't know."

Subaltern (bitterly): "No, sir. If it hadn't been for this beastly War, I should have been in Holy Orders long ago."

—*London Opinion.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, H. V. Storey, "What is now the Chief Duty of the Freethought Party?" Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Oval Tube Station): 7, R. Miller, "The Religion of Russia and the Revolution."

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Passing of Christianity."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Swasey, Ratcliffe, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Freethought *v.* Christianity."

LEICESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss A. E. F. Horniman, M.A., "Under Castle Rule." Reminiscences of Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Miss Constance Brooks, "George Meredith."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Humanism: Its Rise and Growth"; 6 30, "Self-Reliance *versus* Trust in God." Music at 6 prompt.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): Chapman Cohen, 3 (Elysium, High Street), "Why Men Believe in God"; 7, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

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.

London.

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 St. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Rd. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch St. J. J. Jaques, 191 Old St.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Rd., Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Rd. (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Rd., Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore St., Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Rd. E. S. Smith, 7 Turnpike Lane, Hornsey. E. J. Diffey, 44 Cheverton Rd., Whitehall Park.

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. G. Lawrence, New Rd., Woolwich.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King St., Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Rd., Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82 Seaford Rd., West Ealing. H. Bright, 2 Edward St., Wardour St., Oxford St.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

Country.

Aberdeenshire.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.

Askam-in-Furness.—Mr. J. Gill, The Pharmacy, Duke St.

Barrow-in-Furness,—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

Beccles.—C. Chase, Station Road.

Birkenhead.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.

Birmingham.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook St. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Wocester St. F. Holder, 42 Hurst St. Mr. Benton, High St., Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Rd. Post Office, Saltley. Messrs. Stanford & Mann, New St. Mrs. J. E. Burns, 478 Bordesley Green.

Bolton.—E. Basnett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road.

Breconshire.—Mrs. Jenkins, Gartly House, Talgarth.

Carlisle.—Ashton Ridley, 16 and 18 Bridge St., Caldewgate.

Carshalton.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.

Cheltenham.—S. Norris, Ambrose Street.

Coventry.—Miss Bowry, 6 Earlsdon St.

Cullompton.—A. W. Clitsome, The Square.

Derbyshire.—Mr. Featherstone, Chapel-en-le-Firth.

Dover.—H. P. Tarrant, 131 Folkestone Rd.

Dublin.—J. C. Kearney, 59 Upper Stephen St. and 52 South St. George's St.

Dundee.—Mr. Cunningham, St. Andrew's Street. "The Hub," High Street. Mr. Lamb, 121 Overgate.

Edinburgh.—Mrs. Telford, 43 Broughton St. A. and L. Jeffery, 26 Elm Row.

Exeter.—T. Fisher, 37 South St.

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

Gateshead.—Henderson & Birkett, 4 & 5 Hills Street.

Glasgow.—David Baxter, 32 Brunswick St. Mr. Alexander, Stonelaw Rd., Rutherglen. W. Lowe, 220 Argyle St. Mr. Cooper, 53 Main St., Bridgeton. Mr. Shields, 1125 Pollokshaws Rd., Shawlands; 249 Newlands Rd., Cathcart; 359 Holmlea Rd., Cathcart; Tramway Kiosk, Battlefield; 1 Kennishead Rd., Thornliebank; 111 Gloucester St., S. S.; 139 West Nile St., City; 197 George St, City. Mr. Hamilton, 90 Whitevale St.

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

Hastings.—King Bros., 2 Queen's Road.

Ipswich.—A. E. Hiskey, 1 Old Cattle Market. T. Shelbourne, St. Matthew Street. Mr. Fox, Fore Street. Mr. Fox, St. Helen's Street. Mr. Roberson, Back Hamlet. Mr. Joyce, Fore Street.

Jarrow.—L. Prescod, Railway Street.

Kent.—E. J. Voss, 148 Broadway, Bexley Heath.

Lancashire.—John Turner, Scourbottom, Waterford. W. Restall, Station Bridge, Urmston. J. T. Middlehurst, 43 Water Lane, Preston.

Leeds.—J. Bray, 95 Park Lane. J. Sutcliffe, West St. C. H. Johnson, Corn Exchange.

Leicester.—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. Mr. Leeson, Northampton St.

Liverpool.—S. Reeves, 316 Derby Rd., Bootle. Grant's Bookstall, Lord St. Arcade.

Manchester.—Mrs. Tole, Whitelow Rd., Chorlton-cum-Hardy. John Woods, 2A Spring Gardens. Mrs. Clark, 25 Leicester Rd., Hr. Broughton, Salford. Wm. Cox, Broad St., Pendleton, Salford. W. Winckle, Bury New Rd. Post Office, Prestwich. J. Wheeler, 206 Stockport Rd., Chorlton-on-Medlock.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Some Quotations of "Ignotus."—The Editor	65
The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd	66
Wilfred Gibson.—Mimnermus	67
Thomas Paine.—G. O. Warren	68
The Scottish Oath	70
Snow Waters.—Andrew Millar	70
Acid Drops	71
How To Do It	72
To Correspondents	73
Sugar Plums	73
The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer	74
The Professional Touch.—Ignotus	75
Letter to the Editor—Neo-Malthusianism v. Socialism	76
The Massrcre of the Innocents	76
Society News	77
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	77
Obituary	77

Views and Opinions.

Wanted, an Epidemic.

If honesty of speech and sanity of thought were to become epidemic on the widest conceivable scale, how long would organized Christianity endure? The period would hardly be a lengthy one. For Christianity persists in this country because clear thinking and honest speaking so seldom run together. On the one side we have those who never subject their religious beliefs to a careful examination, and so do not feel how indefensible they are; and on the other hand we have those who seek to veil their dissent from Christianity by language which conceals rather than reveals their true opinions. A belief in Deity means a belief in a vague abstraction which bears no reasonable relation to what people understand by God. Faith in Christ means a belief that he was a good man, a well-intentioned social reformer. Or people say they believe in religion, but not in theology; in Christianity, but not in the Churches. And so on through a number of formulæ, all of which serve to disguise the fact that, while there is no real belief left, there is wanting the courage to avow the fact.

* * *

Some Questions of "Ignotus."

There is not, nor is there likely to be, an epidemic of clear thinking and honest speaking in relation to religion; but, on the whole, the complaint grows. And there is an instance before us while we write, which, indeed, is the cause of our writing. For some time past the *Manchester City News* has made a practice of publishing some exceedingly well-written articles on religious subjects by a writer who veils his personality under the pen-name of "Ignotus." These articles have attracted much attention, and they are now reprinted in book form.[1] No claim to originality is made by "Ignotus." It expresses, says the author, "all the doubts, fears, surmisings, defiances, excuses, surrenders, that are associated with the many religions of mankind." The value of the book is that it is symptomatic. All that "Ignotus" says has been said over and over again in these pages in an even more drastic and less compromising form. The appearance of these articles in the columns of a daily paper, with their subsequent reissue in book form, is evidence of the growth of our opinions and of the efficacy of our propaganda. For the newspaper press is abnormally sensitive to the pressure of public opinion. It publishes only what is more or less acceptable to its readers; and the real success of our persistent work is seen, not so much in actual organization, as in the extent to which we force the outside world to adopt the main ideas for which Freeth nkers have fought and suffered.

* * *

Miracles.

The Churches are empty, and they are empty because people have lost, or are losing, faith in those things for which the Churches stand. That is the burden of *The Questions of Ignotus*, and in defence of his thesis he brings an unanswerable indictment against current Christianity. Here is a specimen of "Ignotus" in his assault on the belief in miracles:—

> A miracle, despite all the arguments of modern apologists, must be supernatural.....Abandon that claim, and what remains? Why trouble to talk about miracles at all? Why declare that Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Job, and even the Messiah himself, and all his Apostles, were different from other men if they could not do more than other men?.....As long as superstition exists, miracles linger. When science comes in, miracles go out.

Now, that is a good thumping knock at miracles, and it is one to which the Churches have really no reply. Two or three writers do attempt to reply to "Ignotus," and these are published with the original articles. But they are wide of the mark. For they fail to realize that neither the acceptance nor the rejection of miracles is a question of evidence. It is only a matter of historical psychology. Given a certain low stage of culture and belief in the miraculous is universal. As Spinoza said, anything is possible because nothing is certain. With advancing certainty the realm of possibility contracts. To-day we know *why* people believed in miracles. We know also why they outgrew the belief. We do not argue that dead men were not brought to life, or that water was not turned into wine. We know such things never did and never will happen. As "Ignotus" says, "Common sense gives the death-blow to the supernatural, and grown men emerge from dim superstitions and the mystery of the marvellous just as children grow too wise for fairydom." * * *

The Truth About Religion.

The Questions of Ignotus does not claim to be a systematic treatise on religion, but there is plenty of evidence that the author has read widely and thoroughly. Witness the following on the origin of religion:—

> The religion of primitive man originated mainly, if not wholly in fear. He experienced pain, he beheld the mystery of death; he wondered whence the one pro-

[1] *The Questions of Ignotus.* Chapman & Hall; 5s. net.

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> ceeded and how it might be averted; and he dimly speculated on the meaning of death, and the possibility of an after existence with rewards and punishments. He seemed to be the sport of gods and demons. Gradually a crude system of ethics was evolved, and in his desire to placate the demons and win the favour of the gods he decided on a course of life which he deemed would be pleasing to them.....If he thought the gods and demons would delight in blood, he gave these blood; preferably that of his enemies or of those who did not think as he did."

That kind of writing is much to be preferred to the vague foolishness written about man's yearning for companionship with God. Fear and ignorance are the true mother of the gods of primitive life, and our own gods, howsoever refined, are their lineal descendants, and have no better claim to reality. And he who knows how the gods came into existence is in no doubt as to the conditions of their departure. That which ignorance breeds knowledge destroys. The tree of knowledge was the only one, the fruit of which God commanded man not to eat. To eat of that tree is always fatal—to the gods.

* * *

An Exchange of Errors.

But while quite appreciating much that "Ignotus" writes, we do not at all appreciate the distinction he draws between religion and theology, nor his laudation of an ideal Christianity "as taught in Galilee." There can be no religion without a theology, that is, if religion is to be of use to anyone. If religion consists in the belief in God and a future life, theology is, after all, only a reasoned statement of man's assumed relations to God and a future state, and if he believes in these things, man is certain to argue them out, and in that case we have a theology. And the ideal, moralizing Christianity of Galilee, which could "unite in morals, virtue, and hopes the whole rational world," is as much a myth as anything that "Ignotus" throws overboard. Putting on one side the fact that the Jesus Christ of the New Testament is an obviously mythical figure, the purpose of primitive Christianity was as far as is possible from that of uniting people in virtue and hopes and rational endeavour. The Jesus of the New Testament is saturated in supernaturalism. He is supernaturally born, he works miracles, he believes that epilepsy and insanity are caused by supernatural agency, he has supernatural visitations, and his aim is to save men from the terrors of a supernatural world. There was not a superstition of the ancient world against which early Christianity set itself. It accepted all, and it strengthened many. The Christianity which makes much of a moral life and of social Christianity is not primitive at all. It is a concession to modern forces too strong for Christianity to altogether crush. If "common sense gives the death-blow to the supernatural," this is as true of the supernatural New Testament Jesus as of other supernaturalisms. And once this goes, we have no other Jesus and no other primitive Christianity that the world will trouble about for long.

* * *

A Defence of Thomas Paine.

"Ignotus" has a very interesting chapter on Foreign Missions, which contains a deserved condemnation on this greatest of modern Christian impostures. And there is a quiet humour in his pointing out the folly of sending missionaries to convert Jews abroad when we have so many at home, with that "very obstinate case," the Chief Rabbi. There is also a fine defence of Thomas Paine, and a rebuke to the slanders on great Freethinkers, which we cannot forbear quoting:—

> Think of the lies that have been built up on the dead bodies of renowned unbelievers. Think of the slanders on dying men—how Voltaire passed away in a torment of remorse; how Paine died drunk and blaspheming; how Renan recanted; how Huxley repented in his last hours of all that he had said and done in his life of thought and research.....I think of Thomas Paine..... I wonder what foul deeds this miscreant committed? It happens that I have his biography before me, and I find that he was a humanitarian, a hero on the battlefield, a valiant reformer, a high-minded philosopher, a self-denying practitioner of the Golden Rule, one who loved his neighbour, and devoted his strength to, and risked his life for, his fellow-men.....Paine was the author of the sublime appeal to the American nation to abolish slavery, and he fought heroically that the black man's fetters should be struck off.....But he wrote the *Age of Reason*, and "Tom" Paine, the righteous man, has ever since been marked out for unsparing condemnation by other righteous men, who forgot the Christian precepts of mercy, toleration, and forgiveness.

We know not by what right mercy, toleration, and forgiveness are called *Christian* precepts. Christians did not originate them, and it has practised them even less than other religions that might be named. But we are left wondering why a man, such as "Ignotus," who has clearly surrendered everything distinctively Christian, should still cling to the name! Far better to make a clear break, and join the growing army of men and women who find in humanity the inspiration for, and the reward of, their finest endeavours.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Newest Apologetic.

I.

THERE is evidently a strong feeling abroad among Christian teachers that their religion stands in great need at present of a fresh defence. No apologia of the past meets the requirements of to-day. Theological defenders, like the late Professor A. B. Bruce, and philanthropic champions, like Mr. C. L. Brace, author of the once popular work, *Gesta Christi*, are now completely out of date, and there is a general cry for some effective confutation of the anti-Christian arguments which now seem to be exerting such a mighty influence throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. In our own land, in particular, this need is most keenly felt; and we are informed that, at the instance of the Christian Evidence Society, a series of evidential books is being drawn up, one of which, *The Achievements of Christianity*, by the Rev. J. K. Mozley, B.D., and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, is now in our hands. This little volume, of less than a hundred pages, is described as a popular but scholarly answer to the question: "Has the World Been Made Better by Christianity?" The author bears an honoured name in the theological world; and in a short review in the *Church Times* it was pronounced an exceptionally able and efficient piece of work. It must be candidly admitted that Mr. Mozley is, on the whole, one of the fairest apologists we have ever come across; and yet there is no escape from the impression that he is playing the part of a special pleader who is professionally holding a brief for Christianity. He warns us against expecting a perfect apologetic on the score that the Christian record is woefully incomplete, as well as "far too complex to allow, even within its limits, of the immediate emergence of an apologia for the Christian faith." He tells us that the historical reforms, which in *Gesta Christi* are proudly recited as directly due to Christianity, "certainly look well on paper," but fail to carry conviction to any fair-minded reader. Side by side with such vaunted reforms the Christian Church must shoulder the burdens of religious intolerance, the Inquisition, the religious

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wars, and, in fact, all the things done by Christians which appear specially scandalous." Mr. Mozley is also much juster in his reference to the pre-Christian Pagan world than most of his brethren. He says:—

> There has been a reaction from the picture drawn by Matthew Arnold, how:
>
> On that hard Pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell;
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell—
>
> and there has been a tendency to insist on the amount of solid personal worth and quiet domestic happiness to be found in the Empire, especially in the provinces, which were less corrupt than Rome.

We desire to give Mr. Mozley due credit for the fairness he displays, however reluctantly. It is truly refreshing to find him characterizing as "over-lavish" Brace's ascription to Christianity of "improvements and humanities which any unbeliever in Christianity, who at the same time confessed himself a believer in progress, could easily attribute to the tendency of the human heart to improve." Again, one rejoices at the frank admission that "the sharp divergence sometimes drawn between the Christian spirit and the Christian Church may be held to lead to the conclusion that the Christian spirit is only a specialized representation of the universal spirit of kindness and benevolence." We congratulate Mr. Mozley on his candour and courage, and only regret the absence of such noble qualities from the works of most other apologists.

At the same time, our own sense of fairness compels us to declare that our author's fairness is more apparent than real. Take the following sample:—

> It was in virtue of the faith of Christ, and of that alone, that the position of women was bettered, and respect for women increased, in the later Roman Empire and in the dark ages that followed, that the exposition of children was fiercely combated, and that slavery was practically extinct in Europe by the fourteenth century (pp. xiii., xiv.).

We deliberately contend that on those three points Mr. Mozley is entirely mistaken. On the subject of slavery he is altogether at sea. We do not know what he means by saying "that slavery was practically extinct in Europe by the fourteenth century" in virtue of the faith of Chrtst. By the fourteenth century it is true that a great change had taken place; but all available evidence clearly shows that it was a transition from one name to another rather than from one state to another; and in any case, the faith of Christ in no sense contributed to the change. It is true that in the fourteenth century there were nominally very few slaves in Europe, but that is chiefly because slaves were then called serfs. It is also true that the Church was instrumental in effecting some degree of improvement in the condition of both slaves and serfs, but she was inspired more by economic and political than by religious motives. There may be some technical justification of Mr. Mozley's statement; but from the purely religious point of view there is nothing that can be said in its favour. And in the securing of any improvements in the social life of Europe from the fourteenth century onward, we have to apportion due credit to the influence of the renaissance, which was largely of an anti-Christian character. But we shall return to this point in a future article.

Mr. Mozley asserts that under Christianity "the position of slaves was made more tolerable, and freedom was more easily won"; but Roman historians testify that in some respects the lot of the slave grew worse. Lecky says that for some centuries there were more slaves under Christian rule than there had been under Paganism. What Mr. Mozley fails to mention is that even under the Republic it had been customary to grant certain slaves their liberty, and that under the Empire the freedmen rose steadily in influence and were held in high esteem. They often "obtained provincial governments, and were appointed to offices in the imperial household which virtually placed them at the head of administrative departments. As Dr. J. K. Ingram well says:—

> Freedmen of humble rank filled the minor offices in the administrative service, in the city cohorts, and in the army; and we shall find that they entered largely into the trades and professions when free labour began to revive. They appeared also in literature; we hear of several historical and biographical memoirs by freedmen under the Republic and the early Empire; many of them were professors of grammar and the kindred arts, as Tiro, the amenuensis of Cicero, and Hyginus, the librarian of Augustus; and names of a higher order are those of Livius Andronicus, Caecilius, Statius, Terence, Publius Syrus, Phaedrus, and Epictetus (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Tenth Edition, vol. xxii., p. 133).

Under the Empire, in particular, in the second century of our era, the institution of slavery was condemned by emperors and philosophers alike, as contrary to nature. Seneca denounced it in the name of reason and humanity. He laid it down as a rule that slaves should be treated as "humble friends." Dio Chrysostom, Trajan's adviser, was a Greek writer, and was in full agreement with Seneca on the subject. The Pagan emperors, Nero, Diocletian, Hadrian, Antoninus, Pius, and others, showed their appreciation of the teaching of the philosophers by legislating in favour of the slaves and against the cruel tyranny of many of their masters. Indeed, it is incontrovertible that the trend of the Empire was towards liberty, and that some of the Pagan emperors went as near the abolition of slavery as it was possible for them, in the circumstances, to go. This is candidly admitted in Dr. Ingram's article just referred to. Now what a striking contrast there is between the Pagan attitude to slavery and the Christian. As late as the nineteenth century, Christian divines defended slavery in the name of God; and in the United States of America it was not abolished till the latter half of that same century, and then only in spite of the most determined opposition of the Christian Churches. Presbyterian Synods and assemblies, Wesleyan Conferences, and Baptist Unions passed resolutions in which slavery was justified as a divinely ordained institution.

Is it not absolutely undeniable, then, that the emancipation of the slaves cannot legitimately be claimed as one of the superb achievements of Christianity? Indeed, Mr. Mozley does not even attempt to prove that it can, but contents himself with the bare assertion that such it was. We claim it as one of the most brilliant triumphs of Humanism, which for several centuries has been slowly undermining the Christian faith.

J. T. LLOYD.

Wilfred Gibson.

> 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*.

So many people, not wholly illiterate, believe that in the scientific and commercial age in which we live, good poetry is impossible, and 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 classic literature or mediæval legends. Thus we have the sham antique school of poetry, which appeals far more widely to readers than the work of those poets who have embodied in their verse the new material gathered by science, or have expressed the new conditions of industrialism. The average writer of to-day maintains

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usually a high level, and this is saying much, for poetry is not so easy as it once was. The public is more exacting, and will not tolerate a singer who merely chants in mellifluous accents that the sky is blue or that the grass is green.

Among the singers who have responded to contemporary impressions, Mr. Wilfred Gibson's work arouses our curiosity. In his books, *Daily Bread*, *Fires*, and *Womenkind* (Elkin Matthews), he draws his material from everyday life, and succeeds admirably in infusing the spirit of poetry into the most unpromising phases of industrialism. The area of proletarian labour is almost an untilled field so far as the muses are concerned, and a successful attempt to deal with it as literature deserves encouragement. Indeed, the singer who can transmute the dross of the unpoetical into the pure gold of poetry has adventured to some purpose. Add to this that Mr. Gibson succeeds in endowing the commonest things, the most trifling actions, with a new dignity. It is only a high imagination which can so relate and ennoble things, and the mere fact that he has relied upon life itself, instead of picturesque association and pasteboard romance, is worthy of commendation. Like Walt Whitman, he does not hold to the theory that the tunes and cadences of other centuries are better fitted to express modern thought and feeling than music made to-day. A poet who sings of the flower-seller in the streets, of the printer at his trade, of the charwoman at her work, is somewhat of a novelty among the poetasters of the day.

According to the popular standard, the sword is more poetical than the rifle. Cavalry may be mentioned, but to introduce torpedo boats into poetry is to attempt too much. That a poet should use astronomy is taken for granted, but that he should sing of biology and chemistry is rank heresy. There is real need for contemporary poets bold enough to bridge the gulf between literature and life. Attempts to reflect contemporary life have been made many times. Years ago Walt Whitman made his hearers thrill with his realistic impressions of phases of American life. Tennyson, too, tried to reproduce contemporary thought in his clear-cut verse, as did Sully Prudhomme in France. Passages from *In Memoriam* and *The Two Voices*, as well as from *La Bonheur* and *La Justice*, express scientific theories or metaphysical arguments as accurately as a treatise, and prove that it is unnecessary to be false in order to be poetical. What beauty and force the metaphors of science may give to literature has been shown abundantly by Maeterlinck, but it requires a master hand to use the crude material of life or science. The average poet masks his incapacity by using words and thoughts which he knows are poetical because poets have used them for generations.

Mr. Gibson's muse deals with social life, and a large number of his verses record the struggles of the workers. A poem in *Fires* portrays the emotions of a sweated printer:—

> He was so dazed that he could hardly keep
> His hands from going through the pantomime
> Of keeping even sheets in his machine—
> The sleek machine, that, day and night,
> Through those glaring, flaring hours
> In the incandescent light,
> Printed children's picture books.

In another vein the poet gives us a realistic and humorous portrait of an old charwoman:—

> Suckler of a score or so of children—
> "Children! Bless you! Why, I've buried six, sir."
> Who, in forty years, wore out three husbands,
> And one everlasting, shameless bonnet.

A finer example of Mr. Gibson's method is found in *Geraniums*, which depicts an old street flower seller, and the emotions roused in the poet by the blazing red of the blossoms against the black background of a London night:—

> And yet to-morrow will those blooms be dead,
> With all their lively beauty; and to-morrow
> May end the light lusts and the heavy sorrow
> Of that old body with the nodding head.
> The last oath muttered, the last pint drained deep,
> She'll sink, as Cleopatra sank, to sleep,
> Nor need to barter blossoms for a bed.

Mr. Gibson does not restrict himself to phases of metropolitan life. There is a fine piece of tragedy in *The Night Shift*, in which a collier's wife, who has given birth to a child, has delirious premonitions of disaster to her husband. The mother speaks:—

> There's no hope,
> For she hears something—
> Something that I cannot.
> The wife's heart hears
> What the old mother's may not,
> Because it beats too loudly.

This is weighty and significant work. Mr. Gibson has done well, for he has attempted to extend the bounds of poetry, the finest flower of the literary art. Maybe he occasionally passes over the boundary of poetry into prose, and even into the prosaic, in his free use of the unconventional. He is not 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 most literary men in that he has caught a glimpse of the new poetry which our time demands. His success should stimulate our poets to develop the deeper meaning and hidden beauty of contemporary life until we all feel—

> The mighty being is awake,
> And doth with his eternal motion, make
> A sound like thunder, everlastingly.

There is room for the Jean Francois Millet of literature, the Millet who will paint many other things beside "The Angelus." The poet who could sing of the life of our great cities with imaginative power, intellectual energy, and with wide sympathies, will inscribe his name among the great writers, for he would have modern life for his inheritance, "New and yet old as the foundations of the earth."

The unthinking and uncritical amiability of the modern newspapers, which find great poets are as common as roses in June, does a heavy disservice to literature. We are, in the words of Henry James, "a generation so smothered in quantity and number, that discrimination, under the gasp, has neither air to breathe nor room to turn round." A generation ago William Ernest Henley was scorned and insulted because he chanted the glories of the greatest city of the world. To-day he would be overwhelmed in a flood of flattery needlessly poured forth for the sapping and destruction of his genius. The poet should work his hardest for the present, and for the rest await in confidence the verdict of posterity.

MIMNERMUS.

Thomas Paine.

THOMAS PAINE was born in England on January 29, 1737, and is best known to the world as the author of a book of which most people have heard, but comparatively few have read. For over one hundred years *The Age of Reason* has been selling by a few thousand copies annually, though few Christians have read it, and most parsons denounce it as blasphemous, and its author as a rabid Atheist, without having ascertained, the contents of the one, or the beliefs and character of the other. As a matter of fact, Paine had a stronger belief in God and

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immortality than many a preacher in orthodox pulpits to-day, and it would not be easy to differentiate his religious views from those of the new Bishop of Hereford.

We are not, therefore, concerned with the religious views of Paine so much as with his political views and the great work he did for the achievement of liberty. In 1774, the American War of Independence was fast approaching, although the colonists were still loyal to the English monarchy, and had hardly begun to think of the rights of man. Then Thomas Paine arrived and wrote *Common Sense*, the first of that wonderful series of revolutionary tracts called *Crises*, which spread like wildfire through the country, stimulating the courage and endurance of the soldiers, and inspiring the American public with renewed confidence.

It is well known that he also assisted Thomas Jefferson in drawing up the celebrated Declaration of American Independence, and it is to the lasting shame of Washington, who owed him so much, that he yielded so easily to religious prejudice and neglected the author of *Common Sense* because he afterwards wrote *The Age of Reason*.

In 1787, Paine went to France, where he took an active part in the Revolution, for unlike La Fayette, who said, "Wherever liberty is, there is my country"; Paine said, "Wherever liberty is not, there is my country." He was elected as a member of the House of Deputies, and in one of the reactions of those stormy times he was thrown into the Bastille, where he wrote the second part of *The Age of Reason* while actually under the shadow of the guillotine, from which he escaped by the accidental chalking of the door of his cell on the inside instead of on the outside. Had he then been engaged in writing a defence of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, this escape would have been hailed by Christians as a striking proof of Divine interference and special protection of the righteous.

Some time afterwards he returned to England, and in 1802 he went back to America and lived in and about New York till his death in 1809 at the age of seventy-two.

Now the chief characteristics of Thomas Paine were his love of liberty, his stainless integrity, and his devotion to the welfare of his fellow-men; yet everything has been done by the Church to brand him as a corrupter of youth, to conceal his great services to humanity, and to cheat him of the gratitude of posterity. The ordinary man lives only for the petty interests of himself, and the small circle in which he moves. All his little thoughts are about his little self and his little prospects. He wonders how much money he can make in the next six months, by hook or by crook. He carefully considers everything he says or does, solely in the light of what effect it will have on his own little prospects, and is, therefore, orthodox in his social and religious sentiments. It does not pay to think, speak, or act differently from the "respectable" people around him—to think out and follow the truth when the conclusions it leads to are unpopular. Such men have no beliefs worth considering, and would abandon whatever principles they profess for a mess of pottage at any time. Men whose whole philosophy of life is contained in looking after number one, and who make use of religion to get on in business and society. And nine out of ten of such people will tell you that "Tom" Paine was a blasphemer and a very dangerous character. Yet Thomas Paine never considered his personal interests where any large social question was at stake. He was capable of rising above his personal affairs, and becoming one in whom the interests of the workers found a voice, a hand, and a heart.

I do not say that he was not pursuing his own happiness in acting thus, but his kind of selfishness which finds gratification in promoting the happiness of the downtrodden, is miles above the catchpenny greed that would let his fellow-men go to the Devil rather than spend a dollar or an hour's work in trying to save them. In time of war some men risk their lives and limbs, while others lend their money at a high rate of interest. Thomas Paine was one who freely risked his life in the cause of human freedom, and he is maligned by many whose patriotic zeal takes the form of patting the soldiers on the back and making a big fortune out of a contract for their supplies. But there is one thing in the life of Thomas Paine to which I would specially direct the attention of Freethinkers. Many of them confine their attention to the discussion of purely religious questions, and ignore the social problem that is now forcing itself to the front, just as the question of American independence forced itself to the front in the days of Thomas Paine.

More Freethinkers to-day are, I think, engaged in trying to demolish Calvinism than in trying to abolish industrial slavery; to destroy the Church than to destroy the infamous monopolies of banking and land which impoverish and imbrute the workers. I do not wish to underrate the importance of destroying the popular beliefs in an omnipotent and good God, or in a future heaven of eternal bliss, because these two great superstitions have been such strong bulwarks against popular discontent with unjust conditions of life. But many Freethinkers do not seem to understand that there are economic and political superstitions just as baneful as any religious superstitions can possibly be. Thus we have British and German Freethinkers who are firm believers in royalty, a landed aristocracy, and the secret diplomacy of an aristocratic Foreign Office; and we have French and American Freethinkers so steeped in economic superstition that they think the bottom would fall out of the universe if there were no monopoly of land or banking, so that nobody could take any wealth without doing some useful work.

Most of Thomas Paine's life was spent in fighting against political superstition, and it seems to me that there is a great incongruity between this man whom Freethinkers so much admire and many Freethinkers themselves.

Many a Freethinker to-day is heartily in agreement with the monopolists who enjoy great unearned incomes at the expense of the workers, and the laws which make that sort of thing not only possible but respectable. But Thomas Paine would never have been content to see a great social struggle going on between the toiling, defrauded, and degraded workers and the wealthy idlers, while he spent all his time and energy in exposing and agitating against a decrepit religious system. When Camille Jordan made a report against the priests, public worship, and church bells, Paine wrote to him as follows:

> It is want of feeling to talk of priests and bells while infants are perishing, and aged and infirm poor in the streets, from want of necessaries. The abundance that France produces is sufficient for every want, if rightly applied; but priests and bells, like articles of luxury, ought to be the least articles of consideration.

These words ought to ring in every Freethinker's ears. I believe in fighting against the Church, because she is hand in glove with the monopolists; but the sewing women and half-starved children and underpaid workers in every trade are matters of far more pressing concern than all the false religious creeds. And the Freethinker who is content to hold aloof from the present struggle for industrial freedom and general wealth has no right to call himself a follower of Thomas Paine.

If the Church did not stand in the way of the abolition of poverty, by enfeebling the minds of the workers

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and supporting every form of legal chicanery, I would not bother my head about her. And I want to see the day when the professed admirers of Thomas Paine will love their fellow-men more than they hate Calvinism, and fight against the Church, not so much because she teaches belief in fables, as because she helps to enslave the workers.

Shortly before his death, Paine wrote to a friend as follows :—

> A thousand years hence, perhaps in less, America may be what England is now. The innocence of her character, that won the hearts of all nations in her favour, may sound like a romance, and her inimitable virtue as if it had never been. The ruins of that liberty, which thousands bled to obtain, may just furnish materials for a village tale, or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility; while the fashionable of that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall deride the principle and deny the fact.

Little more than one-tenth of a thousand years has passed since those words were written, and they are nearly fulfilled. The American "fashionables" of to-day, "enveloped in dissipation," care nothing for equal rights; they do deride the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and deny the fact that all men should be free and equal as to opportunities and rights. In the wide territory of the United States, where there is ample room for the whole population of the world, there is poverty as widespread and slums as squalid as any to be found in England.

To free humanity from all that is false and tyrannous in economics, politics, and religion was the life-work of Thomas Paine, and it should be that of every Freethinker.

It is a good thing to drive away the bats and moles of mediæval Christianity, but it seems to me even a better thing to exterminate the modern economic rats which threaten to destroy the ship of State. Let us not only cease to bow down to Jehovah, but also emancipate ourselves from the bondage of the landlord, the money monopolist, and their obsequious servant, the politician.

G. O. WARREN.

[We do not care to comment on a contributor's article, but we feel that Major Warren has, quite unintentionally, done Freethinkers an injustice. Freethinkers do not, as a rule, any more than did Thomas Paine, "stand aloof" from political and social work. They are, in fact, amongst the keenest workers in the country in all advanced social and political work. Major Warren himself is evidence of this. What the convinced and informed Freethinker realizes, is exactly what Paine realized—the Age of Reason must precede the Rights of Man. Mental Freedom is the only guarantee of any other freedom worth having.—ED]

The Scottish Oath.

THE administration of the Scottish Oath in Courts of Justice sometimes causes a good deal of merriment. On one occasion a Baillie in a County Court requested a female witness to swear, and went on encouragingly, "I swear by the Almighty God," but the witness only smiled and nodded her head. "You are to take the oath," explained the officer in attendance, to which the woman replied with another and more emphatic nod. "Say, I swear by the Almighty God."

"Yes," was the immediate rejoinder of the witness

"No, no," expostulated the officer, "repeat the words after his Honour."

This was acknowledged by a third nod, and after explanation, the exact words were at last, to the great relief of the Court, repeated by the witness, and the case proceeded with.

On another occasion, a witness varied the final part of the oath, which calls for "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," by repeating softly "and anything but the truth," which, after all, considering the quality of her evidence, was the more correct rendering of the oath so far as this witness was concerned.

Snow Waters.

A COLD title for the time of the year, but everything in its season, and some things are always in season. A draught from a crystal streamlet that came laughing and tinkling from under its coverlet of snow inspired this pencilling. High up in the hilly neighbourhood are the reservoirs—natural and artificial. What sojourn, in what solitudes, what oozings—slow dropping "seepings" in the brown, old earth, what refinements in the chemistry of Nature, what maturings in the cellars of Time, ere those precious but plentiful drops distil from the domestic tap! Let us be thankful—not to God, but man—to Mother Nature, if we will have a deity.

As fine, and as far come, and as necessary, and, "thank God," as plentiful as the mountain dews, are the wise words of the wisest man. The hills are brown and solemn, almost sad in their eternal immobility and indifference, varied with sprawling patches of slowly melting snow, or in further recesses and higher eminences under the hasty driving mist, gloomy and forbidding in black and shaggy heath. Out of such unpromising material man has created fields and gardens. He had to. Direst necessity was the mother of all his inventions. Coarsened with the coarseness of his toil, he yet made refinement possible. Refinement enjoys, but is not too grateful for his gifts; and brawny labour still digs and hews more than its share, because the light it has created has never yet illumined its own brain. Who will pioneer for the pioneer?

A man loses himself on these moors—and finds himself. He thinks of the food and the home comforts awaiting him. No superflux from any Garden of Eden, but wrung by horny hands from the stubborn clod. And a man, if he be not a worker, and have a little sense of justice, feels small and mean and contemptible; and yet feels not so small and mean and grovelling as the worker himself, so unconscious of his kingship.

As Mark Twain said, these thoughts sadden me. I will to bed. But who has not at sometime looked in that faithful mirror of King Lear and learned, for the moment at least, its salutary lesson. Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.

Such are the waters of wisdom, even if they be snow waters.

Such is the Sermon of the Mount. There are other considerations; not so wise, perhaps, if more persuasive. Change is required. Up here one doffs the gas-mask of convention, and, gasping, gladly gulps the free untrammelled air. One has left behind the little hates and hypocrisies still inseparable from communal life; the flattery, familiarity, contempt, disdain. One thinks of that little swaggering patriotic Hun-exterminator, elevated with something less innocuous than snow water, how it cheeks up, half-drunk, to one wholly sober; who tells you what he would do with you if you were a German, and, even as a true-born Britisher, you don't feel quite safe before such indiscriminating zeal. Apart from nationality, there are all sorts of curious animals in our streets. It would be of such that G. W. Foote was thinking when he said (in almost his last, if not his very last lecture), "They say God made man! Well, if he did, it was not always a very creditable piece of work! .....But when he made Shakespeare, one might say, well done, Boss! you've done something at last that does you credit." The abnormal are still more abnormal in these abnormal times; and sometimes the solitude is the only sanctuary. Miles of moorland have been traversed; and followed afar over snowdrift and heath the windings and undulations of an interminable weather and time-beaten boundary wall; past the still wood, bearing traces

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of savage storms; beyond and below the inclement seas, where insect man, swift or slow in his craft of destruction or commerce, ploughs the wave. Storm clouds are gathering behind the wind; there is a new menace in the hills; a roadway is reached; the sun sets on civilization—a sweet radiance in the sullen cloud—at least, the sunset was civilized.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

The truth about the soldiers' attitude to religion is leaking out slowly, and it is found to be something radically different from what the Bishop of London and Dr. Horton declared that it was some three years ago. The godliness of the young fellows at the Front impressed his lordship so favourably that for weeks after his visit he could speak of nothing else, while Dr. Horton, judging only on hearsay, was astounded at the almost incredible work of grace going on daily on the fields of battle." "There is no Atheist in the Trenches," he kept on repeating, believing it to be true, no doubt, with as little evidence as he believed in the reality of the angels of Mons.

But both the Bishop of London and the Hampstead divine were absolutely wrong. Three books have recently been published in which the true state of affairs is honestly but sorrowfully presented, namely, *The Church in the Furnace*, being essays by Seventeen Temporary Church of England Chaplains on active service in France and Flanders; *Can England's Church win England's Manhood?* by an Army Chaplain; and *As Tommy Sees Us: a Book for Church Folk*, by the Rev. A. H. Gray, a Presbyterian chaplain. The Church of England chaplains have been "simply staggered" by the fact that, "while an overwhelming majority claim a nominal connection with the Anglican Church, the things for which she stands mean little or nothing to them." The opinion courageously expressed is that the Church, as at present constituted, is incapable of winning the respect and allegiance of thoughtful young men.

The Presbyterian Chaplain's testimony is as follows:—

> On the whole, the average male Britisher of to-day has not much respect for the Church. He does not like or admire the Church. He does not belong to it, and does not want it. It is not among the national institutions that stir his pride. He neither fears nor loves it. It has for him no voice of authority .....To his virile nature it makes no impressive appeal.

Lo and behold, that revival of religion, once so confidently spoken of, has completely vanished from the earth. It began in Great Britain. Those in the South of the island declared that it was manifesting itself most gloriously in the North, while those in the North had not felt it, but were quite sure that the South was ablaze under its glorious influence. Further inquiry disclosed the fact that it was in France, not in our land at all, that the Holy Ghost was performing his mighty miracles. Then it was discovered, chiefly by Dr. Horton in Hampstead, that the real religious revival was to be seen among our own soldiers in France and Flanders. And now, at last, we are authoritatively told that, on the whole, British soldiers are not religiously inclined, but look down with something like contempt upon the Church and her services. What a stupendous amount of lying the men of God indulge in *so long as they can with comparative safety do so.*

The Spaniard who escaped from prison and took sanctuary at the Spanish Embassy has been returned to gaol with compliments. In the Ages of Faith the Church gave sanctuary to outlaws, and the secular authorities were powerless to reclaim them. Nowadays, the Church offers sanctuary to her own clergy, and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot get these men into the Army.

The Young Men's Christian Association is still advertising for bagatelle boards, athletic outfits, music, musical instruments, and other articles for providing amusement. Obviously, the pill of religion wants heavily coating in these days.

The Rev. John Godsall Prentice, Rector of Tollerton, Notts, has been sentenced to six weeks' hard labour for defrauding the Church Army. The restraints of Christianity are not conspicuous in this instance.

A London newspaper suggests that "beef, beer, and the Bible made England." It is customary in religious circles to place this responsibility on the deity.

The American Young Men's Christian Association is just as secularistic as the native organization. It has opened an "inn" for American officers at Cavendish Square, London.

The pious *Daily News* published recently a lengthy leading article on "Our Daily Bread." It is significant that no mention was made of the Lord's Prayer.

The Salvation Army knows how to combine the advantages of Christianity and commercialism, and is now advertising for waste paper. Religion is supposed to be "without money and without price"; but waste paper is now fetching record prices.

We were pleased to see the following in the *Ayrshire Post* for January 18:—

> So we are being warned that the decisive factor in winning the war will be food. And that is what the glory and greatness of war comes to in the face of hard facts. Can the Germans and Austrians starve the women and children of the Allies until they bring the men-folk to peace? Can the Allies starve the women and children belonging to the enemy until he sues for peace? So much for the chivalry and greatness of modern war! A competition as to which can starve the other soonest! If hard facts like these don't disgust the world with militarism, and show it for the mean, brutal thing it is, nothing will.

It was given as a quotation, and as "worth producing." All that was wanted was the acknowledgment of its being an excerpt from our "Views and Opinions."

Owing to a printer's error, a provincial paper reported recently that "a god weighing thirty pounds has been caught at Lynmouth, Devon." Pious readers may have thought this had some association with the overdue revival of religion

The opposition against Dr. Henson's election to the bishopric of Hereford has fizzled out ignominiously, for Dr. Henson has scored effectively over the heresy-hunters by giving an assurance of his belief in the Apostles' Creed. As the position carries with it a salary of £4,200 yearly, the new Bishop has weighty reasons for his belief.

Dean Inge declares that the arguments presented for birth control are unanswerable. He would do well to press this view on his clerical colleagues, for the clergy observe the divine injunction to "increase and multiply."

A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* has been quoting Lord Wolsely on the Chinese: "To me they are the most remarkable race on earth, and I have always thought and still believe them to be the coming rulers of the world. They only want a Chinese Peter the Great or Napoleon to make them so. They have every quality required for the good soldier and sailor." We commend this to insular, ignorant Britishers, who regard the Chinese as "scum." The Chinese are neither Christian nor are they consumed with lust for dominion. Their love of peace is a reproach to Christian Europe.

Many of us have suffered from heartache on reading the reports of "charitable" societies at the beginning of this year. The conditions they reveal of the silent, subdued poor

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are the most eloquent condemnation of Christianity that can be found. Oh, for the reign of Humanism!

It has been decided to erect a chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral in memory of Lord Kitchener. How the dear clergy do love to exploit notable men in the interest of the Church.

The recent Intercession service have not affected seriously the playfulness of Providence. Floods have occurred in many parts of the country, many rivers have overflowed their banks, and thousands of acres of land inundated.

The recent very inclement weather has produced evidence tending to show that, in Scotland, the temperature of hell has been reduced to less than normal. Upon more than one occasion recently a Scot has been heard to remark: "It's hellish cauld."

Freethinkers are the last people to minimize or ignore social evils, but the attitude of the clergy to these things is deplorable. Very much that we hear from them about other members of the community deserves to be denounced as unpatriotic, ungrateful, and graceless abuse. These men cannot deny that the land they censoriously sit in judgment upon has been very kind to them; but their attitude to their own land is very much like that of the unspeakable cad who could bring himself to parade the fact that his mother is given to drink and shoplifting.

Government departments will have to look to their laurels as generous exporters of paper. It is reported that the National Bible Society of Scotland in 1917 "distributed 2,880,870 Scriptures in Belgium, Brazil, China, France, Japan, Korea, Spain, and in the homelands."

The following is from *Punch*: "Lady (displaying costume in which she is to appear as the Queen of Sheba in 'Biblical Beauties' tableaux at Charity Matinee). 'Rather sweet, isn't it?' Friend: 'My, dear, absolutely topping. It makes me feel I ought to be doing war work too.'"

"In an avalanche which has occurred in the Nugata Province of Japan thirty-two houses and 173 persons were buried." This should stimulate Christian missions to Japan. "He doeth all things well."

Les Nouvelles reports that a number of Allied aeroplanes flew over large areas of occupied Belgium and dropped copies of President Wilson's famous speech to Congress. At Liege, thousands of these copies were picked up. This will give the Germans another reason for thinking that the Allies are Atheists. The supreme authority with the Germans is the Word of God, which they are asked to discard for the word of Wilson.

In a weekly paper we read that a cinema has been secured for use in the camps surrounding the Holy City. We wonder whether Saturday or Sunday will be selected by the regulators of people's morals there as the day upon which the cinema is to be prohibited?

The Marquis of Tavistock says he is afraid Christian people are sometimes snobs. The "sometimes" strikes us as modest. We have seldom met a sincere Christian who was not a "spiritual" snob. And those who are not sincere are simply humbugs. Christianity, as a matter of fact, breeds intellectual snobbery, and encourages, by its terrorism, hypocrisy. We quite agree, however, with another remark made by the Marquis. "So long as a boy is a sportsman and plays the game, it does not matter if he is not religious." That hits the nail on the head. A decent person can do without religion; and if he is not decent, religion will be very little help.

The Bishop of Exeter is distressed. He finds there is a tendency to treat Christianity with contempt. People no longer love to read their Bibles, or look forward to Sunday to come and pray to God. Worse than all, the Trade Unions "would not hold out a finger to save religious education." Naturally, therefore, the Bishop is distressed. He sees himself left with a shopful of unsaleable goods, and the refusal of the Trades Unions to help religious education means that he cannot count on being able to breed customers who might one day purchase his stock.

Sir Arthur Yapp has been subjected to much heckling at the meetings he has addressed on the subject of food economy. He will not find his present work so easy as when he used to talk of the "Bread of Life" to devout congregations.

"The gospel of the New Testament was a gospel of revolution," says the *Daily News*. It forgot to add that it was also twenty centuries out of date.

"All great truths begin in blasphemy" is a sentence which occurs in a new play produced at the London Coliseum. This is almost a truism; but, unfortunately, it is one that many repeat without in the least learning toleration for new ideas.

Into the melting-pot, say many, with monarchies, secret treaties, matrimonial misfits, and Holy Writ; and now some dreadful person in the *Commonwealth* proposes to throw in the Bishop's gaiters! Revolution can hardly go as far as this. The *Manchester Guardian*, in a leading article, makes a stand against such a painful innovation. "Surely if there be any offence in a Bishop, it is not in his gaiters, which are often the best of him"; and the editorial ends: "Abolish the Bishop, if necessary, but before he goes let us find someone to wear his gaiters." These pleasantries appear in the first number of the *Guardian* at its increased price of three-halfpence, and as long as they can be continued no one is likely to grudge the extra halfpenny.

Miss Lena Ashwell, we read, has been saying, "Thank God for the queues." We think that this particular type of religious fervour can safely be left to the Bishop of London. We could have understood it if she had been referring to the theatre queues.

How To Do It.

WE are out for another thousand new readers, and by some means or another we mean to get them. But we cannot get them without the help of those readers we already have. Therefore, here are a few suggestions as to how it may be done:—

1. Show or lend your own copy to a friend.
2. Take an extra copy for posting to a likely new subscriber, or send on your own when done with.
3. Get your newsagent to display a copy along with his other journals and newspapers.
4. Send us the names of addresses of those to whom you think specimen copies of this paper would be acceptable.
5. Get copies into clubs and reading-rooms wherever possible. There is no reason why the *Freethinker* should not have all the publicity that is given to other papers.

Any or all of these plans may be adopted, and they nearly always result in new subscribers. We are fighting to keep the *Freethinker* at the same size and price for the duration of the War, and an increased circulation is the best way of meeting the steadily increasing cost of production.

So let us have that thousand new readers as soon as possible. And when we have then we will cease troubling for more for—well, for at least a month.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester; March 3, Sheffield; March 24, Manchester; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—R. Allen (N.Z.), £1 10s.; J De B. and Wife, £1 1s.

A. G. ROYSTON.—Thanks for efforts to promote *Freethinker* circulation. We have handed your subscription to Miss Vance, who will send your membership form.

A. V. EVANS.—Murray's edition of the *Origin of Species* is published at 2s. 6d.

T. C. PERKINS.—We will look up the matter, and see if we can find any record. Up to the present we have not been able to find what you require. The Act is only another illustration of religious bigotry. Pleased you think the *Freethinker* the best twopennyworth published. So do we.

C. PINWELL.—A discussion on Socialism *v.* Malthusianism is a little outside the scope of the *Freethinker*.

F. C. W.—Not at all a bad idea—that of publishing letters which our "free press" refuses to insert. We are quite in accord with you on the subject of flogging. To flog children in order to make them kind to animals is about as absurd a policy as one could imagine. It is quite equal to those amongst us who hold that war civilizes.

EMBRYO FREETHINKER.—Naturally, we quite agree with what you say about the religion, or rather the non-religion, of the average soldier. We also agree that large numbers of people are terrorized into silence concerning religion by public opinion. The world lacks moral courage most of all. An hour of moral courage and mental honesty, were it universal, would end the reign of the Churches—and a great many other things as well.

W. L.—Suppose God does bring good out of evil, that doesn't make the evil less real. The question to be met is why God permits evil at all. To argue that it is his way of getting good doesn't meet the issue. It leaves us wondering at the blundering of God and the stupidity of man.

B. EVANS.—Certainly we will come to Pontypridd or Aberdare if a hall can be secured. There is no reason why there should not be a strong Branch of the N. S. S. in both places. There are plenty of Freethinkers there; of that we are quite sure.

MR. J. PARSONS.—We know nothing of Corporal John Roberts, or his alleged conversion from Atheism to Christianity. But as John Roberts says he was a speaker for the National Secular Society, we can only say that he has a lively imagination. That statement we know to be a pure falsehood.

STOKER W. PALMER.—Literature for distribution is being sent. As you are home on leave, we are sending to your home address.

ONE of our readers asks for the name of a soldier, on service, to whom a weekly copy of this paper would be acceptable. Please write this office.

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.

Monday evening's air-raid has interfered somewhat with this week's paper. On returning home from Swansea on Monday late in the afternoon, Mr. Cohen dealt with a number of letters that had been sent down from the office, and posted so that it should be delivered early in the morning. The letter was not delivered, and a number of paragraphs and replies to correspondents that should have appeared are omitted. Most of the paragraphs deal with letters received on Saturday and Monday. Tuesday's post is also disorganized. Some may be dealt with next week.

Mr. Cohen had two fine meetings at Swansea last Sunday. The hall in the evening was too full for comfort, but better that than empty. The proceedings were made the more interesting by some courteous and pertinent criticisms by two clergymen, and the lecturer's replies were accepted with much appreciation and applause by the audience. Food is not so plentiful at Swansea as it might be, but we were pleased to see the enthusiasm for Freethought stronger than ever. We have great hopes of young South Wales.

This evening (February 3) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham. His subject is "Christianity and the Logic of Life," and if ever Christianity was being hammered by the logic of events it is now. Mr. Partridge, the Secretary, writes that he is expecting a "bumper house." We hope that the expectation will be realized, although, judging by previous experience, we have little fear on that head.

A letter from Mr. Wildman, Secretary of the Southampton Branch of the N.S.S., was recently sent to the General Purposes Committee of the Council asking that the *Freethinker* he placed in the Public Library. This was refused, but on the matter coming before the Libraries' Committee, Mr. Howard strongly objected tc this refusal on the quite proper ground that the paper represented the opinions of a section of the ratepayers, aad the *Freethinker* had as much right to be in the Library as any other journal. Finally, a resolution was moved and carried that the *Freethinker* be purchased for six months in order to see whether there was any demand for it. We have no doubt that the demand will quite justify the purchase, and we congratulate the majority of the Libraries' Committee on its sense of justice.

The death of Lance cpl. Evans, noted in our last issue, had a sad sequel the other day. It is pretty obvious to those who know the facts of the case that this young man was physically quite unfitted for the Army. Application had been made to the local tribunal for exemption, in the days when tribunals were less careful than at present, and refused. Overwrought by his son's death, the father made his appearance before the tribunal, and told the members that but for their action his son would be alive to-day. The chairman told him to "get out" and, says the local paper, assisted the caretaker to forcibly eject him. It was, of course, quite useless going to the tribunal on such an errand; but those who bear in mind the now admitted fact that thousands of men were passed into the Army who were quite unfitted for the life will have considerable sympathy in this case.

There is a good report of Mr. Cohen's recent lectures at Southampton in the local *Times* for January 26. The reporter notes that "the meetings were of a very successful character, being well attended, and the lecturer made an excellent impression by a masterly exposition of his subjects, an evidently wide reading, and clear thought, relieved by flashes of caustic humour."

Our note in this column on the need for organized work in South Wales has brought a response from Pontypridd and Aberdare. An attempt is to be made to secure halls in both places, and if these can be obtained Mr. Cohen will pay a visit at as early a date as is possible. We hope that all Freethinkers in these districts will do their best to help these endeavours, and that other parts of South Wales will soon get into working formation.

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The Orb of Day.

III.

(Continued from p. 59.)

THE great and glorious light radiated by the sun is assuredly one of the most marvellous facts of Nature. No artificial illuminant can remotely compare with the light lavished by the lord of day. And all this light travels to us through a space of 93,000,000 miles. Dispensed in all directions from its surface, our orb sheds only one two-thousand millionth part of its effulgence on the earth. Yet, during the immeasurable periods in which our planet has been the abode of life, this stupendous process has been in unceasing operation; while through the course of countless ages which preceded the appearance of organic phenomena, and even before the earth assumed a solid form, the mighty sun sent forth his beams into space with apparently reckless extravagance. For, so far as mortal mind can divine, solar light, like solar heat, is mainly dissipated in the abysses of space.

Although the dense darkness of a sullen winter midnight is so markedly different from the magnificence of a summer day, familiarity with the sun's pure light serves to render us insensible to the real brightness of the solar beams. Any ordinary comparison between the power of artificial illuminants and that of sunlight is futile. Sir Robert Ball, however, in his fine monograph, *The Story of the Sun*, has drawn a comparison which answers this purpose very effectively. In the manufacture of the celebrated Bessemer steel, the molten metal, when it flows at a white-heat from the furnace, is poured into a huge vessel estimated to hold about ten tons of the liquid iron. When this immense vessel—the converter—is full, the process of transforming iron into steel begins. "Air at high pressure," we are told,—

> is driven forcibly into the bottom of the converter, and bubbles up through the molten mass. It might at first be thought that the act of blowing cold air through the heated iron must tend to cool the glowing liquid, but such is not the case. There is a certain quantity of the element carbon in the cast iron, and as the air bubbles through it its oxygen combines vigorously with the incandescent carbon, and heat is developed by this chemical union throughout the entire mass. The heat thus generated is far more than sufficient to neutralize whatever cooling effect might be the natural consequence of blowing volumes of cold air through the hot material. In fact, hot as the air must have been when it was first run from the furnace into the converter, the temperature of the molten metal rises continuously during the twenty minutes or so that the blow continues.

The state of the flames rising from the converter assures the operator that the transformation of iron into steel has been completed. When the liquid steel is turned into the mould, as it is in the next stage of manufacture, its temperature is so exalted that the fluid metal glows with an intense whiteness. This is probably the greatest incandescence obtainable on any considerable scale on our globe, and the glow is dazzlingly brilliant. But this remarkable glow, intense as it is, pales into insignificance when compared with the light of the sun. That gifted investigator of solar physics, the late Professor Langley, declared that the intrinsic effulgence of the sun is fully 5,000 times as bright as an orb of the same magnitude would be were its entire surface composed of molten metal emerging from a Bessemer furnace.

Travelling at the tremendous velocity of 186,000 miles per second, light journeys to us from the sun through the ether of space. Tyndall likened this elusive vehicle of light and heat to a highly attenuated jelly. Other physicists have pictured the ether as a fluid-like substance of inconceivable subtlety and tenuity. Whatever it be, the ethereal medium serves as the conductor of the waves which emanate from the sun, or any other luminous body, and which announce themselves to human consciousness as light.

Sound is propagated by vibrations conducted by the atmosphere, and the presence of the atmosphere is essential to its transmission. Light is also conveyed by waves or undulations; but, quite unlike sound, light is transmitted, not by the atmosphere, but by the ethereal medium. Ethereal waves possess both length and amplitude, or height. Their wave-length determines their colour, while their amplitude discloses itself in the form of brightness. The white light received from the sun is popularly regarded as colourless. Yet, as a matter of fact, it is really the resultant of a complicated combination of all the shades and colours of the rainbow—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. And not merely does the analysis of white light reveal all the colours of the spectrum, but that coloured ribbon of light which we produce by using an ordinary prism is also characterized by the presence of an array of dark lines. With every refinement of spectroscopic research, or the added purity of the spectrum under analysis, these dark lines constantly increase in number.

The meaning of these dark lines was unknown until Kirchoff and Bunsen, in 1859, observed that they corresponded in position to certain bright lines which appear in the spectra of metals in a state of vapour. As Professor Abbot, the Director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory tells us, in his recent volume on *The Sun*:—

> If metallic sodium or any of its compounds, like common table salt, is thrust into an alcohol lamp flame, the spectrum of the flame shows two brilliant yellow lines which agree in place with two prominent dark lines in the yellow part of the solar spectrum. Not only so, but if an incandescent oxy-hydrogen calcium light, whose natural spectrum shows neither dark nor bright lines in the yellow at these places, is caused to shine through an alcohol-lamp flame charged with sodium vapour and placed before the spectroscope, the two dark lines like those in the solar spectrum will appear instead of the two bright lines of the sodium-charged flame itself. Other chemical elements, also, emit bright spectrum lines, and the vapours of these elements, if placed in a beam of white light, absorb the rays they themselves emit. If their own emission is *more* intense than the emission they absorb from such a transmitted beam, the effect will be *brighter* lines in a continuously bright spectrum. If their own emission is *less* intense than the emission they absorb, the resulting spectrum will be crossed by *dark* lines.

This last phenomenon is displayed by the spectrum of the sun. The emission of a vapour declines rapidly as the temperature falls. It is, therefore, evident that the dark solar spectrum lines are caused by the metallic clouds of the solar surroundings, for these vapours radiate their heat into space. The solar vapours are cooler than the sun's inner layers, and are consequently incapable, through their own emission, completely to replace the rays they absorb.

All solid bodies, when heated to a state of incandescence, display their special spectra. The problem presented by the discovery of the dark lines which cross the solar spectrum was solved when it became known that a definite correspondence existed between the bright lines of one spectrum and the dark lines of another. When the solar spectrum is compared with the spectrum of iron obtained by heating that metal to incandescence with the electric arc, the correspondence between the dark lines in the former and the bright lines

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of the latter, clearly denote some close relationship. Even if a single conspicuously bright line in the spectrum of iron occupied the position of a prominently dark line in the solar spectrum such a coincidence would be remarkable. But it was proved that hundreds of such striking correspondences existed, and, as we now learn from the researches and inventive ability of Professor Rowland, there are at least 2,000 coincidences of this character between the dark lines of the sun's spectrum and the bright lines of iron. The presence of iron in the sun is consequently certain. Still, it seemed difficult to explain the circumstance that the lines were dark in one spectrum and bright in the other. But, as already indicated, the mystery vanishes when we realize that surrounding the glowing surface of the sun there exists an atmosphere sufficiently heated to sustain iron in a state of vapour, although its temperature lies below that of the intensely heated atmosphere from which the solar light is chiefly radiated. A vast sum of light issues from the photosphere, which, in its passage outwards, is constrained to traverse a cooler encircling atmosphere in which relatively non-luminous iron vapour is suspended.

We must now note a very significant fact. It has been established that the iron vapour of the solar atmosphere arrests the progress of certain rays of the light travelling outwards from the interior. The interception is selective, for while the greater number of the light rays pass without obstruction, certain rays are absorbed. In truth, the atmosphere of iron vapour proves almost opaque to these special rays, while it remains transparent to all other kinds. Interest in this phenomenon increases when we discover that those particular rays intercepted by iron vapour possess precisely the same refrangibility as the rays emitted by iron vapour at a stated temperature.

When in a vaporous condition the molecules of an elementary substance oscillate in a certain period of time, and if these are acted upon by vibrations which harmonize with the undulations of other molecules part of the energy of the passing vibrations will be taken up by the molecules, and these will then oscillate with increased rapidity. But in the absence of this correspondence of movement the passing vibrations continue their journey with undiminished speed. This accounts for the fact that the vapour of iron in the cooler atmosphere enveloping the sun arrests and appropriates the the energy of those outgoing undulations which vibrate in sympathy with the molecules of iron. As a result of this arrest, the outspeeding undulations suffer a serious diminution in their light. Hence, the dark lines, or rather, the lines which appear dark in comparison with the dazzling illumination which environs them.

At least thirty-five terrestrial substances have been detected in the sun. In addition to iron the spectrum yields over 200 lines of carbon, and seventy-five of calcium, while aluminium, zinc, copper, silver, tin, lead, cobalt, and numerous other planetary substances have been discovered. Professor Rowland failed to find some fifteen of our elementary bodies in the sun, while the presence of others awaits complete confirmation. But Rowland cautions us against the conclusion that because the existence of some terrestrial elements in the sun remains to be clearly demonstrated, and the presence of a few others cannot be proved that, therefore, these undiscovered substances are absent. Quite to the contrary, as research advances, we anticipate the discovery that, were our globe heated to the temperature of the sun its spectrum would be little, if at all, different to that of our luminary.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

The Professional Touch.

PRINCIPAL FORSYTH delivers, in the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* of January 12, 1918, a lecture to the teachers of England on Education, under the rather incongruous title of "Reconstruction and Religion." Let us say at the outset that the Principal is gifted with a good deal more candour than many of his professional brethren. But his very candour—his unequivocal statement of clerical claims—reveals him as a reader of the signs of the times who does *not* understand. Having ears, he heareth not; having eyes, he seeth not.

Principal Forsyth seeks to support the conclusion that Christianity "is the moral renovation of Humanity." His position is "that our first interest in education, secular or religious, is to rear men and women *as citizens;* citizens of the State and of the Kingdom of God." We are not concerned to contradict the Principal when he argues for improvement in the position of the teacher, or when he contends for a better general education for the child. There is probably force in several of his objections to what he calls "premature specialization." What we are concerned to point out and emphasize is, that Principal Forsyth and his professional brethren are content to agree to any kind of curriculum so long as they can have that curriculum well peppered and impregnated with religious doctrine. *There* is the true professional touch. Principal Forsyth lets the cat out of the bag when, in one of his frank outbursts, he says, "I would put up with almost anything rather than see education severed from religion." This bears out to the letter what the present writer maintained in his article, "Better Than Nothing!" in the *Freethinker* of September 23, 1917. Principal Forsyth says we need a religion whose spirit is moral before it is mystical. We contend that such a religion is impossible. Notwithstanding all that has come and gone, we hold that, by saying this, Principal Forsyth is merely echoing one of the discredited watchwords of the "New Theology." Religion was always, is always, and so long as it exists, ever must be, mystical before it is anything else. Religion is, first, obedience to commandments, without question, without any exercise of the mental faculties of the commanded to inquire whether the commandments are moral or immoral. For this reason the Bible remains unexpurgated. But when the individual mind asserts itself by testing the validity of commandments, it makes a claim to the freedom of forming its own religion, or doing without one altogether. And that is an end to the traditional and professional authority of the so-called "men of God." "I would put up," says the Principal, "with almost anything rather than see education severed from religion." Indeed! This may be interesting as throwing light on the psychology of Principal Forsyth; but the advocates of a secular solution of the education problem may be permitted to observe that centuries of association between education and religion have bequeathed to us the evils from which civilization suffers, culminating in a world war. And they may also be permitted to ask why the preferences of Principal Forsyth and those who think with him should be shoved down the throats of those who differ from him. It is painfully and historically true that whenever the "Idea of God" becomes associated with any phase of secular activity, it is a clog on the wheel of progress. Christianity has been demonstrated to be a ghastly failure. It has failed because its claims are false.

There is something to disturb the gravity of Freethinkers when they contrast the attitude of this temerarious apologist of a moribund faith with that of the men of the generation which has just arrived. Many

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of the latter doubtless render lip service to the *dicta* of their elders, but by their actions (always more eloquent than words) they betray the attitude of persons whom a lawyer once described as "recalcitrant beneficiaries." The testamentary schemes of the Almighty Father do *not* appear to them to be acceptable. They prefer their own natural rights. Once alive to these rights they regard the will of God as a mere form of words.

We have every desire to believe that Principal Forsyth does not intend to sneer. But we cannot pass over the form of his suggestion for a heightening of the *status* of the teacher. He says: "His combinations should carry the seal of a profession and not the stamp of a trade union." If that does not contain a sneer it is at least a remarkable example of arrogant professional complacency. The Principal's candour is surpassed by his professional consciousness. But we venture to warn him that the men of the generation which has just arrived will regard it as a sneer, and will smile at it for such. Much has mankind suffered from the three professions, and from their satellites and parasites. The beginnings of emancipation are marked by the appearance of such things as trade unions.

One is not surprised to find such an ultra-superior mind claiming (for Self and Co.) that they only can take "long views of life"; that they only have "the final key to the moral situation." Long views of life! Christians think in centuries—Freethinkers in æons. To men, like Principal Forsyth, their precious religion comes before education. Education "is the public interest that comes next to religion." "The teacher ought to be taught to regard his profession as the true national clergy, as a clergy bearing a relation to the nation parallel to that of the ministry of the Church." Why? Because *he has more effect on the public at its plastic time than the ministry has. There* is the whole clerical position confessed in a nutshell. *There* is the professional touch, if you please. If we clergy do not get directly in touch with "the public" at its plastic time—it would scarcely accord with our dignity if we did—we will do what we can to inoculate the teacher with our doctrines, and so mould the public mind. Observe the professional reference to "the public" as if they were a flock of sheep to be led, guided, goaded, driven, or controlled *en masse*. How often have expert educationists had their schemes frustrated by pottering preachers? And just because of this repression of individuality which inevitably results from religious interference.

Principal Forsyth says that we need a moral education. But *any* education worthy of the name is bound to be moral. You cannot divorce ethics from ethnics.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

NEO-MALTHUSIANISM *V.* SOCIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My deliberate challenge to Socialists has had a most interesting result. Only four have written in defence of Socialism from the most heinous accusation which could be made against it in the eyes of a Freethinker—that it is a faith—the Christian faith *redivivus*—with "beneficent Nature" as God and the wicked Capitalist as Satan. Of these, Mr. Marriott roundly charges his fellow Socialists with opposing the Malthusian doctrine; Major Warren adopts the tactics of the *odium theologicum*, and merely attempts to provoke sentimental dislike of that doctrine regardless of its truth, or of the humanitarian work of the Neo-Malthusian; Mr. Streimer indulges in Marxian's rhodomontade, which, to do them credit, the intellectual Socialist's have already discarded; and the only serious critic is Mr. Robert Arch, who admits the importance of family limitation. When I contrast this with the experience of twenty or thirty years ago, when the Socialist leaders were holding up Malthusianism and family limitation to ridicule and contempt, and were telling the people that smaller families would mean lower wages, it almost shakes my disbelief in miracles.

A few words will be sufficient concerning Mr. Arch's point. The Malthusian doctrine reinforced by vital statistics leads to the conclusion that the present total production of food upon the earth is insufficient for the adequate sustenance of all its inhabitants, and this is the chief source of that poverty which Socialists wrongly ascribe to human institutions. Mr. Arch claims that, if this is so, the food ought to be equally rationed, and that it could be increased by Socialistic effort in the place of production for profit. From both these contentions I absolutely dissent. Competition is the great source of progress, as both economists and biologists have recognized, and the Socialistic mistake lies in condemning competition, instead of avoiding too many competitors. However brutal it may seem to say so, it is better in the face of shortage that the competent should be fully fed, and we must regard as the most competent those who have succeeded best in the struggle. Production for profit means production of the things for which the community shows its desire, and there is no better incentive to production, and no better criticism as to what to produce.

My remarks concerning the effect of destruction of capital seem to have been misunderstood. I was not accusing Socialists of disregarding capital, but was replying to Major Warren's repetition of Henry George's fallacy that wages are paid out of the produce of the labour for which they are paid. Capital may not "employ" labour, but labour cannot be exerted without previously existing capital in civilized countries.

Mr. Arch's claim that Socialism will bring about family limitation among the poor by raising their status has been a favourite one among a certain section of Socialists for the last few years, and has its humorous aspect. What it comes to is: Give the poor Socialism and they will imitate the despised bourgeoisie, and adopt that family limitation which the bulk of Socialists have declared to be unnecessary. And it has another defect. How is Socialism to improve the condition of the poor? Primarily, at least, by further taxation of the educated classes, who will further restrain their already low birth-rate in consequence, thus intensifying the present reversed selection.

Against Mr. Arch's assertion that propaganda will not induce the poor to adopt family limitation, we have the definite experience of the Malthusian League. This experience has shown that there is nothing that the poor are so anxious and so grateful for as advice concerning the methods of family limitation, and there is no doubt whatever that direct neo-Malthusian propaganda will effect far more than any secondary results of Socialistic bounty, and will enable the poor to participate automatically in the benefits of capital by becoming themselves capitalists.

CHARLES V. DRYSDALE.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

I HAVE never been able to see how the cause of true religion, of true Christianity, of the acceptance of Christ's mission and teaching can be helped by the perpetuation of myths and fables and falsehoods.

Mr. McCurdy, who writes in your issue of December 28 on the old fable of Herod's massacre of the male children of Bethlehem, has evidently never taken the trouble to read up the subject (or in general the whole question of the nativity of Jesus) in the Encyclopædia Biblica. Had he done so he would have learnt (1) that so far as anything is certain in the early history of the Redeemer, He was born at Nazareth and not at Bethlehem, and (2) that Herod the Great died wholly ignorant of the son born to Joseph and Mary, and innocent of such a horror as the massacre of the male infants in the town of Bethlehem. If there were any truth in such a legend as the killing of these children lest one amongst them should be the Messiah, the deed would certainly have

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been recorded by Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, who was a contemporary of the Herods, or by Josephus, who has written so fully of this period in his "Antiquities of the Jews"

The only reliable Gospel is that of St. Mark. In the others, not composed in their present form till the second century, the life of Christ prior to His emergence as a teacher is shown with fabulous events simply for the purpose of "fulfilling" Hebrew prophecies and thus converting Jews to Christianity. Of these myths the Massacre of the Innocents is one, adduced or invented (only in the Gospel attributed to Matthew) merely to justify the prediction: "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentations and weeping..... Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted....."

But in religion, as in everything else in this present period, what those who write for the edification of the people loathe or avoid is the statement of the plain truth. Legends and fiction distributed broadcast are thought in some way to help us towards victory in this struggle, to keep us content with mismanagement, and to stave off the terror of real Education.—*Sir H. H. Johnson*, "*Daily Chronicle*."

Society News.

South London Branch, N.S.S. — The South London Branch has arranged a debate to take place at the Trade Union Hall, 30, Brixton Road (near Kennington Oval Tube Station) at 7 o'clock this (Sunday) evening. The subject: "Did Jesus Ever Live?" will be opened in the affirmative by Mr. Noah Bailey (of the C. E. S.), and negative by Mr. Howell Smith, B.A. It is hoped that there will be a good attendance at this lecture, and that Freethinkers will take with them some of their Christian friends, to whom the subject should be equally important and interesting. The Trade Union Hall is easy of access—from North London by Tube as above, and from West London by L.C.C. tram from Victoria to Kennington Church, each about three minutes walk from the hall.—W. HANMER OWEN, Hon. Sec.

West Central Hall, London.—An interesting lecture was delivered by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith to a good audience last Sunday afternoon. A closing remark of the speaker's on Christian Idealism brought an avalanche of opposition, which was ended by an invitation being given to Mr. Smith by the chairman to make this the subject of another lecture at an early date.—E. M. VANCE, Gen. Sec.

North London Branch N. S. S.—An animated discussion followed Mr. H. V. Storey's address, which was freely criticised, on the reconstruction of the Freethought party. Tonight, Mr. George Ives will open on "Early Man." North Londoners who have already heard Mr. Ives are looking forward to a most interesting and stimulating address.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

NIETZSCHE AND CHRISTIANITY.

After three years of War, and three years in the Army, I am proud to have this opportunity of confessing publicly that I am still a convinced Nietzschean, that I still hold Nietzsche's attitude towards Christianity, and that recent events have not moved me one inch from the position I held in the spring of 1914. In the ferocity, brutality, and impudence of the Germans, in the megalomania that induced them to imagine for one moment that they were entitled to world-dominion, I see the inflating bellows of Pauline arrogance in their assumption of right. I see those seditious doctrines of equality and of immortality granted to every Tom, Dick, and Harry, which ultimately leave poor, hitherto modest, Tom, Dick, and Harry with vertiginous notions as to their own altitude! In the commercial rivalry which occurs as a sort of rumbling bass throughout the cacophonous uproar of the world conflict I see the fatal suite: Catholicism, Protestantism, Puritanism (mother, daughter, and abortion); and since a form of government may be judged by the revolutions it provokes, the ugliness and versatile stupidity of Protestantism, together with the appalling sordidness and commercial cupidity of Puritanism, stand for all time as the most convincing condemnation of the stronghold of traditional Christianity.—*Zarathustrian*, "*New Age*."

The Blank Wall.

THE human brain has arrived at one great confidence; the confidence in money, and in money values. No other confidence rivals it. There is much more real and revoltingly sincere confidence in the power of the dollar than in "God" or man, or the possibilities of human life. There is more true faith in pounds, shillings, and pence, than in humanity.

This confidence in the commercial reality of money values is the solid basis, as it were, of the continued existence of the vast majority of "Civilized" men and women. Destroy the confidence enjoyed by the people in cash values and civilization would become an even greater manifestation of chaos than it already is. There would be no faith in anything at all! No faith in man, "God," reason, science, or art. The most effective power that man is possessed of would appear to be a genius for commercializing everything that emanates from his brain! If a thing or idea can be commercialized then the people will believe in it. Religion will perish when it ceases to be adequately subsidized; war stops functioning when, by its own nature, it makes commercial success impossible.

Destroying this great and almost supernatual confidence of humanity in money would destroy the only balance in the human brain which works effectively. Unfortunately, there seems no chance of the money confidence being destroyed. Hope may be permitted, however, because the possibility of directing the money power into less insane channels does exist, and it is conceivable that a more rational populace would see to it that its cash was invested in those things which promise and intend the betterment of the race. In a sane world there would be more subsidy for a "Prevention of War" society than for the Army and Navy. Unfortunately, the people put their money on the wrong horse and lose everything. In time, the people may learn which investment is the most advantageous.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Obituary.

The older members of the Bristol Branch of the N. S. S. will see with regret that Mr. J. W. White has passed into the shades. The deceased was a personal friend of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. G. W. Foote; these frequently stayed in his house in their visits to Bristol thirty years ago. Mr. White was one time President and Secretary of the Bristol Branch in its active days. The deceased was a teacher of navigation, and many noted seamen passed under his teaching. He held three medals from the Royal Humane Society for saving life. Once, when the writer expressed his admiration for this work, Mr. White replied: "Oh, it is nothing. If I saw a dog drowning I should plunge in to save it." At Exeter, many years ago, he was publicly presented with the Royal Humane Society's medal by the then Lord Bishop Temple, afterwards Archbishop. The Bishop expressed his thanks to Mr. White, and said he ought to thank Almighty God for giving him such splendid gifts of saving life. Mr. White thanked his lordship, but shocked the audience by adding, "Perhaps his lordship ought to send the medal to God." When the deceased was Secretary of the Licensed Victuallers at Bristol, he was publicly thanked by the Chairman of the Licensing Committee for his efforts to lessen drunkenness. He was capable of casting three columns of figures at one time, sharing this wonderful power with the late W. E. Gladstone. His mind was so active that he could cast a sum as quickly as it was written; he had second sight. A man of kindly disposition, he was called the poor man's lawyer. Once the writer knew of a man so poor that at Christmas time he had no dinner at home. Mr. White had a parcel of food—puddings and rabbits and fruit—sent round to the man's house, he not knowing who his benefactor was. He was a most earnest Freethinker, and desired that his remains should be cremated. He has passed into the great unknown, and one can think of him as surely "he cannot be ugly in his death"; for his life was brave and frank, and many would desire to lay a tribute on his bier. A good, great man has passed away, and the memory of a life well spent remains to us all.—T. A. W.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. George Ives, M.A., F.Z.S., "Early Man." Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Debate, "Did Jesus Ever Live?" Affirmative, Mr. Noah Bailey (Christian Evidence Society). Negative, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.15, Mr. H. Snell, "Palestine and the Founding of a New Jewish State."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

LEICESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Percival Westell, F.L.S., "The Wonders of Insect Life." Lantern Illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, Mr. J. Hammond, "The God of Mr. Wells."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6 30, Mr. Greenall, "Shelley's Queen Mab."

FAILSWORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Message of Secularism to the Times."

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
English Christians and Russia.—The Editor	81
The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd	82
From a Mattress Grave.—Mimnermus	84
Religion and the Boers.—E. A.	85
"Spare the Rod and ——"—John McMillan	86
Letter to the Editor—Malthusianism and Poverty	86
Acid Drops	87
To Correspondents	89
Sugar Plums	89
The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer	90
John Smith in Khaki.—Herbert W. Thurlow	91
Society News	93
Obituary	93
Notice of Meetings	94
Pamphlets	95
Books	96

Views and Opinions.

English Christians and Russia.

The attitude of English Christian leaders towards Russia since the revolution will not have escaped the notice of the observant. Prior to the revolution we were deluged with sermons by muddle-headed clerics like the Bishop of London, and superficial writers like Mr. Stephen Graham concerning the intense piety and saintliness of Russia. It was Christian in spirit and in temper. Russia had the religious temper that was lacking with us, and it was, apparently, its function to permeate us with its unrivalled Christian idealism. And all this, be it remembered, of the Russia of the Czar! Of a Government that was, without doubt, the worst in Europe, which had for generations kept its people ignorant, drunken, and religious, in order to perpetuate its own power; which had made "Siberia" a synonym for the very grave of freedom, and had permitted, when it had not connived at, the murder of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children to gratify the engineered hatred of the more ignorant among its Christian subjects. Then came the revolution, and with it silence on the part of those pietists among us who had hitherto been so obtrusively vocal. Nothing more was heard of the "soul" of Russia. Bishop Ingram and Mr. Graham remained mute. Fulsome praise for the piety of the Government that for generations had treated its own subjects with a greater infamy than any conqueror would have done, which had forced Jewish girls to register as prostitutes before it would permit them to study at the leading universities. Chilling silence or rebuke for those who, whatever their errors and blunders, were at least animated by the desire for freedom, and had rid the nation of an intolerable tyranny. The attitude of English Churchmen before and after the revolution will be not the least instructive study of the part played by the Churches during the world-war.

* * *

Force and the Churches.

Those who knew anything about Russia, and who also understood our English Christians, were not at all surprised at the sequence of events. Right through the course of this War, the Churches have shown themselves incapable of thinking of the conflict save in terms of physical force. They have never realized that, while the immediate task was to hold Germany at bay and rob her of dependence upon mere militarism, the greater task and the greater aim was to break the power of the militaristic ideal in all countries and among all peoples. And no mere military victory would do this work. We say that because no mere military victory has ever had this effect in the remotest degree. A military triumph always leaves the victor exulting in his military supremacy, and the nation doing homage at the shrine of the God that has served it so well. And a military defeat leaves the vanquished with no other lesson than that its own militarism failed because it was not powerful enough. If the one conclusion is justified, so is the other. The Churches have not realized that if militarism is to disappear from human society, or even to be considerably weakened, the clash of conflict must be lifted to a higher sphere. To put the whole matter in a sentence, the effectiveness of militarism sanctifies, in the minds of the people, its use. Its recognized ineffectiveness, its utter, hopeless breakdown, is the one thing that will make it a permanently discredited instrument in the eyes of men and women. Then only will it be recognized that, as in war as elsewhere, it is ideas that rule, so the end of war will come by the supplanting of lower ideals by higher ones. Our work, said Father Vaughan, is to keep on killing Germans. Our work is rather to keep on killing German ideas. We have to supplant the idea of force with the force of ideas.

* * *

Freethought in Russia.

The time-serving policy of the clergy is one reason of their attitude towards Russia. The other lies in the fact that the revolution was a blow at the Christian Church as well as at Russian autocracy. Church and autocracy have always worked hand in hand in Russia. Without the Church, the permanence of the autocracy would have been almost impossible. As it was, they fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a beast of prey. A late Procurator of the Holy Synod, M. Pobyedonostseff, made it quite clear in his *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, that in Russia the weakening of the Church would mean the downfall of the throne. And in the clergy the autocracy possessed a force far more potent than its armies. The dragooning of the mind is preparatory to the dragooning of the body. But the makers of the revolution were, and are, in the main Freethinkers. The greatest figure of all at the moment, Trotsky—the man who is responsible for giving an idea to the peoples of the world around which they may rally—is an avowed Freethinker. And as in France more than a century ago, the revolution in Russia is making for the disintegration of the Christian faith. The *Church Times*, in a series of articles on the subject, refers with horror to the "tendency to associate Christianity and Atheism with the opposing political

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parties," and, as an instance of the demoralization that has set in, relates that in one of the ports "the crew of a destroyer have met together, and after a lengthy and wordy discussion, passed a resolution that in their opinion the evidence in favour of the existence of God is altogether insufficient, and they are satisfied there is no God." Worse still, there is actually a freethinking paper now issued which publishes a caricature of Moses! We are not surprised to find the *Church Times* writer recording that "In the old days I never saw a peasant who looked unhappy; now the sullen, discontented faces increase in unhappiness every week," even though one may be a little sceptical as to the idyllic existence that has been disturbed by the revolution. Anything is forgivable when done in the name of God. Nothing is excusable if done in the name of humanity. That is the inevitable lesson of the situation.

* * *

Lest We Forget.

Had not the Churches been as incapable of giving a reliable lead in war time as during peace, they might have seen in the Russian revolution a message of hope to the world, and they would have welcomed it as something of an offset against the spirit of militarism. For consider the situation. Three and a half year's of war has pretty well convinced all reasonable men that on lines of mere physical force the position is as nearly hopeless as may be. Even politicians are beginning to realize this. To these millions of people obsessed with the power of armed forces comes a handful of, not as they are stupidly called impracticable idealists, but, in the best sense of the word, very practical realists. They see that the raising of armies, and yet more armies, leads nowhere, and ends in no tangible good. And into this international "suicide club" they threw, not a new army, not a high explosive shell, but something more powerful and more deadly than either—an idea. They appeal to the peoples of the world against the rulers of the world, to human reason against brute force. And that appeal has brought the world nearer peace than has three-and-a-half year's fighting. We are witnessing to-day, if we would only see it, one of the greatest fights in all history; and it is for we Freethinkers to note that in this supreme struggle not a word of help comes from anyone of the Churches of Christendom. That is a fact well worth remembering. In Russia, in Germany, in Britain, in Italy, the Churches have seen nothing beyond a continuance of war until sheer exhaustion brings an "inconclusive peace." It is due to the Freethinking leaders of the new Russia that they have seen a better way out. In a duel of big guns *versus* great ideas the guns may, for the moment, roar loudest; but the ideas will remain when the guns are silent, even if they do not shatter the guns with their own greater explosive force.

* * *

The Record of the Churches.

But, after all, this is only history repeating itself. The Churches have acted in this War precisely as they have acted in others. In Russia, as we have said, the Church was always the cheerful and willing tool of the Government, and it was largely by its agency that the autocracy persisted. Nor has it been vitally different in any other country. In the worst days of the old order in France it was the Church that gave that order its sanction and its blessing. And when the upheaval came and—to quote Carlyle—the shrieking thousands suffered instead of the dumb millions, and the "Rights of Man" were proclaimed instead of "Duty to God," the Church in this country allied itself with an alarmed conservatism, and poured upon the revolution an avalanche of slander and misrepresentation that a century and a quarter has not sufficed to remove. In Germany the Government has found in the Church a ready instrument in its half-century work of militarizing the people. The Church made no protest there when the Government converted the schools into "training stables for the Army." It assists here when military drill and the paraphernalia of Army life is introduced into our schools. The record of the Christian Churches, from Constantine onward, is the same—time-serving, opportunist, and retrogressive. It cannot really be said that the Church has failed to lead the world along the higher path, since it has never seriously attempted the task. It has failed to make its own power permanent, but that is because not even so great an organization as the Christian Church is proof against the growth of human intelligence and the strength of human co-operation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Newest Apologetic.

II.

> It was in virtue of the faith of Christ, and of that alone, that the position of women was bettered, and respect for women increased, in the later Roman Empire and in the dark ages that followed, that the exposition of children was fiercely combated, and that slavery was practically extinct in Europe by the fourteenth century.—*Rev. J. K. Mozley, B.D., "The Achievements of Christianity,"* pp. xiii, xiv.

SUCH is the claim on behalf of Christianity advanced by an exceptionally, fair-minded Christian apologist, but in the form in which it is expressed we are bound to pronounce it utterly false. As regards the position of women in Rome prior to the establishment of Christianity, we have the authority of Lecky for stating that it was more satisfactory and honourable than it has ever been since. "They arrived," he says, "during the Empire, at a point of freedom and dignity which they subsequently lost, and have never altogether regained" (*History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 304). As Mr. Mozley is a classical scholar, he cannot be ignorant of the fact that Pagan philosophers and emperors advocated and legislated for the humane treatment of children. It was clearly taught that a parent had no right to kill his son without a trial, and Trajan made it illegal for a father to enslave his son. A young boy committed a serious offence, and his father put him to death, but Hadrian punished that brutal father with banishment. Alexander Severus treated the exposition of a child as a foul murder; and even Diocletian made the sale of children illegal. Has Mr. Mozley forgotten that the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, once more legalized their sale? And is it not a fact that in Christian Britain there exists to-day a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, under which serious prosecutions are by no means unknown? Much had been done for the benefit of the child in Pagan Rome before Christianity came to power, and, alas! much remains to be done for it in London at the present time.

We now return to the subject of slavery, and particularly to Mr. Mozley's assertion that "it was in virtue of the faith of Christ, and of that alone, that slavery was practically extinct in Europe by the fourteenth century." Of the truth of this assertion not a single shred of evidence is adduced, possibly because the author knows that none is available. Indeed, we confidently challenge him to prove his statement in its present form. Lecky, whom he sometimes quotes, does not agree with him, though he is more favourable to Christianity than the facts, even as cited by himself, allow. Whilst holding that we owe the emancipation of the slaves to Christianity, he frankly admits that two other agents rendered invaluable assistance. The first was Paganism. Under Nero, he tells us:

> There appeared in the centre of Paganism a powerful reaction in favour of the suffering classes, of which Seneca was the principal exponent, but which was

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more or less reflected in the whole of the literature of the time. Seneca recurred to the subject again and again, and for the first time in Rome he very clearly and emphatically enforced the duties of masters to their slaves, and the existence of a bond of fraternity that no accidental difference of position could cancel. Nor was the movement confined to the writings of moralists. A long series of enactments by Nero, Claudius, Antonine, and Adrian gave the servile class a legal position, took the power of life and death out of the hands of the masters, prevented the exposure of slaves when old and infirm on an island of the Tiber, forbade their mutilation or their employment as gladiators, and appointed special magistrates to receive their complaints (*The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii., pp. 235-6).

The other influence favourable to the slaves was likewise non-Christian, namely that exerted by the barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire. Lecky justifies the description of them as "the representatives of the principle of personal liberty in Europe." They scarcely practised slavery at all, and when they did, it was in opposition to the dictates of their best instincts and habits. But the Church was always, even from the very beginning, a believer in, and supporter of, the Divine institution of slavery. St. Augustine justified it on the ground that it was due to man's fall, and regarded it as part and parcel of family government. Gregory the Great admitted that the original state of man was a state of freedom, and on this ground he was theoretically in favour of emancipation as an act of grace. It is also true that his holiness freed a few of his own slaves, but only as an act of devotion. Did he not present slaves to a convent, and is it not on record that he did his utmost to recover a fugitive slave of his brother? The truth is, as the Rev. Dr. Fisher, of Yale University, puts it, that "neither pope nor council pronounced slavery unlawful." (*History of the Christian Church*, p. 232.) Priests were often slave-owners on a large scale, and numerous were the bondmen who did the menial work at the monasteries. Alcuin was an Englishman of the eighth century, who became an eminent ecclesiastic, and an active believer in the revival of learning. He founded the Universities of Paris, Tours, Fulden and Soissons, and he held an honoured position at the French court, playing the part of instructor to Charlemagne and his family. And yet when he took charge of the Abbey of Tours it was the proud possessor of twenty thousand slaves. Dr. Fisher says:—

> The emancipation of slaves and serfs was applauded, like any other act of beneficence. Even among the ancient Romans it was not infrequent for a master to give freedom to a slave, and it was always counted a generous deed. The mediæval Church denounced slavery only when it was the servitude of a Christian in bondage to a Jew or an Infidel. This was always regarded as something grievous and deserving prevention by law, or through a ransom in cases beyond the reach of law. The Church from ancient times insisted that anxiety about one's worldly condition, even in the case of a slave, was undesirable, and that the freedom of the child of God and the heavenly inheritance were the chief good. (*Ibid*, p. 232.)

It is true that in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries slavery diminished considerably in Europe, but it is a radical mistake to attribute the diminution to the benign and humanizing influence of the Church, except in so far as the Church herself was being affected by the revival of ancient learning. Professor Fisher cannot be suspected of harbouring any prejudice against the religion of which he is a distinguished minister, and yet he has the courage to write thus:—

> Serfdom disappeared, not by any religious condemnation of it, but as a consequence of the growth of towns, a spirit of discontent and resistance among the peasants themselves, and other general causes. (*Ibid*, p. 233.)

Speaking of the decline of slavery in England from the ninth to the eleventh century, John Richard Green significantly adds:—

> The decrease of slavery went on side by side with an increasing degradation of the bulk of the people. Political and social changes had long been modifying the old structure of society; and the very foundations of the old order were broken up in the degradation of the freemen, and the upgrowth of the lord with his dependent villains (*A Short History of the English People*, p. 59).

Again, dealing with the Peasant Revolt in the fourteenth century, Green says that "the slave-class, never numerous, had been reduced by the efforts of the Church, perhaps by the general convulsion of the Danish wars." Yet, surely, the class that succeeded it was not much, if any, better, because—

> All indeed were dependent on a lord. The manor-house became the centre of every English village. The manor-court was held in its hall; it was here that the lord or his steward received homage, recovered fines, held the view of frank-pledge, or enrolled the villagers in their tithing. Here, too, if the lord possessed criminal jurisdiction, was held his justice court, and without its doors stood his gallows (*Ibid.*, p. 245).

Does it not inevitably follow from all these testimonies that it was not "in the faith of Christ, and of that alone" that slavery declined in Europe towards the end of the Dark Ages? As a matter of simple fact, slavery was not abolished in Europe until the nineteenth century. In Christian England there was great rejoicing when a monopoly of the slave-trade between Africa and the Spanish dominions had been profitably bought through Marlborough in the eighteenth century, and we must not forget that England was directly responsible for planting slavery in her American colonies and her Indian islands. In 1760 there were 80,000 black slaves in the City of London; and in one hundred years, between 1680 and 1780, our British colonies alone imported fully 2,130,000 slaves; but at the close of the eighteenth century "the horrors and iniquity of the trade, the ruin and degradation of Africa which it brought about, the oppression of the negro himself, were felt widely and deeply;" and yet when, in 1788, Wilberforce, with the assistance of Pitt, brought in a Bill for its abolition, the feeling against it was so strong that the House of Commons threw it out; and it was only in 1833 that Great Britain abolished its slave-trade. And in this connection it should be remembered that, whilst Wilberforce was an evangelical Christian, his friend and chief supporter, Pitt, was an Agnostic. In America, also, slavery was abolished, not by the Church, but by its Freethinking President, Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. Mozley's allusion to the effect of the faith of Christ on slavery is thus seen to be both inaccurate and misleading. Even had complete emancipation been brought about in the fourteenth century, the Church could not justly have claimed the full credit for it, because already Humanism was a most powerful factor in moulding even ecclesiastical policy; and there were men not a few in Holy Orders to whom Christianity was only nominally true. It was the new learning, the ever-growing knowledge of Nature, not the faith of Christ, that was broadening men's minds, and opening their eyes to the grim realities of every-day life. This, however, is an aspect of the subject which demands serious attention.

J. T. Lloyd.

Tompkins: "Do you believe in the immortality of souls?" Jenkins: "Well, not in the case of my shoes."

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From a Mattress Grave.

The spirit of the world
Beholding the absurdity of men—
Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile
For one short moment wander o'er his lips.
That smile was Heine. —*Matthew Arnold.*

HEINE'S genius almost defies analysis. He is, and must ever remain, a problem. Multifarious, luminous, brilliant, he is like a diamond giving light from a hundred facts. To many he appears as a youthful champion tilting against the enemies of humanity; but it seems well-nigh impossible to reach the roots of the man's nature. He is a bundle of contradictions. A Jew who despised money; a convert without zeal; a model of resignation, and yet no Christian; a poet living amid the sternest conditions of prose; a comedian whose life was a tragedy.

In one vivid personality, Heine gathers all those influences of his time which are the live forces to-day. Such a nature was bound to be misunderstood. The puritanical Thomas Carlyle called him a "blackguard"; the pious Kingsley thought him "a wicked man." Thackeray, on the other hand, admitted his "great genius"; and Matthew Arnold hailed him as the mouthpiece of his stormy generation. These varying estimates are typical of the general attitude. He kindled enthusiasm or roused repulsion wherever he was read. If we would seek a comparison, we may find it in Voltaire. Both men championed Liberty, and produced the deepest effects on their generations, and left immortal legacies to posterity. The writings of both ring with a defiant note against "the lie at the lips of the priest."

Heine was born at a great crisis in European history. The long and terrible period during which the vampires of Church and State had sucked away the life-blood of the world was ending rapidly, and before his tenth year little Heine had lived through, and seen, great events. It was the day of Napoleon, and, as Heine puts it, "all boundaries were dislocated." As a boy, he found it hard to learn Latin declensions, which he was sure the Romans never did, "for if they had first to learn Latin, they never would have had time to conquer the world." Young Heine was so troubled that he broke into heterodox prayer: "O thou poor, once-persecuted God, do help me, if possible, to keep the irregular verbs in my head."

One memorable day the impressionable boy saw Napoleon ride through Dusseldorf on his famous white horse, and he never lost the glamour cast over him by the great commander. Republican as he afterwards became, Heine always had a tender place in his heart for Napoleon. Nor is this to be wondered at, for the Code Napoleon, to the Jewish race in particular, was a charter of freedom from the ghastly ghettos of the Midde Ages to the rights of free-born citizens, and the Jews justly hailed the Emperor on that account as their deliverer and protector.

A precocious child—Heine loved reading. His favourite authors were brave old Cervantes and witty Jonathan Swift, and he revelled in the fascinating pages of *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver's Travels*. At the age of seventeen a rich uncle at Hamburg tried in vain to induce him to choose a business career; but it was useless. The young poet, full of lofty ideals, regarded money-grubbing as an accursed thing. Later he studied law, and fell under the influence of Hegel. Years afterwards he referred, caustically, to this period as that in which he "herded swine with the Hegelians."

With the appearance of his first volume of poems he began to take his true place. He still talked of becoming a lawyer, but his thoughts were all for other things than "wise saws and modern instances." For instance, he wrote:—

> Red life boils in my veins. Every woman is to me the gift of a world. I hear a thousand nightingales. I could eat all the elephants of Hindustan, and pick my teeth with the spire of Strasburg Cathedral. Life is the greatest of blessings.

His energies were devoted to writing, and not to pleading. Instead of cultivating his clients he wrote his *Travel-Pictures*, a book so full of word-magic that it showed Heine to be as great an artist in prose as in verse. Its irony was so mordant, so disrespectful, that it was at once placed on the Index Expurgatorius. Indeed, as a writer, he never elected to dwell beside the still waters. To think of his career is to think of alarms and excursions, of church calling unto conventicle, of pamphlet answering pamphlet, of recriminations and vituperations manifold, and all the joys of literary battle. With all his love of fighting his enthusiasm burns for noble ends. The love of liberty shines through the mist of his dreams. And let a man love Freedom and live long enough, and there is no doubt with whom his place must be in the end.

In *The Romantic School* he poured vitriol over the literary chiefs of reaction in their tenderest spot. He compared their reversion to mediævalism to the hallucinations of Charenton, the Bedlam of Paris. This is how he ridicules Ludwig Tieck:—

> He drank so deeply of the mediæval folk-tale ballads that he became almost a child again, and dropped into that juvenile lisping which it cost Mdme. de Stael so much effort to admire.

It was not roses all the way. There came an inevitable stage in which the poet could no longer—

Sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair.

But when the sad days arrived he never complained. For seven long years prior to his death he lay bent and solitary on a "mattress-grave," his back bent, his legs paralyzed, his hands powerless, his sight failing. His ungrudging nature found excuses for his friends' desertion of his sick-chamber in the reflection that he was "unconsciously long a-dying." As Matthew Arnold sings in his fine dirge on his brother poet:—

Oh! not little, when pain
Is most quelling, and man
Easily quelled, and the fine
Temper of genius so soon
Thrills at each smart, is the praise
Not to have yielded to pain.

"God's satire weighs heavily upon me," says Heine.

> The Great Author of the Universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, was bent on demonstrating with crushing force to me, the little earthly so-called German Aristophanes, how my weightiest sarcasms are only pitiful attempts at jesting in comparison with His, and how miserably I am beneath Him in humour, in colossa mockery.

The untameable humorist kept his most wonderful jest for the last. "God will forgive me," he said, "it is his trade."

Heine, after all, was a poet. He is at his best in verse. His melodies are as various as they are faultless. The cadences are more caressingly tender; now lulling, lingeringly mournful; now resonant as the blare of martial trumpets. The verse now rolls majestically, now dances airily, now rings like a peal of fairy bells:—

O lyric voice, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire.

Fundamentally, Heine was a Freethinker, and he hated priestcraft with every drop of his blood. He never wearied of pouring scorn on the "molly-coddle homœopathic soul-doctors, who pour the thousandth part

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of a pint of reason into a gallon of morals, and send people to sleep with it on Sundays." He loathed that "abortion called State religion, that monster born of the intrigue between temporal and spiritual power." He was not "over partial to anthropomorphism." The bolts of his unerring irony are often directed towards the most sacred characters in the Christian mythology. In an oft-quoted passage he says that God is dying, and, in a daring figure of speech, suggests the administration to him of the last sacrament of the Church. On another occasion, he suggests that the pervenu God of the Christians is angry with Israel for reminding him of his former obscure national relations.

In the lambent flames of his sardonic humour he searched everything that the Christian counts dearest. Writing of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he says:—

> Since his time Deism has vanished from the realm of speculative reason. It may, perhaps, be several centuries before this melancholy notice of decease gets universally bruited about; we, however, have long since put on mourning. Immanuel Kant has pursued the path of inexorable philosophy; he has stormed heaven, and put the whole garrison to the edge of the sword.

Even the idea of immortality did not escape his sharp satire. He suggests, mockingly, that the notion of living for evet must have first occurred to some young lover in the arms of his mistress or to some worthy citizen sipping his beer in the cool of a summer evening.

As a poet, Heine's fame has attained to that height in which praise has become superfluous; but in the character of iconoclast he has a yet higher and more lasting claim on the attention of Freethinkers. Heine himself said he knew not if he were worthy of a laurel-wreath; "but," he added, proudly, "lay on my coffin a sword, for I was a brave soldier in the war of the Liberation of Humanity." No one will deny the laurel-wreath, and assuredly to Henri Heine belongs the sword of a valiant soldier of Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

Religion and the Boers.

NEARLY twenty years ago a little people in South Africa astounded the world by the prolonged resistance they made to the might of the British Arms. The healing and conciliatory measures of the conqueror have, to a large degree, softened the resentment of the more enlightened Boers, as admirers of General Smut's English speeches will be able to testify. Still, all is not well, and the recent disturbances, together with the rancorous race hatred, and obstinate prejudices of a powerful faction, have caused no little misgiving in the hearts of those who were looking for the signs of race fusion and mutual forbearance so vital to the progress of this country.

It is a well-known fact that toleration in politics very rarely accompanies bigotry in religion, and it is to this factor that the student of contemporary South Africa should pay attention before all else.

It would be difficult to find a parallel to the spiritual thraldom of the Boers, except in Scottish history; and, like them, the slavery is a willing one. So ingrained are the seeds of superstition in their being that even a finished education at the Universities often fails to awaken their reason in these matters. It is not so much their doctrinal credence that is remarkable (the average Boer is as ignorant as the veriest Pagan of the implications of his creed!) as their rigid conformity to tradition and custom, and this is so natural a characteristic that the very idea of a Boer iconoclast is startling to those who know him.

Bearing in their blood the heritage of the fugitive Huguenots of France, and the sturdy Netherlanders of William the Silent, liberty is for them a watchword and a passion, and, considering this, their spiritual subjection seems a perplexing anomaly. In this respect they too resemble the Scots, and I can hardly refer those interested to a better explanation than Buckle's account of that nation's religious evolution in his *History of Civilization*. Like them, the struggle for survival has condemned the Boers to a warlike, restless existence. Allowing no time for reflection, and ever in the van praying for them, cheering them, and fighting as one of them against wild native tribes, fierce animals, and the raging elements, went the "Predikant" (parson) himself, a rugged, sturdy son of the soil as they were. In the early nomadic stages of this people, these "Predikants," doubtless, served a very good purpose as a natural nobility of "best men," where no distinctions of rank exist. The greatest religious event in the Dutch Church is the celebration of "Nachtmaal," a term applied to a periodical gathering of the members of the Church ostensibly for the purpose of baptisms, weddings, confirmations, and the taking of Communion. The lonely veld dweller, who has not seen a town for months, will then wend his way through dust and storm, across great distances, to the nearest "dorp" (village), and "great is the joy of meeting." The writer has vivid youthful recollections of these gay gatherings—the bright frocks and sparkling eyes of the healthy country girls, the wooings and the weddings, the songs and dances 'neath starry skies, the *tete-a tete* round wagon fires; all the pleasurable emotions which only a South African night can excite. For, mark you, your Boer is no pleasure-hating Puritan, and he has none of that sombreness and austerity which a starving of the senses begets. In fact, he is more often than not a glutton of the senses, and possessed of a very keen sense of humour too! In the remote sparsely peopled parts of this country, unhappy must be the lot of one who casts himself adrift from the life of the Church—the marooned islander would hardly find himself in a more desperate plight!

At these functions the "Predikants" are, as it were, the Directors of Ceremonies. They are listened to with deep respect, and credited with almost superhuman knowledge and foresight. The natural mischievousness of their flock is kept in check by a stern demeanour and keen watchfulness. In addition to his always liberal salary, gifts in kind are willingly poured upon him; in fact, his position is one of so much influence and comfort that it is the desire of almost every prosperous Boer family that at least one of its members should join the Church. As a rule the modern "Predikants" are well-educated, thoroughly practical men; and as the education of their countrymen is almost wholly left to their charge, they can safely be depended upon not permitting such enlightenment to penetrate their flocks as would jeopardize their positions!

These old "nachtmaals" must have been a priceless blessing to those old Boers of unsettled communities and nomadic habits. As South Africa develops and settles down, these conditions must disappear; in fact, already in the towns the young Boers are distinctly more rebellious to custom; but a great distance has still to be travelled before a thoughtful Rationalism can replace the pedagogic type of morality which they are just beginning to escape from.

Religion and morality are, to an overwhelming degree, absolutely dissevered in the Boer consciousness. The most profound profession of faith is often accompanied by startling moral delinquencies, and this is beginning to be recognized by the more thoughtful of them. This is the result of trying to force an other-worldly Cal-

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vinistic creed upon a naturally buoyant and human people; and in saying it of them it is far from my intention to single them out from amongst the nations as *alone* in that respect. My idea is to check that habit which so many English people have of comparing them to their own Puritans of pious memory, which the figure of Paul Kruger and the Bible did so much to foster. *They are far better people* than your Puritans could ever hope to be, and it is this temperamental characteristic that makes one hope that, once rid of the deadening influence of the "Predikant," their natural bent for the "human" side of life may expand, until they become generous, open-hearted, and free, politically as well as religiously.

E. A. (Johannesburg).

"Spare the Rod and ——."

THE adoption of Biblical statements as canons of conduct has been productive of more evil than one would credit from a cursory examination of the facts; and none more so than the adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Those of us who are interested in educational matters have noticed, with feelings almost of despair, the apparent dislike of children to education, and the indifference with which it is viewed by the adolescent. The growth of this dislike is difficult to understand, for there is none of us who have brought up children, but can recall the painful insistence with which the infants pressed their questions about letters and words.

We have just been watching some children playing at "school." Their antics, which might have been amusing had they not indicated a blemish on our educational scutcheon, pointed to the probable source of this baffling indifference to education. We refer to the retention of corporal punishment in schools. Most of the citizens of this island have a distinct recollection of the frequent, and, in mature judgment, uselessness of the "tawse" or cane. Abhorrent to all those who have a spark of humanity in their breasts, yet the rule of the cane continues. We know of a child, a girl aged ten, who suffered from valvular disease of the heart, and in respect of whom a medical certificate was lodged with the School Board, or its employees, that on no account was the child to be struck or in any way excited; and yet who, despite the certificate, was severely flogged. The School Board was informed, but the only step taken, although the virago was a probationer, was to remove her to another school, where, presumably, she might continue her physical exercise to her constitutional benefit.

Many of the profession, however, discountenance corporal punishment, and we think it is a matter for congratulation that they should have advanced so far from the barbarism of a Hebrew civilization. They fully realize that not infrequently resort is had to the tawse, when anger has supplanted intelligence. It might be of some value to point out that the cringing children of five years and upwards are not infrequently only objects upon which an enraged teacher may wreak his vengeance, something to smash—human flesh—no matter, it relieves the feelings; and that hateful as such an action may appear in cold print, it is unfortunately rather common in this super-Presbyterian-Christian country of Scotland; tolerated in a country which boasts of its educational system. Perhaps, however, we credit religion with being a humanizing factor, and on turning to the text-book of Christianity, we find we are in error. Corporal punishment is, indeed, mild when we read of the treatment meted out to stubborn sons.

> If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him and bring him out unto the elders of his city; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die.

Thus is parental affection encouraged in Deut. xxi. 18 *et seq.*

With such an example of magnificent ferocity before one, it cannot be deemed surprising that those brought up on such a literature and such ethics cannot comprehend that the retention of corporal punishment in schools is a thing to be condemned; and it is here that the humane influence of Freethinkers could be exerted with great profit both to the generations to come and to civilization in general. In Scotland we find ministers of religion on every School Board; in England we find them in large numbers on Boards of management. Here, where Freethinkers ought to be present in large numbers, there are but few. Can it be that they do not recognize the great good that can be done by breaking up the religious atmosphere which pervades each Board, and discrediting the boasted support to education which is claimed by Christians?

We cannot view with indifference the direct and immediate effect which corporal punishment has on social life. One cannot walk of an evening through the town without observing how frequently parents strike their children for little reason or none at all. It is apparent that such a habit is contracted by constant association with the fact of striking, and that it is indulged in because public opinion has not yet condemned it. And what gives more substance to its reputed right than flagellation in schools? Were it to be treated as immoral, and that fact impressed upon the plastic minds of the children, we should, within two generations, find that parents would control their feelings; which act of discipline would be a great step towards the ideal of a sentient being.

JOHN MCMILLAN.

Correspondence.

MALTHUSIANISM AND POVERTY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Dr. Drysdale insists that poverty is due to over population, and that "it is better in the face of shortage that the competent should be fully fed." If this be so, perhaps he will explain why the condition of the workers in Ireland has not been improved one iota by the decrease of population there since the famine of 1848? The population then was 8,000,000, and is now only 3,000,000, yet the poverty-stricken state of the Irish workers remains as bad as ever. Again, seven great landlords take £14,000,000 annually in ground rents in London, without doing a hand's turn to earn it. They are, certainly, fully fed, but in what way do they display their competence? They might all be congenital idiots, yet their unearned incomes would roll into their pockets just the same. John D. Rockfeller, the American oil king, has an annual income of some £5,000,000. If this is the just reward of competence, he must be a much more competent man than Huxley, Darwin, Tyndall, Spencer, and a good many more scientists rolled into one.

G. O. WARREN (Major).

[We have received a number of letters on the subject of "Socialism v. Malthusianism," for which we regret our inability to find room. The letters, too, are a little outside the scope of the original topic, which was "Freethought and Birth Control."—ED.]

The congregation at a Stevanage (Herts) church are asked not to put foreign coins in the collection. This is an improvement on the old, sad days when brace-buttons and bad money found their way to the alms-bag.

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Acid Drops.

It seems that several people were "providentially" saved from the aeroplane bombs last week by being out of the way when the explosions occurred. When one comes to think, over six millions of the people of London were in the same position. And some of us are inclined to think the thing that calls for explanation is why the people who were killed happened to be "providentially" in the path of the German bombs. The victims do not appear to have been Freethinkers, or some explanation might be found in that direction.

There are about 50,000 sky-pilots in this country, and this large number is likely to be increased if the Catholic *Universe* is correct in stating that "hundreds of officers and men are to-day resolved that if God brings them safely through the hell-upon-earth, which they are experiencing, their thank-offering shall be a life devoted to His service in the priesthood or the religious life." And, let us hope, prayerfully, that no breach-of-promise cases will result.

The dear *Daily News* informs its readers that "the old gods are passing." This news should flutter the dovecotes of Nonconformity.

The conferring of the vote on women has roused the Churches to a sense of its vast import, but Miss Margaret Fletcher, of the Catholic Women's League, lets the cat out of the bag in saying: "Catholic women must be educated to do their new duties well. They must be in a position that they would not through ignorance betray the cause of the Church." In other words, when the clergy pull the strings the marionettes will vote.

A generation ago many Nonconformists regarded theatres as "the door of Hell"; but things are changed nowadays. A leading London theatre announced recently a special performance in aid of the Young Men's Christian Association.

At an inquest held at Westminster on Timothy John Lee, a bootmaker, who committed suicide by cutting his throat, it was stated that he suffered from religious mania. This is a tragic testimonial to the value of religion. In the Coroner's Court it was stated that, as a rule, bootmakers were Atheistic, and a correspondent inquires if there is ground for this assertion. We believe it to be true that a large proportion of reformers *used* to come from this class, and the reason was that bootmaking—in the days when they were bootmakers, and not merely machine minders—was an occupation that gave opportunities for reflection and conversation. And these circumstances tend towards heresies of all kinds, by favouring mental development.

The piety of the Sunday papers is more fully flavoured than that of the weekly periodicals, but, curiously, the sporting pages of the *Referee* often contains the unadulterated article. Recently it expressed the touching sentiment that "the Huns, like Agag, must be hewn in pieces before the Lord by Christian men." Scratch a Christian, and you find a savage.

America is the home of fancy religions, and it is not surprising that a Christian Scientist has been appointed chaplain in the United States Army. He should have a holy time with the military doctors.

Bishop Taylor Smith, the Chaplain-General, declares that "what captured Jerusalem was what captured Jericho in the days of old." It requires the eye of faith to perceive the resemblance, for the Bible says the fall of Jericho was preceded by a procession and a blare of trumpets, and the walls of the city fell down. The bishop has enough brass in his forehead to make a trumpet. We wish he would go to Jericho—and stay there.

The *Christian World* explains to the public that Sir Arthur Yapp learned the art of public speaking in Primitive Methodist Chapels. This must be very consoling to those standing in queues in the hopes of getting food. It may also explain the general suspicion with which the statements of officials are now regarded—

> From all sides comes the query,
> Where's God in all this "scrap"?
> The answer comes, quite cheery
> "Behold, He gave us Yapp!"

Since the above was written, Sir Arthur Yapp has resigned, and is returning to the Y.M.C.A. His reason is that now compulsory rationing is on us, his advocacy of voluntary rationing is no longer required. Sir Arthur might reflect that the advent of compulsory rationing is a commentary upon the success of his campaign.

There is no doubt whatever that the Churches are beginning to feel that they are losing ground rapidly, and that the War, which they hoped to turn to their advantage, is having quite an opposite effect. Thus, at the annual meeting of the Derbyshire Free Church Federation, the speakers were much concerned about the relation of the soldiers to the Church when the War is over. The Rev. W. F. Moulton suggested that they were on the horns of a dilemma. If they kept what was essential to the Churches, they might have the men. And if they got the men, it looked like having to throw overboard much of their teaching. Rev. M. Ackroyd followed on much the same lines, and it is quite clear that these gentlemen know quite well that thousands of soldiers who went out professing Christians are coming back more or less Freethinkers.

One of the latest manifestations of the tender mercy of Providence is a tidal wave and cyclone in Queensland, resulting in a loss of life and large destruction of property.

An illiterate shopkeeper in a poor neighbourhood put a notice in his window with the words "Annual Sell" upon it. The title would be a good one for many Church bazaars

Cardinal Bourne says that Russia has "lost all hold of Christian principles." Presumably, his eminence means that the Greek Church clergy no longer have a place in the sun.

The most popular Christian prayer contains the passage: "Give us this day our daily bread." The answer is to be seen in the food queues.

In spite of the need of the Government for money, we note that no attempt is being made to place a tax upon church buildings. A very large sum of money is lost to the State through all churches and chapels being freed from rates or taxes, and all of this might help pay for the War. But the parasitism of religion is unbounded. The clergy claim exemption from those duties of citizenship that are forced upon other people, and they are freed from paying rates and taxes that fall upon other people.

The tight corner in which the clergy find themselves is shown by the admissions many are making. Thus, the Rev. J. L. Harris, of Kingston:—

> This kind of salvation offered to me by conventional soul-savers seems a selfish thing. It does not appeal to the best manhood in me. If the world is to be saved I want to help; I want to be a saviour too, and I decline to be saved as a special favour, even though churches and priests offer me theological passports and sprinkle me and absolve me. The Saviour who will reach the man of to-day will not only show us something we cannot do without Him, but also something He cannot do without us. He will not only make me feel that He is indispensable to me, but that I am indispensable to Him. I would rather keep my self-respect and go to hell like a man, than lose it and go to heaven like a coward or a pauper.

The closing sentence has been voiced by thousands of Freethinkers who have realized what a selfish and contemptible thing the Christian scheme of salvation is.

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Scarcely a week passes in which we do not see a paragraph charging the Kaiser with blasphemy. This betrays on the part of those who write the paragraphs, and the editors who pass them, a deplorable ignorance of English. To blaspheme is to speak irreverently of, or to revile, God. A blasphemer is, therefore, a person who speaks irreverently of, or reviles, God. What evidence have we in any of the published utterances of the Kaiser that he speaks irreverently of, or reviles, God? None whatever. On the contrary, he addresses the Deity with profound reverence, with truly pious adulation, and humble but confident gratitude for favours past and future. This silly form of raving at the Kaiser would be better replaced by silence.

Laudatory paragraphs have appeared in the newspapers concerning a new comedian, Tom Paine, who is to appear at a London theatre. A comic Tom Paine suggests an age of unreason.

There was once another "Tom" Paine, whom the Churches found anything but a comedy. To them he was a tragedy. And although he played his part a century ago, the consequences of his life are still with us. And when history is written with truthfulness, instead of in the interest of established prejudice, it will be found that the nineteenth century produced no greater benefactor to the human race than he who first wrote "The United States of America," and who dreamed of a United States of Europe.

A new anonymous playlet, *Annajanska*, produced at the London Coliseum, has been attributed to Mr. Bernard Shaw, and among the lines quoted is "All great truths begin as blasphemy." The idea is excellent, but it is hardly original. Many years ago Ingersoll said, "The blasphemers of one generation are the aureole saints of the next."

For sheer mawkish sentiment, or pietistic piffle, we have not seen anything for a long time to compare with the leading article in the *British Weekly* for January 31. It is entitled "The Cross on the Battlefield"; and the writer takes it for granted that the soldiers in the trenches swallow without demur his antiquated and essentially immoral theology. To the dying on the battlefield, the Editor contends: "the Cross means salvation." Sir William Robertson Nicoll does not know that the Cross means anything of the sort to them, only he ventures "with great humility to conceive their outlook." Judging by what we have read in books, pamphlets, and newspaper articles, by many army chaplains, we do not hesitate to affirm that Sir William is radically mistaken.

Thoughtful young men of to-day do not subject their necks to the yoke of such theological dictatorship as characterizes the *British Weekly* editorials. Of the dying soldiers it is said in the one now under consideration: "One look of trust saves them." Here is another worse than silly saying: "To be saved by what another has done is their hope." We give our soldiers credit for being too sensible to cherish any such wicked hope. And yet the article in question teems with sayings of that outrageous nature, and is, from first to last, a wildly emotional outburst.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc uses the eye of faith in political as well as religious matters, for he regards Lord Northcliffe as the dictator of this country. Surely, he does too much honour to the proprietor of *Comic Cuts*.

The Bishop of Carlisle has written to the clergy in Carlisle diocese, asking them to hold themselves in readiness to go out as Army chaplains. What patriotism! These men will go to the Front as non-combatants with the salaries of officers.

What queer ideas the clergy have! Here is the Bishop of Southwark, preaching in Southwark Cathedral on the attractive subject of prostitution. When will these bishops learn that the pressing problem of our time is that there are many millions of Christians arrayed for mutual slaughter.

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, writing in a daily paper, has a sly dig at Mr. H. G. Wells' theological views. He points out that Mr. Wells "imagines his next god as a gentleman in shining armour. It seems somewhat out of date. Why not a tin-helmet and a gas mask?"

The mind of the new science, says a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, "is inclined to synthesis, to monism, to inspired naturalism." We are not quite sure what is *inspired* naturalism; probably the word is only introduced to help tone down the fact that modern science is irrevocably non-theistic. These are bad times for the kingly rule of gods and the godly rule of kings. Both began pretty well together, and they look like ending together.

The same writer—he is reviewing a new work on the history of Science—asks, "Did not both Wallace and Darwin receive the idea of natural selection in a flash of purest inspiration?" Note the "receive," and the "purest inspiration" in this sentence, and then consider the misleading associations such language is likely to set up. A flash of inspiration is a permissible expression, but it is inspiration from within, not from without. Had Darwin and Wallace not been trained naturalists, with minds well stored with information on a special subject, they could not have offered the world Natural Selection. In other words, their "inspiration" was the outcome of rapid and semi-conscious generalization on a mass of acquired data. There is no mystery in the machinery of inspiration once a little common sense is brought to bear. And for that reason it is not "received." That expression belongs to the pages of theology. There is no legitimate place for it in science.

There is more than an academic interest in noting the use of such expressions. All language reacts on thought, and when a person gets in the habit of using words with definite connotations in another and a special sense, such words are almost certain to mislead. The old associations are there, and they confuse subsequent thinking. "Receiving" a generalization by way of "inspiration" is certain to carry with it the theological connotation, and it establishes a mystery where there is only a rather complex problem to unravel. That is the root reason why we have so often protested against such expressions as the "Religion of Humanity," etc. "Religion" has a fairly definite historic connotation, and it is absurd to expect that it can be used to-day without giving an illicit support to supernaturalism in some form. If a man means that he believes in Naturalism, or Humanism, or morals, there is no reason whatever why he should not say so without associating therewith such an incurably misleading word as "Religion." Definite ideas are the outcome of clear thinking, as definite speech is the outward sign of its existence.

Primitive Methodists have complained to Sir Arthur Yapp that room could not be found for missionaries on boats that carried intoxicating liquors. The obliging Sir Arthur promised to see what could be done. It is very important that the missionary traffic should be encouraged. For while many in the commercial world are bent on capturing German trade, those engaged in the missionary business are equally alert and to the same end. And many of our traders know how much assistance is derived from missionary enterprise.

A new comedy bears the title, *A Cushy Job*. It is not so soft a job as that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who gets £15,000 yearly for preaching the Gospel of Poverty.

The King has expressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury his "profound thankfulness" for the general response to his appeal for the Day of Prayer, and the Archbishop has expressed his thanks for the King's help. This expression of pleasure by the two representatives of one of the oldest businesses in history is very touching. But what one would like to know is, what kind of response did God make to all the praying? Were the London and Paris air-raids an expression of *his* pleasure?

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 17, Leicester; March 3, Sheffield; March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—R. D. Voss (Cape Town), 10s. 6d.; Kepler, 5s. 7d.

S. Elmsley.—Is the fault yours or ours? If you have lived so long on religious "slops" we are not surprised you find the diet we supply rather trying to the digestive organs. Our advice is to "stick it." You cannot expect to acquire robust mental health all at once.

"Puzzled."—There is no ethical idealism in the "sacrifice" of Jesus Christ, save such as is imported into it by semi rationalized Christians. Fundamentally, the death of Jesus is an exercise in god-making. Its roots are anthropological, not ethical. Christians claim to find the ethical ideal only when the true Christian idea is realized as intolerable. They would play the same game with "Old Mother Hubbard" if it paid them to do so.

G. McDermott.—Reprints of the kind you submit, unless there is something on hand that gives them special pertinence, read a trifle forced and out of date. Thanks for the trouble you have taken.

"Sammy."—You will have to take your choice. We were not at the discussion and cannot say, but we think it a questionable act of judgment on either side. Assertions of victory are best left to the judgment of the audience.

W. Wilmer.—Have returned letters. Thanks, very much, for sight of them.

D. Jackson (Derby).—Glad to learn you have recently secured "several new readers." Please keep at it. We consider it work of real national importance.

One of our readers has kindly volunteered to supply the *Freethinker* for a year to the club of which he is a member, and suggests that other readers might like to follow his example, and thus introduce the paper to new readers.

H. Simpson.—Fitzgerald's *Omar* can be obtained of Messrs. Macmillan. The price need not be more than 2s. 6d. There are various editions.

D. Cornoch.—We do not know when we are likely to visit Portsmouth again. Glad you have arranged with another newsagent to supply the *Freethinker*.

J. R. Kelly.—Your P.O. received for *Sacerdotal Celibacy*. You have omitted to send address. Please let us have this to forward books.

R. D. Voss.—We are doing our best, and are gratified our efforts are so widely appreciated. When easier times come we shall feel quite dull.

R. Chapman.—Sorry the dislocation of the post—due to the air-raid, we presume—prevented your note on Mr. Lloyd's South Shields meetings reaching us in time for last week's issue. Anyway, we are pleased to learn that the meetings were "quite successful," and that the audiences were "delighted." We expected nothing less.

J. Breese.—Too late last week. It is a good sign that so many of the educated men in the Army should be so strongly anti-militaristic. The sense of national duty that carried them into the Army will be needed when the War is over to fight the class in our own country who are almost certain to attempt some form of militarism here.

Mr. H. E. Latimer-Voight sends us a letter protesting against Freethought being mixed up with what he calls "crankeyisms." He thinks the *Freethinker* should confine itself to the attack on Christianity and other religious superstitions.

L. W. R. Silke (Cape Town).—Thanks for suggestion. We have had such a project in our mind for some time, and will seize the earliest opportunity for putting it into operation.

J. W. Wood.—Very good news indeed. Will write further on the matter next week.

J. Thackray.—Thanks for suggestion. Will consider it.

J. Bunce.—Addresses received. Specimen copies are being sent.

A. Johnson.—We make no charge for inserting lecture notice, nor for any other matter referring to the N. S. S. Lecture notices should be sent on postcards as early as possible in the week, but must be received by first post Tuesday at latest.

A. A. Wildman.—Mr. Cohen has booked Southampton for March 17.

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. Lloyd pays his second visit to Swansea to-day (February 10). Judging from the accounts of his first visit the success of the meeting is assured. Those who were there before are certain to go again, and we hope that each will not fail to take at least one friend with him.

From our esteemed contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*:—

> The *Freethinker*, we feel confident, will "carry on." It is nearly as old as the *Truthseeker*, and in the same way indispensable. Its editor, Chapman Cohen, is a Freethinker with no reservation—a man of ideas, with remarkable skill in handling them; the compeer in this respect of his predecessor, George William Foote. The latter induced in us the habit of reproducing his "leaders," and Mr. Cohen makes it impossible for us to desist and reform.

It seems easier to think of the *Freethinker* and *Truthseeker* without either England and America than to conceive England and America without these two papers. And we are quite sure both would be poorer places without them. And on that score we are under no great fear. The struggle is hard, and gets harder every month. But both papers have too many friends for them to go under—even under the stress of a world-war.

We may as well do all our blushing this week at once. We venture to reproduce the following from an old subscriber:—

> I enclose cheque for my subscription for ensuing twelve months, adding 50 per cent. as I consider that, under the prevailing conditions, the "Paper of Papers" is well worth 3d. a week.
>
> Yours is one of the very few publications, at any rate, that have come under my observation, of which one might say that the articles penned re the War, in its earlier stages, could be reprinted practically without amendment to-day! So much for sane thinking and plain speaking. If I were hard-pressed for funds there are many publications to which I should give the "go-by" rather than forgo the weekly intellectual treat provided by the *Freethinker*.

Seriously, we publish the above because we are aware of the pleasure with which so many of our readers show appreciation of *their* paper. And whatever credit may be due to our own writings upon a very vexed topic, we can only attribute that to possessing principles, knowing what they are, and sticking to them.

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We are glad to see that the new Branche of the N. S. S. at Nuneaton settling down to regular work. Several lectures have been arranged, and to-day (February 10) Mr. Clifford Williams, of Birmingham, will lecture in The Palace, Queen's Road, at 6.30 on "Freethought *versus* Christianity." We hope to hear of a successful meeting.

The paper famine continues to make itself felt. This week the *Clarion* raises its price to twopence, and we believe the *Labour Leader* is to follow suit. Naturally, it is papers representing advanced movements that feel the pinch most, and as they have no reserves of capital to fall back on, and no profits to eat up, even under normal circumstances. And yet the best work of the world is often done by those papers, the maintenance of which, under the most favourable conditions, is a labour of love.

We are pleased to see that the *Humanitarian* continues its monthly appearance, and that, in spite of nearly four years of war, it still stands for the better side of human nature. There are many better known journals that could be more easily spared. From a note in the last issue, we see that, in the interests, of "war economy," the diet of the inmates of prisons is to be reduced. At its best, prison diet is only just enough to keep a prisoner alive, and to further reduce this seems a doubtful economy, and an almost certain brutality.

Under the name of the New Era Union a vigorous Freethought propaganda has for some years been carried on in Abertillery. The members have now an opportunity of purchasing a very suitable hall, with a number of smaller rooms for committee meetings, &c., for a sum of £900. This is regarded as a good investment, and it is hoped will lead to more efficient work in the locality. A company is being formed to secure the hall, and the Committee will be glad to hear from anyone who feels disposed to invest in the proposed company. The shares are to be £1 each, and the Secretary, Mr. A. J. Cottle, 10, Park Place, Abertillery, Mon., will be glad to furnish all particulars.

We have had a number of applications for literature to be sent to men at the Front, the cost of which is defrayed from the £10 left with the Pioneer Press by Mr. N. Evans. All these requests have been complied with, and we feel sure the literature so sent will be productive of good. We are making this statement here in order to avoid individual replies to those who have written us.

The Orb of Day.

IV.

(Continued from p. 75.)

THE solar prominences, those great sheets of flame which leap from the sun's surface, as well as the wonderful solar corona, were first revealed by the aid of the moon. When the moon covers the face of the sun, and a solar eclipse occurs, the prominences and the corona are clearly seen through the telescope. Recent refinements, however, enable the astro-physicist to view the prominences without our satellite's assistance; but the solar student is still dependent upon eclipses for his observations of the mysterious corona. For it is only when the moon's dark body cuts off direct solar radiation from our globe that the corona which fringes the solar luminary becomes visible.

When viewed from the earth, the sun and moon possess the same apparent diameter. This arises from the remarkable fact that, although the sun's diameter is 400 times larger than the moon's, it is about 400 times distant. Thus the diameters of the solar and lunar orbs appear to us approximately equal.

It is now a mere matter of calculation as to the time of a total or partial eclipse of the sun. Just as the astronomer is able to predict coming eclipses for the next 2,000 years, so can he tell us the date of thousands of eclipses in the past. The motions of the moon being determined, mathematical research resolves the rest. The period of solar eclipses known as the Saros is one of eighteen years and eleven days. Otherwise stated, whenever an eclipse has been visible anywhere on the earth's surface, another is certain to occur after an interval of eighteen years and eleven days. Unfortunately, eclipses frequently happen which cannot be observed, and many deep disappointments have been experienced by astronomers who have journeyed to the ends of the earth to view them, only to discover that clouds and mists precluded all prospect of observing them in the only countries in which they would have been visible.

A total eclipse never lasts more than eight minutes, and usually not more than three. The few minutes available to the observers are therefore of vital importance. When the astronomers have gathered together to witness an approaching eclipse, elaborate preparations are made for the purpose of economizing time and labour. Provided with spectroscopes, photographic telescopes, and various other scientific instruments, the assembled scientists rehearse their arrangements over and over again. The thorough efficiency of their apparatus is thus tested, and the observers become so expert in performing their several parts that, when the critical minutes arrive, every moment is fruitfully occupied in observing the eclipse and its accompaniments. As the moon steals near the sun, a notch is seen on the solar disc, and this, darkening steadily, increases during the succeeding hour and a half, when a narrow crescent is all that remains visible of the sun. The supreme moments are now very near. A mere strip of the sun remains; the orb of day becomes obliterated. A ring of ruddy light encircles the moon, and the pearly-hued corona starts into view.

Many observers have recorded their impressions of a solar eclipse, and all appear to have been immensely moved by the change which comes over the fair face of the earth as the sun vanishes behind the moon. Weird changes are witnessed in the sky. The clouds lose their coloured tints, and assume a solemn and funereal appearance. The temperature falls, and as the period of totality approaches, cold and darkness increase. Professor Smyth, who was present at an eclipse in Norway in 1851, tells us that:—

> After a little time the eyes seem to get accustomed to the darkness, and the looming forms of objects close by could be observed, all of them exhibiting a dull green hue, seeming to have exhaled their natural colour..... Life and animation seemed, indeed, to have now departed from everything around; and we could hardly but fear, against our reason, that if such a state of things were to last much longer, some dreadful calamity would happen to us also, while the lurid horizon northward appeared so like the gleams of departing light in some of the grandest of the works of Martin and Danby that one could not at the time, and in that presence, but believe, in spite of their alleged extravagances, that Nature has opened up to the constant contemplation of their mind's eyes, some of those magnificent revelations of power and glory which others can only get a hasty glimpse of on occasions such as these.

The sun rotates on its axis in a period of about twenty-five days. As the circumference of the sun is over 110 times that of the earth, its speed of rotation is more than four times that of our globe to enable it to revolve in twenty-five days. At its equator, the sun rotates at a rate of more than a mile a second. Dark spots on the solar surface were observed in antiquity, but modern sun-spot research began in the seventeenth century, when the

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spots were independently discovered by Galileo and others. The invention of the telescope in 1608 preceded the rediscovery of the sun-spots by two years only. These spots vary considerably in number and size, and it was noticed that they travelled across the solar disc in one direction. It was obvious, therefore, that the sun spun on its axis, and the period of solar rotation was thus ascertained by observation of the movements of the spots. When a spot is seen at the centre of the solar disc it will, in the course of six days, be carried to its western edge, and then disappear. At the end of about a fortnight, however, if still in being, it will reappear on the eastern edge.

The frequency of sun-spots fluctuates within a period of eleven years and forty days. In some years few, if any, spots are visible for about six months. This occurred in 1889, and also 1900. After such a dearth, a few will appear in the subsequent year, and during the following five years their numbers increase. Then they will commence to wane until they reach their minimum stage, when they resume their years of increase. From the days of Galileo, these periodic variations have been studied, but it was not until 1825 that Schwabe proved the existence of the law which governs the waxing and the waning of the spots. The year 1904 was a maximum period, while a minimum was reached in 1911. In 1922 few spots will appear, and five years later the spots will be at their greatest frequency, declining again to least frequency in 1933. The solar observer has also established the truth that the spots are mainly restricted to special regions of the solar surface. Very few are found on the sun's equator, but north and south of it they increase in number up to 15 deg. of latitude north or south of the equator, while from 15 deg. to 20 deg. north or south of the equator their frequency attains its maximum. At this latitude the spots decrease, until beyond 30 deg. sun-spots seldom appear.

There is little doubt that the spots are fleeting features displayed by that mantle of radiant clouds embracing the sun, which is termed the photosphere. The impermanence of sun spots arises from the circumstance that they are evolved amid those solar vapours which change almost as rapidly as the clouds of our own atmosphere. Titanic commotions are in constant operation in the photosphere, and spots appear where these disturbances are most pronounced. The old opinion that spots are depressions in the luminous photosphere is no longer tenable. Professor Hale has proved that vast eruptions of gas are incessantly occurring, but that these perturbations are more marked in sun spot regions than elsewhere, and that to these causes sun spot phenomena are due.

In 1885 the equatorial regions of the sun were in a state of constant agitation. In the following year the orb was quite calm, and during the late autumn of 1886 the sun betrayed scarcely a sign of commotion. Other stages of almost complete quiescence have been noted in periods succeeding a time of unusual activity. That huge convulsions are never really absent in the solar interior is a fair deduction. How, then, are we to explain the periodic fluctuations in the magnitude of our luminary's activities which, unquestionably, occur? Instability of the solar envelope exposed to our view presumably arises from the ceaseless interchange between the cooling gases at the exterior and the enormously heated materials from the interior which ascend to occupy their place. That such phenomena are subject to a periodic law is fully in harmony with our experiences of boiling liquids and other substances when heat is generated on a vast scale. Ball recalls Tyndall's brilliant theory of the periodicity of geysers, the truth of which that celebrated physicist established by designing an artificial geyser which reproduced the requisite results. The chain of reasoning runs as follows:—

> If the thermal phenomena of the geyser, depending as they do, on the passage of heat from the inside to the outside, take place, not gradually but by a violent outbreak at intervals which recur with tolerable regularity, is it not likely that a somewhat similar periodicity should be manifested in the sun? It is true that the interval between two outbreaks of a geyser is measured only by hours, or by days, while the interval between two periods of exuberant solar activity is measured by a decade of years. But this discrepancy is not more than might be expected from a consideration of the mighty scale on which the phenomena of solar activity are exhibited.

Extending sometimes to a height of 300,000 miles from the sun's limb, there are vast sheets of rosy flame. These solar prominences are as much part of the lord of day as the atmosphere is of our globe. First revealed at times of eclipse, they are now studied with the telescope and spectroscope in normal sunlight, and splendid photographs are obtained by means of Professor Hale's spectro-heliograph. The luminous ball of fire that we ordinarily see is the photosphere, but beyond its margin vast volumes of gaseous materials float in the solar atmosphere.

It is now known that the sun is surrounded by a shell of coloured gas which fringes the photosphere. This shell is the chromosphere which, owing to the intense heat of the sun, is subjected to violent agitation. During these disturbances immense volumes of glowing gases are urged outwards from the chromosphere, and these form the fiery prominences. The methods devised by Huggins, Janssen, and Lockyer—those of spectrum analysis—have demonstrated that the chromosphere is composed of prodigious masses of glowing gas. So thoroughly have the prominences which leap upwards from the chromosphere been studied, that even the wavings of these giant masses of incandescent gases have been detected. Very frequently as he watches the movements of the prominences the astronomer witnesses the decline and extinction of a mighty sheet of coloured flame, while sometimes he becomes the fascinated spectator of the sudden appearance of a new solar display of flaming gas. These solar spectacles are, at times, extremely transient. The sun's flames rise and fal with remarkable rapidity. One observed by M. Trouvelot attained an enormous height, but its entire extinction was merely a matter of minutes. The velocity of these incandescent substances is amazing, for 375 miles per second is a quite moderate estimate of the speed with which they ascend from that shell of solar clouds — the chromosphere — when urged by the giant energies of the solar mass.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

John Smith in Khaki.

A Note on His Manners, Morals, and Religion.

TOMMY ATKINS was once a specific type—the professional rank and file soldier. A better name, perhaps, for the present-day soldier would be John Smith; for he is no longer a type, but is become a whole nation. There are those who still endeavour to treat Tommy as the old Tommy, showering adulation on him while they throw cheap abuse on his countrymen. But it will not do. The Army is now England, and England is the Army. It should be understood, then, that these remarks refer, not particularly to soldiers *as* soldiers, but just to Englishmen (or Britons if you like), so far as it is possible to strike an average, where the vices and virtues, and views

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and opinions, of such a heterogenous body of men as the citizens of this Empire are concerned.

Readers of this journal do not need telling that the clergy are very unreliable guides in this matter. Parsons are prepared, according to the particular "stunt" they have on hand, to dwell upon the intense religious feeling of the average soldier and sailor—to tell you how he treasures his devotional books and with what ecstatic joy he joins in the hymns, and with what regularity he says his evening prayers, or to make their hearers' flesh creep by doleful and grossly exaggerated accounts of his sexual irregularities when missionary work is the order of the day.

Everyone is familiar with Carlyle's summing-up of Englishmen as "mostly fools." Although all of us, at times, quote this saying with approval whenever we see the crowd bent on something which strikes us as foolish, this jibe cannot be accepted as an accurate statement of fact. The average Englishman is no fool. He is no genius, true; but he is very far from stupid, and it is the positive quality of stupidity that marks a man off as a fool as distinguished from the man of average intelligence who sometimes acts foolishly, as who of us does not?

The trouble with the Englishman's head is not its lack of brain power (for the Anglo-Saxon is quite as intelligent as anybody else) but a certain want of balance. He is so concentrated upon what he thinks of as the practical things of life, that he has no time for theorizing. Abstractions he neither understands nor respects. Enough for him to find out how to deal with the immediate problems of life as they arise. How to provide his daily bread, not to mention a little reasonable luxury; how to keep healthy, solvent, and amused—these are his first cares. Unfortunately, they are too often his last cares also. He is taught to perfect himself in the routine of life, and not bother his head with general principles further than may be necessary for the development of technical skill. He is supplied with a ready-made explanation of the Universe, and a ready-made code of morals. These are fixed on to him at an age when his critical faculties are in embryo. He is made to swallow them by fraud. I say fraud deliberately: it consists in teaching as unquestioned facts doctrines that the teacher knows to be the objects of bitter controversy. The interdependence of morals and religion is forced into him by constant repetition, until prejudice has taken possession of the youthful mind; and though, once freed from the influence of school, he may learn that the truth of his religion is open to question—or even that it it is demonstrably false—he will rarely succeed in shaking off the feeling that, false or true, it is generally safer and more convenient to refrain from attacking religion on account of its connection with morality.

From my daily intercourse with him—and present conditions afford one far better opportunities of familiarity with all sorts and conditions of men than is possible as a civilian—I say without hesitation that John Smith is not religious. He has no belief in God or religion worthy of the name, though he rarely expresses positive disbelief in these things. In a word, he is indifferent.

In the Army, although no one really cares a tinker's curse about your religion, you are continually called upon to state it. Before you can have a tooth extracted or a stitch put in your hand, you must declare your opinion as to the origin of the universe and the destiny of all things, using the label of the particular sect with whom you have deposited your thinking apparatus. The favourite, by long odds, is the short and sweet "C.E." What this stands for depends upon the man who uses it. To me (for I will shock you all, dear readers, by the admission that I use it frequently and unblushingly) it means, "Mind your own business." To the great majority it means, "I don't care a damn which"; while to a few—a very few—it denotes their firm belief in that highly respectable institution, the Church of England.

Church Parade is often optional, we all know. This means that, if you don't care a button what happens to you, you can generally get out of it. Not that would-be martyrs for Freethought can find any good field for their activities by valiantly refusing to attend "Divine Service." They would not find an enraged Chaplain clamouring to have them shot at dawn. He would probably be too busy playing dominoes to bother about that. They might find themselves spending their Sunday on some nasty "fatigue"—and the jobs that are reserved for troublesome men are most unpromising from the martyr's point of view. When you realize that going to church is just a military duty, like going on guard or cookhouse, it simply comes to a toss-up whether you elect to be bored for an hour at church or for several hours at the barracks. Here let me offer a useful tip to those whose exemptions are nearly up. Call yourself an Atheist if you feel like it, but, if not, "C.E." is the horse to back. Do not, for the love of Allah, go in for Methodism. They take you seriously there, and instead of a short, bright, and breezy sermon, your ears are tortured for what seems an age.

So much for Church Parade being "optional." I would wager a pound of sugar to a temperance tract that if only those went who really wanted to worship, the Chaplain would have to waste his precious words on empty pews. A few yawning anglers for promotion—a thin sprinkling of the devout—and that would be all.

Now, what does the man in the street that was, or the man in khaki that is, really believe? Not only in the Army, but perhaps out of it too, he would, if called upon to state his belief, say without any conscious hypocrisy, "Oh, Church of England," or "Catholic," or "Congregationalist." But pursue your investigation, if he will let you, and endeavour to get past his label and penetrate what Mr. Wells would call his "hinterland" of personality. If your experience agrees with mine, you will find that, in nine cases out of ten, a man's declared belief signifies little more than a lazy acquiescence in the adoration of the Lares and Penates of his parents. He comes from Dublin—he is a Roman Catholic; from Scotland—he is a Presbyterian. This applies, I say, to nine out of ten. The tenth man I will consider later. The religious belief of the great majority of men with whom I have succeeded in discussing the question has always resolved itself into a vague kind of *feeling*, rather than reasoned conviction, that somehow, somewhere—there is something; a power—a misty personality—they know not how to express it. Now, the one essential thing that marks the bounds of Theism and Atheism is a belief in *supernatural personality*. To say "God is Love" or "God is supreme Power," or things like that, is really to express Atheism if personality is not intended to be understood. "Love" and "power" alone are mere abstractions. The question is, "Does the average man believe in supernatural personality?" not "Does he believe in something he calls God?" My opinion is that he has a belief—ever so faint though it be—in the existence of a personal God. That belief, probed to the bottom, is so vague as almost to baffle examination and criticism, but it is there. In other words, though not an Atheist, he stands at the borderline of Atheism. Needless to say, this belief is not something attained, but something *re*tained. It is the last rag of theological prejudice that the winds of common sense and human

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experience have not yet succeeded in tearing from his naked soul.

The morals of John Smith are, perhaps, even more elusive than his religion. Here, again, you have to distinguish between the conventional views of morality which a man affects to hold and the real motives that dominate his conduct. Apart from the vigilance of the police and the retribution of the law, there is the far more significant influence of the development of social sense among the people. The line once so clearly drawn between ethical and mental aberration is fading away, and we are beginning to realize that crime, like madness, is a disease of the brain. It is to be hoped that some day the folly of crime will be so apparent that not only will it be applied to individuals, but the idea will be introduced into international politics. However, I am not now discussing nations but persons, and in that more limited province it is good to see that sane ideas of right and wrong are replacing the barbarous old doctrines of retributive justice, and the divine right of the Top Dog.

John Smith has a real respect for the rights of property—especially his own. Gradations of larceny are rather more finely cut in the Army than elsewhere. In the order from guilt to innocence you can "steal," "pinch," "win," or "take" a thing to which you have no established legal right. For instance, you "steal" a comrade's trousers (and God help you if you are caught) you "pinch" his blankets (these are not charged up to him; if lost he just has to pinch some one else's). Anything you can get from the canteen you "win," because canteens are always regarded by the soldier as dens of thieves, and there is no sin in getting a little bit of his own back when occasion allows. Not one soldier in ten thousand would rob a "Soldiers' Rest" of a penny piece, but very few would hesitate to win anything from a canteen. Lastly, you "take" a tool, or a pencil, or a broom without hesitation, and without a second thought, if you have mislaid your own *Ca va sans dire*. Possession is nine points of the law, and to secure the tenth you carve your initials on it and stick to it—while you can. Findings, I need hardly add, are keepings.

Ideas of sexual rectitude are so dependent on the constitution of the individual that it is very hard to generalize them. The difficulty is enhanced by the continual efforts of the "Moralist" to confuse the different issues of decency and chastity. Of all the ill services that the Christian religion has rendered mankind, perhaps the most lasting mischief has resulted from the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, with its necessary implication of the essential uncleanness of the sexual relationship. Animals do not revel in filth—they try to be as clean as possible, and, I believe, the human animal is no exception. The substratum of nastiness that underlies the superficial cleanliness of mind of so many men is not a natural part of their normal development. It is one of the nauseous excrescences of a prurient religion. Christianity dragged into the mire of indecency—the most prominent and essential attribute of humanity and all life, with the inevitable result that men and women have become ashamed of the very forms and functions that comprise their being. Christian priests have been dinning into the ears of the people the atrocious lie that the sexual act is the twin sister of beastliness for so many centuries, that it is small wonder the same lie has contaminated them as it has done. I say, without hesitation, that the greater part of the moral disease that afflicts us to-day is directly traceable to the Christian religion.

HERBERT W. THURLOW,

(To be continued.)

Society News.

West Central Hall (London).—During February we shall continue to hold meetings on Sunday afternoons, and we hope our London friends will advertise them as widely as possible. Mr. Snell's interesting address on Palestine was keenly followed by a good audience, and led up to a lively discussion. To-day, Mr. Ratcliffe will lecture on Spiritualism—a topic which is exciting a good deal of interest at the present time. —E. M. VANCE, Gen. Sec.

North London Branch N. S. S.—Mr. George Ives delivered a most enlightening lecture on "Primitive Man" to a very good audience. A good discussion followed. To-night, Mr. Baker and Mr. Wilde will debate. The subject, 'Is the Roman Catholic Church an Enemy to Democracy?" should excite great interest in the light of present events.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

South Shields Branch N. S. S.—Our latest lecture ventures at South Shields have been quite as successful as could possibly be expected in these trying times. Mr. Cohen's visit brought all his old friends who could secure travelling facilities, and welcome assistance from Sunderland, Newcastle, Cramlington, and Fence Houses well-wishers. Mr. Lloyd, in ideal weather following the storm and wreck, had a warm reception in the afternoon, and for the evening meeting every seat in the lecture hall was occupied. His logic and eloquence surprised the inquiring visitors who had been specially invited to attend to hear his interesting discourse upon various issues of Rationalism and supernaturalism. The new feature of vocal and instrumental music preceding the evening lecture also met with the heartiest approbation; and a few words of appeal from the local Secretary brought three new members to strengthen the Branch for future undertakings—a very satisfactory result, all things considered, and calculated to assure us that when the high-pressure system and overstrain everywhere passes away we can depend upon a fair measure of support for the Secular Cause.—R. CHAPMAN, Sec.

South London Branch, N.S.S.—On Sunday evening our hall was crowded with an audience of nearly 100 persons, who had gathered to hear a debate on "Did Jesus Ever Live?" between Mr. Noah Bayley (Christian Evidence Society) and Mr. Howell Smith, B.A. (N.S.S.). The debate was conducted on both sides with the greatest decorum and good temper, and the audience took a great interest in the question. It was certainly a novelty at a debate to allow the audience to ask questions of either disputant at the close, and several took the opportunity of getting obscure points cleared up. Next Sunday Mr. T. F. Palmer should have a good audience, when he will relate "The Story of the Evolution of Life."—V. ROGER.

Obituary.

The many friends of Mr. Jack Hecht, of Edmonton, will regret to hear that another severe blow has fallen upon him in the death of his mother. Mrs. Hecht, who had reached her 76th year, had endured much suffering both physical and mental in a long life of devoted self-sacrifice. Fate decreed that the son, whose home she shared, was debarred from taking a last farewell of the mother he so tenderly loved. To him and to his brave and loyal wife we extend our keenest sympathy. The Secular Burial Service was read on Tuesday last in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Hecht and their friends at Edmonton Cemetery by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, who had performed the same sad office for Mr. Hecht, senior, four years ago.—E. M. VANCE.

[Owing to dislocation of the post by air-raids, this Obituary did not appear in last week's issue. We tender our regrets to all concerned.—ED.]

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

LONDON SOCIETY, *Morality based on Laws of Nature* (West Central Hall, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, M. Desthernbert, "The Natural Defences of the Organism." Lecture in French.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Is the Roman Catholic Church an Enemy to Democracy?" Affirmative, Mr. Percy S. Wilde. Negative, Mr. W. O. Baker.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. T. F. Palmer, "The Story of the Evolution of Life."

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Is Spiritualism a Delusion?"

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK. 11 30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Kells, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6 30, Mr. Harry Snell, "Palestine as a New Jewish State."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6 30, Mr. F. E. Monks, "The Theory of Malthus."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6 30, "Recollections of a Leeds Veteran."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Heroes of our Faith"; 7, "Secularism and Social Reforms."

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

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion in the Army.—The Editor	97
The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd	98
The Great Saint Bernard.—Mimnermus	100
John Smith in Khaki.—Herbert W. Thurlow	101
A Tribute.—A. C. Apted	102
Acid Drops	102
Russia and the Church	102
G. B. S. and the "Freethinker"	104
To Correspondents	105
Sugar Plums	105
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	106
The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer	107
The Psychology of the Ranter.—Ignotus	109
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	110
N. S. S. Executive Report	110
Notice of Meetings	110

Views and Opinions.

Religion in the Army.

Ever since the War opened we have had very strongly in mind the question of religion in the Army. We have written many scores of letters and penned numerous paragraphs concerning the position of Freethinkers, first under the Derby scheme, and then under the Military Service Act—both, when first entering the Army and when serving in the ranks. On the question of taking the oath, and the statement of the recruits' religious opinions, the position was soon made clear. We do not know how far a couple of letters sent by us to the Minister of War during 1914 and 1915 contributed to the result, but in January, 1916, the following instruction was issued by the Army Council, which we published soon after it was issued, although it may serve a useful purpose in again printing it :—

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 Officers and N.C.Os are reminded that whenever it may be necessary to obtain information as to a soldier's religion, as for instance for the completion of his identity disc., etc., his own statement on that point should be taken without any attempt to influence him, and should be acted on without question.

27/Gen. No./5063 (A.G. 2B).

By Command of the Army Council.

This was quite satisfactory, and any difficulty experienced was due to the want of acquaintance of the officials with the regulations. An officer is bound to take the answer as given to the question: "What Religion?" He is not warranted in using any kind of pressure, or in entering upon any inquisition. He must take down the reply, and any soldier has the right to enter himself as of no religion, or as Freethinker, Agnostic, or Atheist. He is also, of course, absolved from taking any religious oath. These rights are secured to him by law, and by the Army regulations. Any officer who traverses these regulations is exceeding his duty.

* * *

Church Parade.

Up to this point no soldier has any ground for complaint. The pity is that the same wise liberality is not continued through the whole of a soldier's career. Once in the Army, there is "Church Parade," which may be either compulsory or voluntary. It is quite impossible to say how many soldiers *like* this Church Parade, but it is quite certain that the majority very heartily dislike it. Indeed, it is not too much to say that, were Church Parades really and wholly voluntary, the practice would soon die out altogether. It is not the men who want these Church Parades; nor, we believe, do the majority of officers. It is the Chaplains attached to the Army who ask for them. Their interest in the matter is, obviously, almost aggressively professional. And it is certainly anomalous that, after allowing a man on joining the Army to dispense with all religious formulæ, after even writing him down as Freethinker or Atheist, he should be *ordered* to attend a church service in which he has recorded his convinced disbelief! It is really taking away with the one hand what is given with the other. The liberty of conscience permitted on entering the Army is virtually denied afterwards. We suggest, therefore, that on this matter soldiers should be permitted the same liberty as civilians. If they wish to attend a church service, they should be permitted to do so. If they wish to stop away, that also should be permitted. And we are quite sure that no one would be a worse man, or a less efficient soldier, because his opinions on religion were treated with consideration and respect.

* * *

A Ridiculous Situation.

As is usual with religion in a civilized country, there is something laughably foolish in the retention of compulsory religious attendance in the Army. If religious observance be essential to the maintenance of discipline, or efficiency, or of good behaviour, two things should follow. First, Freethinkers should not be enrolled at all, for it is clearly useless to make a man go through a performance which he tells you plainly beforehand he does not believe in. And if only believers were admitted, compulsion would be a mere form; all its awkward features would disappear. Second, if religion is necessary for the purposes above stated, it is the duty of the Army authorities, or the Government, to say what

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religion is to be followed. For the soldier, it will be observed, is—quite properly—not permitted a choice in other directions. He is not allowed to choose his uniform, or his weapons, or his drill, or where he shall go or what he shall do. All these things are properly settled for him, and the reason is that their settlement makes for efficiency. But in the matter of religion a very wide choice is given. A man may choose from quite a number of religions—Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, Roman Catholicism, Methodism, Presbyterianism, and other religious odds and ends. Men from the same regiment will be selected, and each lot ordered to go away and follow the observances of a religion the non-observance of which they believe will damn the rest. A sense of humour would make a camp resound with laughter before and after, if not during, a Church Parade. And when these variegated religious services are over, the men will return to their ordinary life with all the religious distinctions obliterated—except on their identification discs. One simply cannot escape the conclusion that, so far as discipline, efficiency, and behaviour are concerned, religion doesn't matter—to anyone except the chaplains.

* * *

A Move by the War Office.

But we are naturally concerned with the compulsory Church attendance, so far as it affects Freethinkers. And here it is pleasing to note that the number of compulsory Church Parades are on the decline—while the voluntary ones are so much a farce that they, too, are getting fewer. Mr. R. H. Rosetti—whose letter appears in another column—states that in his battalion compulsory Church Parade is abandoned. That is good news, and it is only what one would expect. The vast majority of British officers are gentlemen—in other than the cant sense of the word—and it must be irksome to them to order men to go through so solemn a farce as a Church Parade, which they know the men regard as a folly and not necessary to their duties as soldiers, and in which the officer himself often does not believe. From certain sources, the nature of which we are not at liberty to disclose, we learn that the War Office is becoming more alive to the existence of this easily removable hardship, and we are informed by a trusted correspondent that the Authorities are inquiring for particulars of men who have "been the victims of persecution." We do not think "persecution," as ordinarily understood, is the right word to use. The grievance is that when a Church Parade is ordered, men can only be excused on the ground of illness or other duties. And the officers have, we understand, no power to excuse men from attendance, save on those grounds. The result is that men who ask for exemption are, when the exemption is granted, confined to barracks during the time the rest of the regiment is at church, or else told off to perform some kind of "fatigue duty," more or less disagreeable. Naturally, this is looked upon as being a kind of punishment, and thousands who would gladly stay away from church regard attendance as the less disagreeable of the alternatives offered. If the War Office were to conduct an inquiry on these lines, we feel sure it would discover that the abolition of compulsory Church Parade in the Army would be regarded as a real boon by the men, and it would relieve the officers of what is often a disagreeable duty.

* * *

The Modern Trend.

Against any possible plea of necessity for compulsory religious service there are two outstanding facts. In the French Army, the praise of which we have been singing for nearly four years, compulsory, even official religious service does not exist The French soldier can play his part as a man without being marched off to Church at the command of his superiors. In the American Army, the praise of which we are beginning to sing, there is an official religious service, but attendance is voluntary. What reason is there for maintaining as necessary in the British Army a practice that is not found necessary with the two greatest of our Allies? Is the British Army dependent upon what both the French and American Armies can do without? All the retention of this practice means is, that England is behind other countries in this respect. The whole trend of modern life is to divorce the secular State from religious control. We see that taking place in the general affairs of the State, where the holding of office is becoming independent of religious opinion, and in the growing agitation for exclusively Secular Education in State schools. In France, the complete example has been set. There is no religion in the official life of the State—there is none in the schools; there is none in the Army. The ideal of duty, of love of one's fellows, of a sense of oneness with the rest of the community, is enough. This position has yet to be realized here, but it is coming. At any rate, we have decided that in civilian life what religion a man follows, or whether he follows any at all, is his own private concern; it has nothing to do with the State. All that we are asking is that the same principle shall apply to the Army. There is no reason why a man should be called upon to sacrifice his sense of personal dignity, or to take part in what, to him, may be a meaningless, absurd, or harmful religious service, because he has donned a military uniform. Soldiers will not be worse soldiers because they become better men. And in a War that is claimed to be a war for the freedom of the world, it is something of a stroke of satire to insist that those who are fighting it shall be compelled to participate in a religion in which they do not believe, which adds nothing to their efficiency as soldiers, and that repeats formulæ and expresses beliefs of which the more intelligent part of the world is growing ashamed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Newest Apologetic.

III.

THE arguments against the truth of Christianity are both numerous and cogent, and no attempts to refute them have ever been successful. In his *Achievements of Christianity*, Mr. Mozley undertakes to deal with four of them, the first of which being "that Christianity, when it had the power to do so, discouraged free inquiry, and accordingly impeded the course of learning and knowledge." This is a serious charge, and deserves to be seriously treated; but Mr. Mozley fails to bring forward any facts in disproof of it. We frankly admit that "the intellectual activity of the Middle Ages is a patent fact." The schoolmen did a good deal of hard thinking, even if it resulted in no practical benefit to the world. Thomas Aquinas was an intellectual giant, and the Church can legitimately boast of many such both in ancient and modern times; but this fact does not show that the Church favoured free inquiry. Indeed, Mr. Mozley himself admits that she did not, and endeavours to justify her conduct. "For the men of the Middle Ages," he says, "Christian doctrines were bedrock realities; they naturally disapproved of whatever seemed inconsistent therewith." We do not blame the Church for her protection of what she regarded as sound teaching, or for her efforts to stamp out whatever seemed to her inimical thereto. We also recognize the fact that "very wide latitude was allowed to thinkers like Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, though their metaphysics must

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have seemed almost subversive of first principles." We go a step further and agree that "it is impossible to imagine the later Middle Ages as a time when learning was at a discount"; but it was Christian learning that flourished then. Learning, as such, has always been looked upon by the Church as an enemy of the faith. Mr. Mozley declares that many of the greatest scientists, such as Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, "have either been orthodox Christians, or have at least stood on the Christian side," but he forgets that the Copernican system lay under the condemnation of the Church for many years. Copernicus himself and several of his disciples were authoritatively denounced, in 1616, for teaching that the earth moved. Lecky says:—

> It is, indeed, marvellous that science should ever have revived amid the fearful obstacles theologians cast in her way. Together with a system of Biblical interpretation so stringent, and at the same time so capricious, that it infallibly came into collision with every discovery that was not in accordance with the unaided judgments of the senses, and therefore with the familiar expressions of the Jewish writers, everything was done to cultivate a habit of thought the direct opposite of the habits of science. The constant exaltation of blind faith, the countless miracles, the childish legends, all produced a condition of besotted ignorance, of grovelling and trembling credulity that can scarcely be paralleled except among the most degraded barbarians. Innovation of every kind was regarded as a crime; superior knowledge excited only terror and suspicion (*The Rise of Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. i., pp. 274-5).

Mr. Mozley maintains that the condemnation of Galileo "is quite irrelevant to the main question"; but we fail to see how the irrelevancy is made out. Galileo was by no means an exemplary character; but it was his teaching, not his character, that the Inquisition pronounced pernicious. His offence was the declaration that the earth moved, which was in direct contradiction of the generally accepted statement that the "sun runneth about from one end of heaven to the other," while "the foundations of the earth are so firmly fixed that they cannot be moved." Science was frowned upon merely because it could not be harmonized with Scripture. What does Mr. Mozley think of the Church's treatment of Roger Bacon? Why was that great scientist flung into prison, where he remained for fourteen years? Was it for some irregularities in his moral character, or for the expression of opinions antagonistic to orthodox theology? The truth is that Roger Bacon was punished because he pursued his studies in a spirit of free inquiry, which the Papacy could not tolerate. Mr. Mozley refers to the number of European universities which were founded between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries, but he omits to tell us that science, as such, was not allowed to be taught in them. Chemistry, geology, and astronomy, in particular, were directly subversive of the Christian Creed, and the Church was determined to prevent them from being taught. Scientific experiments were prohibited because the discoveries made by means of them undermined the Bible. Roger Bacon was a professor for several years in the University of Paris towards the close of the thirteenth century, and he had the audacity to make a violent attack upon the ignorance and vices of the clergy, as well as upon the false system of education in schools and colleges. The immoralities of which the clergy were guilty went unpunished, though perfectly well known to the ecclesiastical authorities; but the introduction of scientific discoveries that threw discredit upon Scripture was a crime that could not be tolerated for a moment, and so pioneers like Bacon, Bruno, and many others, were imprisoned, tortured, and, in numerous instances, put to death.

Our contention is that the Church has never encouraged free inquiry, or been the friend of learning and knowledge. Indeed, ever since her advent to power, under Constantine, her conduct of affairs has been open to grave suspicion. This is what Mr. Mozley says in his book:—

> At the accession of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, to complete dominion in 321, the heathen population of the Empire may still have been nineteen-twentieth of the whole; it was certainly in an overwhelming preponderance (p. 32).

This is a point of enormous importance. As is well known, Gibbon estimates the number of Christians, at Constantine's accession, as only one in twenty of the entire population of the empire. That estimate was accepted as essentially accurate by the late Bishop Lightfoot, and Bishop Boyd-Carpenter is not able successfully to challenge it. Now, though the Pagans were overwhelmingly in the majority, the Christian religion was adopted as the only religion for the Empire, while all the Pagan cults were proscribed and finally extirpated. Under Constantine, laws against Paganism were passed, but not systematically executed. The prohibited worship was permitted to continue. The imperial delays greatly annoyed the clergy, but they did not openly rebel. The first full-blooded persecutor of Paganism was Theodosius the Great, who was in a state of cowardly subserviency to one of the most notorious bigots that ever lived, Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, under whom Augustine was converted. That eloquent prelate was a man who did not hesitate to sink every principle of honesty, truth, and justice when the interests of his creed were at stake; and Theodosius was little more than his willing tool. Acting under the spell of the Ambrosian and Augustinian bigotry, he rallied all available resources in a gigantic attempt to put a complete end to Paganism. He fought with might and main for the full establishment of the Catholic faith. In thirty years the Pagan religions were finally extinguished throughout the Roman Empire. By the beginning of the fifth century Christianity had succeeded, mainly either through the fear, or by actual use, of the sword, in supplanting all rivals for the suffrage of the people. Of course, all Pagan schools were closed, and, in consequence, ignorance and superstition grew apace. Secular knowledge was despised and suppressed. Whewell says that "during a considerable period of the history of the Christian Church, and by many of its principal authorities, the study of natural philosophy was not only disregarded but discommended." In the middle of the eighth century an Irish saint, named St. Virgilius, both loved and cultivated scientific knowledge, and when in Bavaria he expressed his belief in the existence of the Antipodes, with the result that the whole religious world was beside itself with wrath against him. Mr. Mozley thinks most highly of the fourteenth century, ignoring the fact that it was in this age of universities the astronomer Cecco d'Ascoli was burnt. Copernicus was condemned by Catholics and Protestants alike. Of him Luther said:—

> This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth.

The universities of the Middle Ages, of which Mr. Mozley is so proud, are thus seen to have been compelled to teach the Ptolemaic System of the World when it was known to be false.

Geology fared even worse, because it discredited the Mosaic cosmogony and disproved the Pauline belief as to the origin of death. The theologians were determined to crush the new science out of existence. The conflict continued till within living memory. But the Church

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was violently opposed not only to the sciences, but also to Greek and Roman literature; the only literature worthy of study being that contained in the Bible. "After Jesus Christ," said Tertullian, "all curiosity, after the Gospel, all inquiry, are unnecessary." In classical education that Father could see "only a robbery of God." Writing an angry letter to a bishop, Gregory the Great said: "I hear that you have committed the unspeakable crime of teaching profane letters." One of the chief faults of Pope Leo X. was that he devoted himself to the curiosities of profane studies, and called to the sanctuary of religion men who were better acquainted with Greek fables than with the history of the Church and the doctrines of the Fathers. Indeed, there were men in Holy Orders who prided themselves upon their dense ignorance. Gregory of Tours, a Frankish historian, said, "Why should I blush for my rusticity, since the Lord, our Redeemer and God, chose for the destruction of the vanity of worldly wisdom, not orators, but fishermen; not philosophers, but rustics. As Compayre well says:—

> If the early doctors of the Church occasionally expressed some sympathy for profane letters, it is because in their youth, before having received baptism, they had themselves attended the pagan schools. But these once closed, Christianity did not open others, and after the fourth century, a profound night enveloped humanity. The labour of the Greeks and Romans was as though it had never been.

Baronius, the famous annalist of the Catholic Church, delivers this significant judgment:—

> The tenth century was an *iron* age, barren of all goodness; a *leaden* age, abounding in all wickedness; and a *dark* age, remarkable above all others for the scarcity of writers and men of learning.

With all these incontrovertible facts in mind we deliberately repeat the charge that "Christianity, when it had the power to do so, discouraged free inquiry and, accordingly, impeded the course of learning and knowledge," and declare that Mr. Mozley's answer to it "obviously will not do at all." He ignores the facts that count, and cites only wholly irrelevant ones.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Great Saint Bernard.

Bernard Shaw, the Man and His Work, by Herbert Skimpole. Allen & Unwin; 1918.

George Bernard Shaw: His Life and Works, by Professor Henderson.

Bernard Shaw, by A. Hamon.

THE whirligig of time brings strange revenges. Much that the Philistine disclaimed some years ago, the middle-class man adores to-day. But nowhere has the reversal of positions been so rapid or so absolute as in literature. The Socialist writers ran a great risk, for they were odious, unpopular, and were supposed to exhibit the worst features of petty political propaganda. William Morris is now a classic; Edward Carpenter addresses a large and ever-increasing audience; and Bernard Shaw is one of the foremost literary figures in the public mind. And Shaw possesses an effrontery like Casanova, a readiness and an irreverence equal to that of Panurge, and a brain as brilliant as Machiavelli. "It is roses, roses all the way."

After these happenings, it is not so astonishing that Mr. Shaw's biography should be written by a university professor, who hails from the land of "tall statements and tall buildings." Even his latest critic is a full-blooded American citizen, who throws bouquets at Mr. Shaw from across the Atlantic. To Mr. Skimpole, Shaw appears as a serious rival to Shakespeare and Sheridan, whilst Professor Henderson likens him to "a genial Celtic Mephistopheles"; and both insist on his seriousness as a writer. A continental critic, Mons. Hamon, declares Shaw to be "the English Moliere," which is a graceful compliment to the most brilliant living English man of letters. This wide concensus of opinion is remarkable, for the purely parochial success of an ordinary writer sinks into insignificance beside a reputation of this kind.

The underlying seriousness of Bernard Shaw's work cannot be ignored. For Shaw, despite his chameleon-like changes, always maintains stoutly the rottenness of the prevailing ideals. He criticizes these ideals in his novels, his dramas, his musical, sociological, and theatrical reviews. He sets up these ideals, strips them, and puts them to the test, and the ordeal is the cleansing fire of truth and the scalding water of satire. So thorough is the process that few impostures may walk and live. He is so much more than a merely brilliant author. Underlying all his wit and irony, you find a sanity, a balanced good sense, which mere smartness lacks. Occasionally, of course, as an Irishman, he justifies his reputation as a "Celtic Mephistopheles," and grins under his cock's feathers, as in his attacks on Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and his attitude on religion. But the total impression left by his work is of a man grappling earnestly and seriously with social and theological problems, not of a clown grinning through a horse-collar. And that impression is very welcome, for, as Heine says finely, "unless wit is based on seriousness it is only a sneeze of the reason."

Shaw has not the temperament which suffers fools gladly, and when he is annoyed he is merciless. He sees all round a subject. Is he writing to Benjamin Tucker, the apostle of Individualism, he will tell him that true Individualism can only be reached through Socialism. When addressing Socialists, he will warn them of the dangers of Socialism to individual liberty. He will jibe at religious people for their barbarism, and scoff at Freethinkers for their devotion to science. When he belonged to the Shelley Society, he told the members bluntly that he expected all the members were Atheists, Republicans, and Vegetarians, and nearly broke up the Society on the spot. Sometimes the victims get angry, but the ready Irish wit comes to the rescue, and the jester is again forgiven for his audacity.

After all, Shaw's plays contain his most valuable work. He has been at great pains to emphasize his technique and his philosophy, and to explain that his technique is old and his philosophy is new. Frankly, neither is originally Shavian. The one is seen clearly in Henrik Ibsen, and the other plainly conveyed from Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. But Shaw's comedy is interesting and valuable. He has re-introduced high comedy on the English stage. So far as England is concerned, the comic spirit, as George Meredith so admirably calls it, has had few chances between Bernard Shaw and the Restoration dramatists. And, remember, the main secret of Congreve and Wycherley's interplay of character is not mere depravity. It is the absolute equality of equipment with which men and women pitch their battles of wit.

There is no question of Shaw's genius. The impress of his unique personality is on all his work. Even his newspaper articles retain their freshness and survive the test of republication triumphantly. They are the work of a brilliant, clever, and witty man. With a strong, haughty, careless nonchalance he has expressed himself very freely. He once asked: "Who is Hall Caine?" and people have not done laughing yet. His phrases hit. "Sardoodledom" is not a compliment to the popular author of *La Tosca*. "Bardolatry" is applied to the worship of Shakespeare. His famous retort, "Sir

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Edward Grey is himself a Junker," was merciless. And so was his advice to the Free Churches that, if they were wise, they would place busts of Voltaire in their buildings. Shaw is too much in earnest to be impartial. "I have never claimed for myself the divine attribute of justice," he says blandly. His life's work is a siege laid to the social and religious abuses of his time by an author who had to cut his way into them at the point of his sword, and throw some of the defenders into the moat.

Mons. Hamon is right in pointing out Shaw's affinity to Moliere, for he has the same indomitable commonsense, his capacity for crusading, and the acidity of his sarcasm. Listen!:—

> A theatre to me is a place where two or three are gathered together. The apostolic succession from Æschylus to myself is as serious and as continuously inspired as that younger institution, the apostolic succession of the Christian Church. Unfortunately, this Christian Church, founded gaily with a pun, has been so largely corrupted by rank Satanism that it has become the Church where you must not laugh, and so it is giving way to that older and greater Church to which I belong —the Church where the oftener you laugh the better, because by laughter only can you destroy evil without malice, and affirm good fellowship without mawkishness.

There is a strain of Puritanism in Shaw's attitude towards art:—

> I am as fond of fine music and handsome buildings as Milton was, or Cromwell, or Bunyan; but if I found that they were becoming the instruments of a systematic idolatry of sensuousness, I would hold it good statesmanship to blow every cathedral in the world to pieces with dynamite, organ and all, without the least heed to the screams of the art critics and cultured voluptuaries.

Shaw's emendation of the "Golden Rule" is often quoted: "Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."

Bernard Shaw is, indisputably, the most brilliant living English dramatist. His plays have crossed all frontiers, and have been played in all the chief cities of the civilized world. The nimble lightning of his wit rouses men everywhere. He is, in fact, the only man-of-letters of world-wide reputation that we have. It is well, for he has done more for Progress than any other writer of his generation.

MIMNERMUS.

John Smith in Khaki.

II.

(*Continued from p. 93.*)

I HAVE suggested that language is of no very great consequence in placing a man ethically. I remember hearing a famous Puritan (W. T. Stead) quote a bishop, with approval, as discounting the seriousness of swearing as a sin. "Bad" language may be either strong, indelicate, or foul. Strong language, *i.e.*, the use of oaths, is hardly worth considering as a vice; indeed, one feels very sorry for the poor devil who has nothing stronger than "Oh, blow!" wherewith to relieve his feelings. Imagine the poor milk-and-water Methodist side-slipping into a ditch with "dear, dear!" There are some who tremble at a damn and faint at a (well—ask Mr. Shaw for the word). I have no patience with these "unco guid." They are, more often than not, of the class that, having no positive virtues worth mentioning, imagine themselves vastly superior to the common crowd by reason of this and similar puerilities. Of course, oaths, like spirits, should only be taken in moderation. Continual swearing soon wears all the edge off your best oaths, until it comes to pass that, when an emergency arises, calling for an extra super one, words fail you. You haven't a decent cuss-word in reserve, so your passion has to find vent in some other and generally more dangerous way. That is how it works out in the Army. The recruit finds so much to swear at (for it is absolutely the only relief open to him) that he soon wears out his harmless A.B.C.'s and the D. E. F.'s, which at first shocked him, soon become as familiar to his ears as Sunlight Soap and Prussian Militarism.

But however deplorable the habit of tainted speech may be, it would be unjust and short-sighted to attach a great deal of importance to something which is, after all, little more than a reflection of one's surroundings. Anyone who happens to overhear a soldier "letting off" should remember that the grosser images made use of really have nothing to do with their primary meanings, being just expletives and nothing more. Before dropping the subject of the psychology of cussing, I *could* say something about the language of women-soldiers, but chivalry forbids.

After making every allowance for the natural coarsening of language which comes of barrack life—or any similar life—one is, as I have said, bound to admit that the very heart and soul of Mr. Smith are tainted. Not rotten, mark you, but tainted. Military life has much to answer for, but we cannot justly arraign it here. The people who are responsible for it are the priest and schoolmaster. It all comes of the folly of lying about Nature. It is largely contributed to by the absence of real culture in the scheme of elementary education, an omission which is, I hope and believe, gradually being made good. The exploitation of remunerative rubbish by music hall and newspaper magnates, by which they fill their pockets at the expense of the public taste, is another factor to be reckoned with, but the germ of all that is rotten in us is the fact that we try to keep children ignorant of their nature. A child picks up its first knowledge of sexual physiology from furtive and guilty questionings. Very rarely does the veil of silence cover up the facts—even from the child of tender years. This silence, with the positive lying which is necessary to keep it up, acts rather like a distorting mirror than a veil. The whole truth no child or adolescent can ever know without sympathetic and tactful help from those of maturer years, but long before he or she is supposed to know anything about the subject, enough distorted knowledge is acquired to make a joke of what is really one of the most serious things in life. It is bad enough to make a joke of sex. I have, unfortunately, seen evidence lately of a distinct tendency to make a joke of maternity. This is not so much a matter for anger as for sorrow. If ever a loud laugh spoke a vacant mind, it does when maternity is the subject of humour. But it is no use railing at the rising generation. The tittering that runs round a picture hall, for instance, whenever an allusion to motherhood is made, must be understood as a sign of ignorance rather than depravity. It is not the rising generation who should be condemned, but the risen generation. The moral sores are a result of the rotten moral food supplied by bilious prudes and sanctimonious humbugs. If the cause of the disease is understood, the remedy is obvious. Let a child be taught to distinguish between the ethics of local convention and those fundamental principles of right conduct that are not right here and wrong there, but are necessary for the preservation of true manhood and womanhood in all countries and at all times. Moralizing *as* moralizing is out of date. The best sermon is not a series of exhortations cemented by threats and bribes, but a plain statement of the truth.

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I mean the whole truth—not selected bits of the truth. For the art of selecting some important facts and omitting others is only another form of lying. Even in the case of the hideous evil of prostitution the preacher rarely rises above a denunciation of it because it is "sinful." You are not to do it because it is a sin, and it is a sin because it is prohibited in some mysterious "moral code" —that dear old hardy annual so much beloved of the Christian Evidence lecturer and others of the Pecksniff clan.

A gallant attempt was made by the Bishop of London who, gloriously arrayed in the uniform of the warrior, favoured the gallant regiment of which I am an insignificant member with a discourse on the subject some months back. But with all his descent to the vernacular, and evident sincerity of purpose (which latter is, I think, his redeeming feature) the sermon utterly failed to grip. I know that by the subsequent allusions to it among the men. He certainly showed some appreciation of the scientific side of the subject, apart from the goody-goody clap-trap that formed his dominant theme, but the former was all about venereal disease. According to what one could gather from the good Bishop's address, prostitution is bad, (1) because it is naughty; (2) because it leads to disease. He ornamented his sermon by a rather childish insistence upon his personal performance as a life-long total abstainer. (I believed him, but I regret to say there was much mirth among the ungodly about it.)

Of the above two reasons, it may be said that the first is idiotic, and the second insufficient. If the horrors of venereal disease could be wiped out of existence, and all the moral codes of the world were to be discredited, the great objection to the practice would still stand. The thing is evil because it is an insult to nature. It is the attempt to cramp and confine nature that is principally responsible for it, and anyone wishing to combat this evil must not be content with planting the "fear of God" into the hearts of young men and women. There are two potent forces at work to counteract this and other debasing practices. The first is the ennobling influence of love, and the second is the effect of a development of good taste. Love is more uplifting than anything else in the world, and the true artist can do more to purify morals than all the Comstocks and Torreys and Ingrams ever heard of. Perhaps if factories were not quite so hideous, and the dwellings of the poor were not quite so ugly, the lure of the siren of sin would lose much of its force over the weaker portion of womenkind, and if boys were made to understand the beauty of Nature, they would be the better armed against temptation to insult her.

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

(To be concluded.)

A Tribute.

BRAVE-HEARTED toiler, toiler of the sea!
Can we repay thee—for to thee we owe
The greatest debt that human heart can know,
Dear life itself, and all that life may be.
We, and our England, from thy hands we take
Warmth, shelter, safety—all of these from thee;
Because of thy strength is it we are free?
Thy sleepless watch for sleeping brothers' sake.
Ah, Gods of men! Men cry to you in vain.
Then cease your prayers, ye people of the shore,
Look toward the sea, where thunder evermore
Breakers that rise and swell, and break again.
There man, your fellow, fights and dies for you;
To him your prayers, your praise, your thanks are due.

A. C. APTED.

Acid Drops.

"Boldness, again boldness, always boldness," said Danton, at a time when the French Revolution was fighting for its existence. The Russian Bolshevik leaders are acting on the same principle. Undeterred by their trouble with Germany —although one fancies the German Government are more afraid of Trotsky than of the Armies of the Allies—the Bolsheviks have now entered into conflict with the Church. The Soviet Government has declared complete liberty of conscience, and wiped away all privileges on account of religious belief. The State is completely secularized, as in France, but all religious ceremonies are permitted so long as they do not interfere with public order. The religious oath is abolished in law courts, and religious instruction in State schools, but private teaching of religion is permitted. No Church or religious society can possess property, and all churches, etc., are declared to be national property; but buildings and instruments for religious service are assigned by the authorities for the free use of religious societies.

Naturally, all this has stirred up the opposition of the Church in Russia, and pietists in this country are doing their best to misrepresent the situation. Thus, most of the papers report curtly the "outrage" of the Government in seizing the Alexander Nevsky Monastery. Mr. Arthur Ransome, in the *Daily News* of February 6, gives a truer version of the affair. The monastery is very rich, covers a large area, and is practically a town in itself. And this monastic town was "commandeered" on the ground of its being needed for the use of invalided soldiers. On the face of it, what is being done may be quite justifiable from several points of view; and our good people at home forget the treatment of Roman Catholics by that Defender of the Faith, Henry the Eighth.

In order to excite public sympathy, the monastery organized a public procession, and this terrible Government not only permitted the procession, but issued a proclamation that anyone who interfered with it would be arrested. The procession was a large one, with rich banners and many ikons. In spite of the proclamation ordering people not to interfere with the procession, agents of the Church went amongst those who could not read—a very large proportion in Russia—telling them that the Bolsheviks were putting down all such ceremonies. Mr. Ransome says:—

> All along the route were groups with agitators trying to work on the ignorance of the people. But the day passed quietly.....The Bolsheviks wisely avoided trouble by removing the Red Guards from the streets. The procession, which took half an hour to pass, would have been impressive had it not been so obvious that it had a secondary non-religious object. That object was not attained. The political opponents of the Bolsheviks wanted martyrs. They got no martyrs, and from their point of view the procession was a failure.

Now the monks of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery have proclaimed a Holy War, and the Patriarch has excommunicated the Government. Other things might have been overlooked, but seizing Church property was the last straw.

Meanwhile, we invite Freethinkers to read with caution the stories that are being made current in the ordinary press about Russia. They should remember the systematic slanders on the Portuguese revolution because it struck at the Throne and the Church, and also the misrepresentation in this country of France when it disestablished the Church a few years ago. Church interests are well served in this country, and lies in defence of piety find a ready market. Above all, we advise all to study the French Revolution. The analogy between that and the Russian Revolution is wonderfully close, and very instructive.

The *Daily News* concluded its account of the consecration of the new Bishop of Hereford with the words, "the ceremony passed off without incident." Was a free-fight expected?

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Some of the new models for spring headwear are of the poke-bonnet type. For once in a way the Salvation Army girls will find themselves in the fashion.

A plan is being discussed for reinforcing the religious life of America and this country by exchanging ministers for periods up to twelve months, says the *Daily News*. The Americans are very welcome to our Bishop of London, but we hope that they will keep Billy Sunday on their side of the Atlantic.

Speaking at the Colston Hall, Bristol, the Rev. D. J. Hiley said:—

> No hymn in any hymn book he had ever seen had done him so much good as "What's the use of worrying?" sung by brave men, who lived up to that sentiment. "What about the religion of the boys?" they might ask. His experience was that war must brutalize men—there was no escape from that. Those who expected a wave of religious enthusiasm after the War would be bitterly disappointed. The religious service at the base was not the most popular event of the week. Swearing was probably "only from the teeth," and he did not attach too much importance to this weakness, but he always regretted that this had seemed to become part of the soldier's ordinary vocabulary. Referring to the morals of the troops, the speaker complained bitterly of the "conspiracy of silence" on the great evil which threatened the British race even more than did the Huns. To Churchmen—the whole Catholic Church—he said, "We have lost touch with democracy."

What will trouble the Churches most is that they will probably lose touch with a deal of their income.

My Tuesdays are meatless,
My Wednesdays are wheatless,
I am getting more eatless each day;
My home it is heatless,
My bed it is sheetless—
They're all sent to the Y.M.C.A.
My club it is breadless,
My coffee is sweetless,
Each day I get poorer and wiser;
My stockings are feetless,
My trousers are seatless.
My God! But I do hate the Kaiser.

—*Daily News.*

Sir Arthur Yapp's task at the Food Ministry has come to an end, and he has retired, to resume his work of talking for the Young Men's Christian Association. Talking was his job for the Food Ministry, and, as a daily paper points out, "he has probably talked more words in four months than the glibbest street-corner medicine-vendor." Anyhow, Sir Arthur ought to be satisfied, for he yapped himself into the honours list.

Billy Sunday, the popular American revivalist, is engaged in an eight-weeks' campaign against sin, and, according to the *New York Herald*, Billy never misses an opportunity of attacking "Kaiser Bill and his bunch," whom he describes as "a God-forsaken, weasel-eyed, hog-jowled, beetle-browed crew." It would be interesting to hear "Kaiser Bill's" comments on these compliments from a fellow-Christian. Probably they would be couched in the same exquisite language.

One of the alterations made by the House of Lords in the Franchise Bill was a suggestion to exhibit in public places a "black list" of Conscientious Objectors. This was rejected by the House of Commons. What an ironical suggestion that men with "consciences" should be "blacklisted" in a Christian country!

Oh, those newspapers! The *Daily News* is again assuring its readers that "the German power is a pagan power, just as their ideal is a pagan ideal." Has the editor ever heard of German priests and Lutheran parsons?

The glorious free press of England has been expressing its astonishment in headlines at the news that the ex Czar of Russia has been sawing wood. Yet Christians profess to believe that the King of Kings wielded the jack-plane.

The *Evening Standard* declares that "it is the English habit to shrink from the analysis of ideas." Even Tory journalists find out things in time.

The secularization of Christianity is still going on. At an Eastcheap church the Sunday programme comprised "Songs, orchestra, and cinema," and the sermon was devoted to "Food hoarding." At an East-end tabernacle the chief attraction was a "free tea for 700."

The new Education Bill, soon to be brought before Parliament, provides for the maintenance of school camps for physical training. Quite a good clause—so long as it is properly carried out. But the County of Leicester Education Committee has issued a handbook, called *Elements of Military Education*, from which it may be gathered that those responsible for its issue are only jealous of Prussia, not antagonistic to its spirit.

Thus, "Special Military Practice" is to have a definite place in the cadet curriculum. There is to be bayonet practice, with or without bayonet; trench practice, in which a sack is to be placed to represent a man. The boy is to go through certain manœuvres, and finally "seize bayonet to stick into the throat at close quarters." Quite a pretty, humanizing exercise for young boys. The rulers of Germany have brought their country to its present pass by a systematic militarizing of the rising generation. The County of Leicester Education Office is evidently jealous of German efficiency in this direction, and wishes to try the same process here. We can only hope that parents will see that this kind of thing is killed before it acquires strength. Physical drill for boys, as much as is possible. Bayonet exercise, involving the simulated running of a bayonet through the throat of a prostrate enemy, a thousand times no! Let us leave that kind of systematic brutalization to Prussia.

The Bishop of Oxford says "there is a lamentably low tone in many country places as well as in the towns. I feel bowed down with humiliation and misery, yet I do not know what to do." Perhaps the Bishop may reflect that this "low tone" is some sort of a comment on the boasted purifying effects of Christianity. That kind of confession stamps Christianity as a decided failure. It is the Churches who have claimed moral control, it is the Churches who have told us of the marvels accomplished, and if the Bishop's lament is justified by facts the sooner the clergy give up the job the better.

In the House of Convocation the Bishop of Lichfield protested strongly against the "smallness of the outfit allowance and daily pay" of chaplains in the Army compared with that of combatant officers. Well, but they do get officer's pay, and many will be receiving, as Army chaplains, more than they were getting as curates. And is there any reason why a chaplain should get officers' pay at all? Why should he be paid more than an ordinary soldier? Why should not even the Church to which the chaplain belongs pay him? He is there to represent it. The protest strikes us as just "cheek."

There is a fool or a liar involved in the following item of news. On January 29, at the Cambridge Borough Tribunal, a bookseller running a one-man business, married, and a specialist in scientific publications, applied for exemption. He was refused, the Military Representative stating that *the Minister of National Service regarded books as luxuries.* Comment is quite needless.

On the window of the Reading Room of the Y.M.C.A. at Ayr, appears a notice intimating that for some time past the management has been troubled through magazines having been stolen from the premises, and a request that visitors should abstain from the practice. Is this a sign of the glowing return to religion among our young men?

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It is a pity that Mr. George Bernard Shaw does not pay more careful regard to fact when dealing with certain subjects. Thus, in the *Nation* for February 1, he says in the course of a review of a recent book by Mr. Belloc :—

> The late editor of the *Freethinker* was not the same man in his private correspondence with Meredith as in his editorial columns. He knew quite well that the sort of Atheist who called the Bethlehem stable the Pig and Whistle, not merely to change the atmosphere of the discussion, but with the quaintly snobbish notion that nothing miraculous could happen in a vulgar public house was a danger to Secularism ; yet he was not free to say so ; too many of his subscribers would have suspected him of superstition, if not of downright Christianity and abandoned him.

Those who knew G. W. Foote will smile at the suggestion of his refraining from saying things for fear of losing subscribers. That consideration has never been of weight in the editorial policy of the *Freethinker*, and, we hope, never will be. And we are pleased to say that the relations between this paper and its readers are such that no one feels at all upset when something is published with which many may disagree. Clear thinking and honest speaking is all that our readers ask for, and so far as is possible they get it. Both the late and the present editor have had disagreements with some readers, but we do not think any have been lost on that account. And, quite frankly, we should not greatly value the support of anyone if his or her support was conditional on complete agreement upon every subject and all the time.

The suggestion that G. W. Foote was one man in the *Freethinker* and another man in his private correspondence, is simply ridiculous. It was the G. W. Foote of the 'eighties who won the respect of Meredith, and it was won on the strength of his writings in the *Freethinker*. And that respect was retained to the end. Of course, G. W. Foote didn't write "Acid Drops" when corresponding with Meredith ; there was no necessity for his doing. Nor was there any need to "depolarize" words by calling the Bethlehem Inn the "Pig and Whistle," or changing the atmosphere of the discussion in other ways. Between two such men these things were quite unnecessary. But that is a different thing to the suggestion conveyed in the passage cited. Nor do we imagine that G. B. S. writes or talks to his friends in the same way that he does in his articles or plays. If he did they would think of him as a deuce of a bore. For with those who can read, lessons in the alphabet are quite unnecessary.

A bold advertisement in the press states that the Rev. J. T. Davis, the minister of the Theistic Church, will deal with "mental doubts" on the subject of religion. The subject should keep his congregation awake.

The *Strassburg Post* suggests that the Kaiser is in dire need of the prayers of his people. This does not tally with the clerical statement that the Germans are "Atheists."

At a special service at St. Paul's Cathedral the music included selections from Mendelssohn's *Saint Paul*. A striking instance of German "Atheism."

In these days of the enforced simple life it is refreshing to notice an advertisement in the Catholic *Universe* announcing that "bees-wax vegetable votive candles" can be supplied promptly at reasonable prices.

Well done, Inverness! A deputation of "laymen and ministers" waited on the magistrates to protest against their action in permitting Sunday concerts. One of the ministers told the magistrates that if Germany had observed the Sabbath better, she would not be "going through such a period of debasement." The magistrates were unrepentant. Indeed, Bailie Maclean said that if the ministers would do more to show the people how to live they would have plenty to do. Other magistrates informed the deputation that they represented a community not a section. This was a good and deserved snub. So we again say : "Bravo, Inverness." And we hope the authorities elsewhere will follow suit.

The Archbishop of Canterbury thinks there is likely to be a shortage of parsons after the War unless a great number of young men now in the Army are ready to offer themselves for ordination. We should say a deal will depend upon the state of the labour market. If there are no openings elsewhere some may "offer themselves." If other openings present themselves, then we fancy the War will not lead to a great rush in the direction of the Church. There is one thing, however, of which we may be quite sure, whatever may be the shortage of parsons, there is not likely to be a queue formed waiting for their ministrations. So far as this commodity is concerned, the public will submit cheerfully to the most drastic rationing.

The *Church Times* is alarmed at Mr. Justice Atkins refusing to send to prison a soldier charged with killing his wife for infidelity. It fears that such a judgment may lead to the taking of human life being regarded less seriously than hitherto. But what can one expect? If millions of men spend four years on end killing each other, how is it possible for them to regard human life as of great value? We said when the War broke out that it meant a progressive brutalization of character, and we are now witnessing some of the consequences.

A Wesleyan minister in the Isle of Man has received three months' imprisonment for saying that many soldiers were "drunken, immoral, and profane scoundrels," and that "to talk of such men going straight to heaven because they had died for their country was sheer heathenism." We are no authority as to *who* will go to heaven, or what are the conditions of entry, and we cannot see why the question of militarism cannot be discussed without painting an Army as worse than the rest of the population. We should be surprised to find that our Army is either much better or much worse than the rest of the people from whom the Army is made up. As it is, we have one class painting soldiers as all saints, and another class depicting them as all sinners. A little common sense would dispense with both extremes.

The *Star* notes that a further distribution of the profits on the late Canon Fleming's sermon, *Recognition in Futurity*, has just been made by Queen Alexandra. The *Star* also reminds its readers that this sermon, although preached by Canon Fleming, really belonged to Talmage. What Fleming did was merely to alter the names of places. An impudent trick, but it went down.

The *Sketch* will be getting into trouble. In a recent issue it printed a picture of a "Calvary" showing the figure of Christ broken into pieces by a shell. It ought to have shown everything else broken and the figure untouched. The *Daily Mail* knows how to "arrange" these things better.

"Will the Archbishop act?" asked a religious periodical at the height of the hubbub over Bishop Henson's appointment to Hereford. An unkind critic might have retorted that His Grace had never done anything else.

The Bishop of London seems anxious to impress people with the idea that the clergy are taking their proper share of work in the national crisis. Speaking at Covent Garden, he said that he had "combed-out" forty parsons to go to the Front. He did not explain that they were going as non-combatants, and that they would receive officers' pay.

A would-be humourist in a Sunday paper declares that he knew a man whose idea of heaven was to sit in a hot bath reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The funny thing about this remark is that many pious folk believe honestly that persons who read "Kant" will have a hot time—in the next world.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 17, Leicester; March 3, Sheffield; March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—E. B. Side, 5s.; H. W. Side, 5s.; J. D. Maysmoor (Sierra Leone), 14s. 6d.; East African Soldier (per E. Murson), £1.

J. C. HARDING.—Thanks for address, which is now included in list.

J. BARTRAM.—Sorry no hall can be obtained at present for meetings in Newcastle. Hope things will soon improve.

J. LIGHT.—You will see what you require in this issue.

S. THOMPSON.—We suppose that alcohol is the "gift of God" if he created everything. There is nothing wrong with the argument from a religious point of view. Its only fault is that, like nearly all religious arguments, it is supremely silly.

PTE. STARMER.—Pleased you found our "splendidly selected parcel of literature" so interesting and useful. We have no doubt its distribution will do good.

E. STARLING.—Paper is being sent. Have not seen the book you name.

P. MAIR.—Will send on specimen copies.

A. C. APTED.—Shall appear. We quite appreciate your story of the clergyman who, after acting as recruiting agent, moved "heaven and earth" to get exemption for his own son when he was called up for service.

M. BIRKENHEAD.—Unless material is used in the sense of "existence" the answer you quote is absurd.

C. F. BENNION.—The publishing offices of the New York *Truthseeker* is 62 Vesey Street, New York, U.S.A.

G. WEBB.—We quite agree that it would be well for people to discuss the Population Question without dragging in so many side issues. But our experience is that very few people are able to discuss *any* question and keep to the essential issues. We may act upon your suggestion when a suitable occasion presents.

A. F. THORN.—Received. As early as possible.

"ICONOCLAST."—Thanks for verses, but regret they are not up to our standard.

W. SMALBRIDGE.—Cathedral towns usually are sleepy places, and one may trust the clergy to keep them so. Thanks for cuttings.

W. GREGORY.—Paper is being sent.

H. L. LAWS.—Sorry, but as you will have seen, the discussion is closed.

MRS. BRIDGES ADAMS.—Will see if it is possible to do anything in the direction you indicate.

M. L.—Quite correct; but Darwin and Wallace stated that the idea of Natural Selection came to them from reading Malthus on Population.

A. JOHNSON.—We are pleased to learn that Mr. Clifford Williams had a successful meeting at Nuneaton on Sunday last; also that a debate is likely to be arranged as an outcome of the discussion.

"FREETHINKER" (Glasgow).—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.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 17) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The lecture commences at 6.30, and the subject, "The Savage in Our Midst," should bring a good attendance.

Mr. T. F. Palmer lectures this afternoon (Feb. 17) at the West Central Hall, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road. The lectures commence at 3.15, and those of our London readers who are already familiar with Mr. Palmer's writings will no doubt avail themselves of this opportunity of making his acquaintance as a lecturer. In the evening, Mr. Palmer is holding a debate with Mr. P. Muir, a Christian Evidence lecturer, at the St. Pancras Reform Club, Kentish Town Road. The debate commences at 7.30.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who has returned to the fighting zone, writes:—

> Freethinkers in general, and the *Freethinker* in particular, have striven against the tyranny of religion in the Army with much success. On enlisting now, the Freethinker's chief difficulty is enlightening Army officials, and acquainting them with the new procedure in relation to the "What religion?" question.
>
> Freethinkers will also, I believe, be pleased to hear of a further success. In my own company, church parades were occasionally ordered, but at the foot of the announcement was a note stating that the parades were voluntary. I cannot say if it is the same in other companies or battalions; but the point is, that voluntary church parades are in operation in one company at least, and that is a beginning; and I think much of the credit for it is due to the *Freethinker* and its energetic editor, who has lost no opportunity of bringing to the notice of the military authorities the tyranny and impudence of the old method.
>
> Thus, just as the late Charles Bradlaugh, by continually pegging away, eventually defeated the legal necessity of Freethinkers becoming hypocrites in courts of justice, and the late G. W. Foote by the same process checked the mean but Christian policy of robbing Freethought Societies, so in the same manner has the present President of the N. S. S. and editor of the *Freethinker* led the way in winning another right for Freethinkers—the right of openly professing non-religious opinion, and the acceptance, without question, by officials in a hitherto compulsory religious branch of national service, and the beginning of voluntary attendance at church parades.
>
> Thus the evidence for the strengthening of religion during the War accumulates. If Christians are satisfied with that kind of evidence, we certainly are.
>
> Therefore I hope every Freethinker will keep on pegging away to relieve injustices to Freethinkers wherever they exist, in the full knowledge that they are, by so doing, helping to win the fight against the enemy to human progress; for Christianity can never be strong where Freethought has equal rights.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith pays his first visit to Birmingham to-day (February 17). His address will be on "The Influence of the Church on Marriage and Divorce," and we hope Birmingham friends will see that the Repertory Theatre is well filled.

While we are on the point, we should like to draw the special attention of local friends to these meetings. The meetings at the Repertory Theatre are successful and impressive, but the local Society is in need of better financial support. There must be many Freethinkers round and about Birmingham who can help in this direction, and probably they have not done, because they are not aware of the need. We can assure them the work is worthy of their help.

Mr. John Breese writes:—

> One man's bit. I am taking six copies of the *Freethinker* weekly. My newsvendor is going to display them prominently on the counter. All *not* sold, I purchase, and shall distribute to likely converts. I am telling you this because I am

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seriously out for helping you to realize that splendid object—1,000 increased weekly sales of the *Freethinker*. Surely there are a thousand purchasers who would take *one* copy more each week, say, for six months, and give that extra copy away, or do a little propaganda work by leaving it on tram-seat or in the train. There is not the least doubt in my mind about you moving that additional thousand copies. Anyway, I am going to have a cut at it.

Nothing gives us so much encouragement as the knowledge—which comes to hand by almost every post—of the warm support given, and which continues to be given, by our readers.

We are asked to state that lectures are held every Sunday in Jail Square, Glasgow, by the Herald League, at which the *Freethinker* and other heretical literature is offered for sale.

We were very pleased to see the following in the *North Mail*:—

> The Newcastle No. 3 Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners has passed the following resolution:—
>
> That we strongly protest against any further combing-out of the working classes for the Army whilst the clergy and ministers of various sects remain exempt as a privileged class, seeing that many vigorous, eligible ministers have no objection to the War, whilst physically unfit conscientious objectors have died in prison, despite the Exemption Act.
>
> We therefore urge the Government to take immediate steps to revoke this glaring injustice, as we refuse to continue to quietly submit to having our sons and brothers made the scapegoats of any privileged class, whose services are of no national importance.
>
> Copies of the resolution are to be sent to the Premier and Sir Auckland Geddes, and members of Parliament.

The Southampton Branch of the N. S. S. is holding a meeting this evening (Feb. 17) in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road. Mr. Rayner is the speaker, and his subject is "The Life and Work of Charles Darwin." We hope that all local Freethinkers will make a special effort to be present.

It will not be very long before a new Education Bill will be before Parliament; and although Mr. Fisher shows every desire to avoid discussing the religious question, it is improbable that he will be able to do this. The question is almost certain to be raised in some form or other. We again, therefore, ask Freethinkers all over the country to get busy. Those who belong to Trade Unions should seek to get a resolution passed asking for a policy of Secular Education in State schools. Those who belong to organizations other than Trade Unions should act in the same way. It is not at all difficult to get such a resolution passed, since the justice of our case is obvious; it is becoming plainer than ever that Secular Education is the only way to end the "religious difficulty." We have urged this advice several times, and have been pleased to note that it has been acted on in several cases. We have reported some of these instances; but we should like to see the policy followed more generally. The more resolutions received by the Minister for Education, the better. Therefore, we repeat, let Freethinkers all over the country get busy.

Another subject on which Freethinkers might bestir themselves is that of compulsory church attendance in the Army. We deal elsewhere in this issue with this topic; and we should like to see constituents writing their parliamentary representatives on behalf of this act of justice to the soldiers. If this does nothing else, it will ventilate a real grievance. And, perhaps, when our legislators realize that Freethinkers are not an altogether negligible quantity, their legitimate claims will receive more serious attention.

The simple diminution of the freedom of the press is enough to diminish the stature of a people.—*Victor Hugo.*

Writers and Readers.

THE greater part of the prose writings of Coleridge are not what would be described as easy reading. At their worst, they are grey, dull, devitalized stuff—the outcome of a brain befogged with opium and the more moonshiny variety of German metaphysics. *Aids to Reflection* used to be, and I am told is even now, the favourite reading of the more thoughtful Unitarians. It is no doubt largely responsible for the absence of colour and vibration from Theistic thought. A sort of philosophical wet blanket, it is a hindrance rather than a help to mental movement. *The Friend* and the other political and moral dissertations are equally without form and void. Even the *Biographia Literaria* is vital only in parts; the mere materials, often excellent in themselves, out of which a fine book might have been made. Coleridge was a sympathetic, and at times an acute and subtle, critic of literature; but, like many men of genius, he was too easy-going a critic of his own works—he could never bring himself to reject the irrelevant. He was so much in love with his own amazing faculty of discursive expression that he never troubled to think of his readers. All really effective writing is a sort of collaboration between the writer and the reader, who are both willing to make sympathetic adjustments. Coleridge was not the garrulous lunatic of Peacock's silly caricature—he is labelled as Dr. Flosky in *Nightmare Abbey*—but certainly for those who had not come under the spell of his magical eloquence, that is; for most of his readers, he has never had the attraction of a sequacious thinker.

. . . . .

In conversation, too—or, to speak more correctly, in monologue, for Coleridge would talk for hours at a time—he was often content to throw away the riches of his reflective wisdom. He tells us somewhere that he was once at dinner in company with an intelligent-looking man, who listened and said nothing for a long while; Coleridge, no doubt, expatiating with melodious eloquence on some favourite topic—the idealism of Berkeley, or Kant's wire-drawn distinction between the reason and the understanding. The gentleman nodded his head in polite and apparently intelligent agreement. At the end of the dinner, when a streaming dish of apple dumplings was brought in, he broke silence with—"Them's the jockies for me!" I am half inclined to think that the silent gentleman was pulling Coleridge's leg, our metaphysician being too self-conscious to see the joke. Still, there is no question but that Coleridge was in the habit of scattering his seminal ideas with no regard to the nature of the ground. Some of his friends benefited by his undeveloped sense of personal property in ideas, and it would not be difficult to find traces of them in Wordsworth, Lamb, and Hazlitt. They, no doubt, felt they were justified in helping themselves from so rich a store. Emerson, it may be remembered, did the same with his friend Alcot. But Alcot, although a generous talker, was not silly. One fine morning he paid an early visit to Emerson's kitchen-garden, and helped himself to a wheelbarrow of vegetables. We are told that Emerson could not see that Alcot had as much right to his vegetables than he had to his friend's original ideas. It is an instructive comment on transcendental logic.

. . . . .

It is not my intention here to discuss the merits of Coleridge as a thinker in politics, religion, or æsthetics; the curious reader will find all he wants in Pater's essay, reprinted in a handy form in *English Critical Essays* (The World's Classics), and in Mr. J. M. Robertson's illuminating study (*New Essays Towards a Critical Method*).

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What I want to do is to recommend anyone who knows little of Coleridge to make his acquaintance through the *Table Talk* which the Oxford University Press has just published at half-a-crown. There you get the best of Coleridge in a form easy to digest. Nothing short of a phonograph could have reproduced exactly the continuous stream of vocal sound, and one might be thankful, perhaps, that the talking-machine was not thought of a hundred years ago. His sympathetic and intelligent admirers reported the more striking passages, which are not usually epigrammatic, Coleridge having but little taste for the condensed phrase that puts a criticism with dogmatic and vigorous clearness. Yet there are quotable passages that seem to contradict this view. For instance:—

> In Æschylus religion appears terrible, malignant, and persecuting: Sophocles is the mildest of the three tragedians, but the persecuting aspect is still maintained: Euripides is like a modern Frenchman, never so happy as when giving a slap at the gods altogether.
>
> The poor-rates are the consideration paid by, or on behalf of, capitalists for having labour at demand. It is the price and nothing else.
>
> You may depend upon it, the more oath-taking, the more lying, generally among people.
>
> Party men always hate a slightly differing friend more than a downright enemy. I quite calculate on my being one day or other holden in worse repute by many Christians than the Unitarians and open infidels. It must be undergone by everyone who loves truth for its own sake beyond all other things.
>
> The morality of Rabelais' work is of the most refined and exalted kind; as for the manners, to be sure, I cannot say as much. Swift was *anima Rabelaisii habitans in sicco*—the soul of Rabelais dwelling in a dry place. Yet Swift was rare. Can anything beat his remark on King William's motto,—*Recepit, non rapuit*,—"that the receiver was as bad as the thief?"
>
> A rogue is a roundabout fool; a fool *in circumbendibus*.

. . . . .

There are not many of these "short, sharp things" in Coleridge; the sort of thing which Johnson was celebrated for, and which are much easier to report than continuous discourse. It was not the style of talk that best expressed the wide-ranging genius of Coleridge, who tells us with amusing simplicity that all men of genius who love to talk at all are very discursive and continuous. Yet it would have been impossible for Dr. Johnson to say a shorter and sharper thing than this on Burke: "Until he could associate his general principles (of history) with some sordid interest, panic of property, Jacobinism, etc., *he was a mere dinner bell.*" The remark above about Swift is witty enough, although at bottom it is only a little less inapposite than Pope's line about laughing and shaking in Rabelais' easy chair. Now, is it difficult to think of Swift as even smiling sardonically at the gross stupidity, the banality average human nature. To paraphrase his latest apologist, Mr. Whibley: A fierce hatred of injustice and oppression is the master passion of Swift. He has no illusions, and would tear away the illusions which mask the faces of men. We marvel at the genius of Swift; we do not laugh at it. The reader who is critical enough not to be impressed or oppressed by the mere *obiter dicta* of a great man is sure to come across many passages with which he will not agree, but they will, or should, help to clarify his ideas. He will note how far astray is Coleridge in his judgment of Gibbon. The historian's style is pronounced detestable, which is, perhaps, no more than we might expect of the recoil from the periodic prose-style of the eighteenth century. But the style is not the worst thing. Gibbon has no ideas, no philosophy; he is ignorant of the true cause of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Coleridge, like Mr. Belloc, in our time, knew all about it, no doubt, by a sort of historical intuition. The one historian of the eighteenth whom modern research has not set aside nor threatened to set aside; the writer of the broadest sociological survey ever attempted is ignorant of the philosophy of his subject. The truth is that both Mr. Belloc and Coleridge have ignored the immense value of Gibbon through sheer antipathy to the Voltairean scepticism of two chapters out of a total of seventy-one. And yet Newman had splendid praise for the historian's great portrait of Athanasius; and Freeman, who knew the ground well, could bring himself to speak of Gibbon's work as the encyclopædic history of 1,300 years; the grandest of historical designs carried out with wonderful power and wonderful accuracy. "Whatever is read," he avers, "Gibbon must be read too."

. . . . .

These are precisely the kind of misjudgments every one is liable to make through hastiness, or want of care or prejudice. If Coleridge was sometimes wrong, he was often enough right. He was ever loyal to what he thought to be truth. He set his face against the soulless industrialism of the period, he pointed out the evil of accumulated capital, he advocated a progressive tax on income, he noted the scandalously unjust treatment of Ireland. In philosophy he was one of the first to do justice to Spinoza, professing to find a Pantheistic Atheism more agreeable to an imaginative mind than Theism. Certainly his religious course was not edifying from the Freethinking point of view, going as he did from heterodoxy to Socinianism, and thence to the support of Church and State, founding, it is said, the Broad Church school—the school of Trimmers. But, on the whole, his support of Christianity was of doubtful value, and he has been discarded. It is small wonder; for even Christianity has not been able to resist the relative spirit against which Coleridge had always set his face. He was really a mediæval doctor of theology out of his element. In him, however, there was something which the pragmatic Christian could not understand, a transcendental disinterestedness which, to use his own phrase, loves truth with indescribable awe, and those of us who know the whole of his work are ready to believe him when he tells us, in his own beautiful way, "that he would creep towards the light, even if the light had made its way through a rent in the wall of the temple."

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

The Orb of Day.

V.

(Continued from p. 91.)

SURROUNDING the sun like a beautiful halo is the elusive corona. All attempts to view this pearly light have failed, save at such moments when the sun is eclipsed. The corona varies considerably in outline. Occasionally, it is comparatively uniform in appearance, and seems like a circle of light encompassing the sun. At other times the corona appears to project into space to a distance of double the solar diameter. So seldom do favourable opportunities present themselves to the observer, owing to the infrequency and transientness of eclipses, that any particular solar investigator would, in the course of thirty years, if all eclipses were visible and he were able to view them, even then, only about forty-five minutes would be available for successful study. These serious drawbacks are largely responsible for the fact that little concerning the corona has been definitely

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determined. Moreover, the solar corona is a quite modern discovery, and until fairly recently it was not positively proved to form part of the sun. During the past generation improved methods of study have been adopted. In addition to telescopic study, photography has been utilized, and the spectroscope has been pressed into service for the purpose of ascertaining the materials of which this radiant solar crown is composed.

When the solar surface is much agitated by sun-spots, the coronal light is at its best. An astronomical expedition to California to study the corona in January, 1889, was marred by two difficulties. Instead of the average few minutes of complete obscuration, the total eclipse lasted a single minute only. Again, the eclipse took place at a period of minimum sun-spot activity; and as the several envelopes which environ the sun seem to become disturbed in sympathy with the periodic evolution of sun-spots, this proved a further disadvantage. When the corona departs from its circular form, and sends forth its streams of light with most marked magnificence, there usually occurs a splendid display of solar prominences. There also exists a cycle of changes in the form of the corona, which possesses a period of about eleven years, and this cycle is regarded as identical with that of sun-spot frequency.

Astronomers have surmised that some connection may be traced between the corona and the zodiacal light. This exceedingly delicate glow is most noticeable in the tropics, but may be seen in England, in the evening, after a mild spring sunset, in our Western counties. This light is also visible just before sunrise in the fall of the year. In full sunlight this hazy light is extinguished by the powerful solar beams; but as our luminary dips beyond the horizon, and the afterglow gladdens the sky, despite its faintness, the zodiacal light serves to prolong the radiance of the dying day. In the morning, its appearance in the eastern heavens heralds the sun's awakening; for, in company with the dawn, this pearly glow ascends above the oriental sky. The faint zodiacal light is, perhaps, an attenuated extension of the solar corona, and in that case forms part of the sun. This nebulous haze rises to a height some sixty times that of the solar diameter, and if really part of the sun's atmosphere, then the encircling substances of our luminary must occupy a stupendous region of space.

There is a steadily accumulating array of evidence which indicates that epochs of intense solar activity coincide with periods of magnetic disturbance on the earth. Experts differ widely in opinion concerning the correct interpretation of these coincidences, but the facts appear to speak for themselves. The earth is a huge magnet, and perhaps this is true on a much vaster scale with regard to the sun. There appears little doubt that the phenomena of terrestrial magnetism are in some way related to the electric currents which circulate round our globe, and these currents are apparently connected with the movements of the solar orb. It is well known that when the sun is in a highly disturbed state, as shown by a great abundance of sun-spots, that then the earth is subject to magnetic storms and auroral displays. Maunder recorded one outstanding magnetic disturbance registered by the instruments at Greenwich, which seemed to accompany the appearance of a great sun-spot in 1892. And that authority goes on to state that:—

> In a period of nearly nineteen years, therefore, we have three magnetic storms which stand out pre-eminently above all others during that interval. In that same period we have three great sun spot displays—counting the two groups of 1882 together—which stand out with equal distinctness far above all similar displays. And we find that the three magnetic storms were simultaneous with the greatest development of the spots.

Among other evidences, there is the testimony of Ricco, another celebrated solar observer. Ricco compared his own results with those obtained at the United States Naval Observatory. He demonstrated that in 1892 eleven large spots were visible on the solar disc. And in seven out of the eleven instances noted, there occurred magnetic disturbances on our planet. Forty-five hours after the giant spot of February 12 had crossed the central meridian, a magnetic storm of "extraordinary vehemence was manifested." When, with the rotation of the sun, the spot reappeared on March 10, a powerful magnetic storm was recorded by the photo-magnetographs, forty-five hours once more intervening. It is most significant that, as a rule, the bigger the spot, the more intense the magnetic disturbance.

Kelvin adversely criticized the theory that the sun's influences as a variable magnet were sufficient to develop magnetic storms on a planet 93,000,000 miles distant. In any case, there is ample evidence that terrestrial magnetic storms tend to succeed solar outbreaks. Possibly the numerous coincidences recorded will find their complete solution in other relations than those of cause and consequence. It may be that they constitute the outcome "of some other influence of electro-magnetic waves on a vast scale sweeping through our system, and influencing the magnetic phenomena in the various bodies of which our system is composed."

A very interesting problem of solar physics is that which relates to the chemical composition of the photosphere—the luminous envelope of the sun. Our light and heat arrive to us from our luminary's wonderful stratum of glowing cloud. The photosphere is comparatively shallow, apparently, when related to the magnitude of the solar diameter. Yet this layer of incandescent cloud is the chief radiator of our orb's effulgence and thermal power.

If our world were viewed from some outside area, it would appear encompassed by the clouds which float in the terrestrial atmosphere. These volumes of vapour arise from water. Now, is there some special element in the solar clouds also which confers upon them their predominant features? Dr. Johnstone Stoney strove to solve this problem in 1867, and the hypothesis he then propounded has never been seriously shaken since. The water which forms the earth's clouds is a chemical compound, but it is utterly unlikely that the photospheric substance could possibly remain in a condition of chemical combination at the enormously exalted temperature which obtains in the sun. Therefore, the material composing the photosphere must be reduced to an elementary state. Out of the eighty odd terrestrial elementary substances most, and probably all, are present in the sun, and the element coronium, so far as we know, is special to the solar globe. Helium was first discovered in the sun, but has recently been detected on our planet. It seems likely that our orb is mainly composed of elements quite common on our planet, and it is a fair inference that the material of the photosphere is a terrestrial substance also.

The solar envelope has been proved by spectrum analysis to be something different to a pure gas. Its spectrum is continuous, although the spectrum, as viewed from our earth, is traversed by an array of black lines. But it is quite certain that these lines are really present in the cooler vapours outside the photosphere, while some are caused by the vapours of the earth's atmosphere. Were it possible to eliminate these interposing and absorbing media, the spectrum of the photosphere would stand out as an unbroken ribbon of light. It is demonstrable that a strictly gaseous material,

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however high its temperature may be, never displays a continuous spectrum. The spectroscope invariably reveals in a pure gas the presence of a number of vivid lines. On the other hand, the spectrum presented by a liquid or solid in a state of incandescence is usually of a different nature. It manifests an unbroken spectrum, and as the photosphere furnishes a continuous spectrum, it must contain either liquid or solid particles suspended in its clouds.

There are weighty reasons for concluding that the vapours of the photosphere are non-metallic. As a matter of fact, carbon or silicon, perhaps both, are the most likely constituents of the photosphere. Rowland's researches prove that about 200 lines of the sun's spectrum are those of carbon, while other lines point to the presence of silicon. But carbon is an element of lower atomic weight than silicon. That of the former is 12, and that of the latter 28. Carbon, therefore, will constantly tend to ascend into the solar atmosphere, while the higher it rises, the lower is the temperature it encounters, and this increases its proclivity to assume a solid or liquid state. Carbon, as we know it, is an element so refractory that it becomes extremely difficult to heat it to a condition of vapour. Their low atomic weights permit carbon vapours to soar upwards in the solar atmosphere where they become cooler, and, although still at a temperature too high to allow other vapours to form liquid particles, are yet at a temperature sufficiently low to liquefy or solidify a substance like carbon which ceaselessly tends to resume a solid form.

The part played by carbon on the earth lends substantial support to the theory that this element is the main source of solar emission. The illuminating powers of a candle are derived from particles of carbon. Carbon filaments were used in incandescent lamps, because this element retains the solid state at a temperature even above that at which platinum fuses. Carbon is the best known radiator, and it refuses to abandon its solid form at enormously exalted temperatures. Thus, it is enabled to utilize its vast radiating powers. For the foregoing, and for various other reasons, it appears a practical certainty that carbon performs a *role* of immeasurable importance in evolving the effulgence of the lord of day.

(To be concluded.) T. F. Palmer.

The Psychology of the Ranter.

Thirty or forty years ago, before the Salvation Army had become the international (or even national) business affair into which it has now developed, the *nuclei* of it, as we may say, were distributed in scattered groups all over England. These groups—the very lowest intellectual types of Nonconformity—mostly called themselves Methodists, and to them excitement was synonymous with religion. They lashed themselves into moral furies whenever they had a public opportunity of doing so. To outsiders they were generally known as "Ranters." They were the sort of enthusiasts who honestly believed that a brick thrown at Bradlaugh made the angels in Heaven rejoice.

Those of us who have come into personal contact with Ranters, and have attended their meetings, realize that the shrewdness of the late General Booth lay in his appreciation of the ignorance, credulity, and craving for excitement, which are the leading characteristics of such people. His success lay in founding an organization which could meet their requirements. And, as has been demonstrated by the results which have followed in the wake of the Salvation Army drum, the Ranter is not peculiar to any particular country.

But the acquisition of wealth and the growth of knowledge are the two things that are most inimical to the multiplication of the Ranter. He is not by any means so numerous as he was in the days of Sankey and Moody, when irreverent boys were soundly thrashed and put to bed for parodying such a well-known classic as "Hold the Fort":—

> Hold the Fort for I am coming,
> Sankey's on the sea:
> Up to the neck in a rhubarb pudding—
> That's the game for me!

The educated member of the fashionable City Church would not, we should suppose, descend to the vulgarity of such rhymed resolutions as are set forth in these lines with which we have in boyhood been almost deafened over and over again:—

> My old companions, fare you well
> I will not go with you to Hell:
> I mean with Jesus Christ to dwell,
> Fare you well: Fare you well!

One has difficulty in understanding upon what ground the Ranter should suppose anybody who was rapidly on the road to Hades could fare well; but the Ranter has never been famed for accuracy or precision in thought, or for punctiliousness of phrase. Still, let us do him justice. He was, in most cases—we have tested it by experience—honest.

It is really the educated member of the fashionable church that gets one's gorge up. For what in effect are the relative positions of him and the Ranter to one another? *Publicly*, the former, far from deprecating, commends and praises the religious enthusiasm of the latter—though he does not personally attend Ranting demonstrations. *Privately*, we know how the cynical grin overspreads his features when the subject of the enthusiastic Ranter is brought up. So let us have the Ranter, if *you* please, in preference to the gilded hypocrite of the big city church! The latter and his kind have social and business interests to be served by the Ranter. Let the Ranter have plenty of religion, they say; but he is, all the time, to be kept as far away as possible from those inimical influences—wealth and knowledge—which would at once dissipate some of the fiery fervour of the Ranter, and incidentally take away some of the fat of the fashionable hypocrites.

The Ranter must have plenty of curry and ginger with his religion. A faith that cannot make you wrestle and sweat is not worth a farthing. Salvation that does not make you shout and jump is no salvation at all. The pugilist who had newly been received into the Salvation Army, giving his "testimony," cried: "I'm that glad I'm saved, that I could knock hell out of the big drum." The reality of hell is what makes religion precious to the Ranter. He has no doubt about a personal Devil. Like Sir Walter Scott's covenanting leader, he has nocturnal contests with him. The Ranter is out-and-out; he is no compromiser; he knows the clean-cut line of demarcation between the divine and the devilish. He is a man who has to undergo considerable physical exertion—apart from his religious exercises—and he is therefore usually a powerful trencherman, and not markedly appreciative of the rules of the Food Controller; but he can tell you definitely that beer, tobacco, playing cards, theatres, novels, and last, but not least, the brimstone-smelling productions of infidels—which he would not touch with the tongs—are all clearly and undoubtedly the temptations of the Devil.

The Ranter may be dying out. But we contemplate his passing with mixed feelings. For he was honest.

Ignotus.

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The Blank Wall.

VIII.

THE "Ultimate Goal" of humanity has yet to be created or discovered. It is more than probable that it would be as ineffectual as any other form of mental daring if it were. That the life of man has a predetermined direction; a knowable meaning, and an ultimate destiny, glorious or otherwise, does not interest the modern mind. It may be because of this indifference that we have to acknowledge the barrenness of popular thought. Barren, that is, when we take it into perspective with the fundamental problems of life which remain unsolved. And were modern thought prolific with discovery of the destiny and meaning of life, we may be certain that the complacent majority would keep on the other side of the road.

Is the obstinate conservatism—the shocking apathy of the normal mind, an indication upon a cosmic scale of the ultimate vacuity and stupidity of life? The thought is insistent, real, and very terrible. Happiness, joy, pain, disease, life and death, the thought of these things has tortured the consciousness of all intelligent people at some time or another. Yet these great universal facts seem to be, in a general way, no more vital and dynamic in normal human existence than the emotions experienced by a servant girl when she finds a bad egg or a broken water-tap.

Is one to believe that the commonplace daily incidents of our material existence are as important as the reality of death, birth, life, pain, joy, disease, and health? Must humanity for ever overestimate the little prosaic things, and relegate the important things to the narrow activity of "advanced thought"? Will the mystical Rationalist attitude to life ever draw the consciousness of man into some thrilling and magnificent dream, wherein the blinding fact of life shall dominate and direct all our inspired energies, and create a world of mental illumination? There would be no need for religion in such a world. Religion would lose all significance in a society which afforded no necessity for third-rate illusions. Religion exists because men are blind, and will cease to exist when men shall receive a light which religion is unable to give.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON FEB. 7.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Braddock, Brandes, Eagar, Gorniot, Leat, Neary, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members, 35 in all, were admitted for Goldthorpe, Liverpool, Manchester, Nuneaton, South Shields, Southampton, Swansea, and the Parent Society.

The President and Secretary reported increasing interest in the propaganda at Nuneaton, and that arrangements had been made for lectures to be delivered in the town by Messrs. Lloyd, Palmer, and Willis; and also that the success of the afternoon meetings at the West Central Hall justified their continuance during February.

The continuance of the demand for the tract, *The Massacre of the Innocents* ("God and the Air-Raid"), was also reported, and it was resolved that it be reprinted with other of the Society's stock tracts.

Ordinary routine business was dealt with, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

The latest device for inspiring devotion amongst Catholics is a luminous crucifix, which shines in the dark, and, in the touching words of the advertisement, "speaks to the heart by night as by day." The thing should be popular among light-headed Christians.

The Grocers and Allied Trades have contributed £41,015 to the Young Men's Christian Association. Is this to further the cause of Christianity or to promote the sale of groceries?

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, "That Materialism is an Insufficient Rendering of the Universe." Affirmative, Mr. Percy H. Muir. Negative, Mr. T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Annual Meeting.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, Mr. T. F. Palmer, "The Antiquity of Man."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK, 11 30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Shaller, Swasey, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Influence of the Church on Marriage and Divorce."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars Hall, 120 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Important Business.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Savage in Our Midst."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6 30, General Discussion for Development of Branch Work. Attendance of Members earnestly requested.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Mr. Rayner, "The Life and Work of Charles Darwin."

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Science and Religion.—The Editor	113
The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd	114
Coleridge's Table-Talk.—Mimnermus	115
The Orb of Day.—T. F. Palmer	116
Belief in God.—G. W. Foote	118
Acid Drops	119
To Correspondents	121
Sugar Plums	121
"Wet Canteens."—Arthur F. Thorn	121
John Smith in Khaki.—Herbert W. Thurlow	122
The Organism as a Whole.—Philip Sidney	122
New Testament Legends for Young Readers.—F. J. Gould	123
The Specialist.—F. L. B. G.	125
Letter to the Editor—Existence of God	126
Society News	126
Notice of Meetings	126

Views and Opinions.

Science and Religion.

The religious mind seldom takes kindly to science; the religious leader never. Circumstances may, with the latter, call for a cessation of active hostilities, but scientific claims are always viewed with hostility, and every opportunity is seized to emphasize their shortcomings. It could not well be otherwise. Both religion and science claim dominion over the same empire; both deal with the same universe, both come before us as interpretations of the same set of phenomena. You may choose one explanation or the other, but you cannot adopt both—that is, with any valid claim to logic and sanity. If the universe, with all its phenomena, is the expression of an intelligent purpose, then the implied claim of science to explain it in terms that are ultimately reducible to matter and motion is invalid. Or, in more concrete instances—if miracle be a fact, universal causation is a delusion. If the New Testament theory of demonism be true, the scientific theory of disordered nerve action is a delusion. And so on through numerous contrasts. The religious and the scientific interpretations are in direct conflict. They have been in conflict since the dawn of positive science. And the conflict will continue until science has wrested from religion the entire domain of human knowledge, actual and possible.

* * *

A Forced Truce.

Consequently, when a Christian preacher talks about science, one must be prepared for certain things. One will usually get a good deal about the failures of science, but very little of its successes. Much about its (ethically) Materialistic outlook, but not much of that lofty idealism which is characteristic of nearly all great figures in the history of science. You will be told what science cannot explain, but will hear little of how much it does explain, and there will be a complete oblivion to the fact that the limitations of existing knowledge is one of the commonplaces of the working scientist. Above all, there will be a positive gloating over the ignorance of science, as though that were something to be proud of, and as though religion possessed knowledge where science was bound to confess itself at fault. And to the psychologist these things are instructive. They prove that, in the person of the bulk of its leaders, religion is substantially where it was. They know that the reconciliation of religion with science is all humbug. Every step of scientific advance means a loss of territory to religion. Given a universe scientifically explained, and religion becomes a sheer anomaly. It has nothing to say, it has nothing to do. It can tell us nothing about the world we do not know without its aid. Its god becomes an absurdity; its ministers a social outrage.

* * *

Darwinism and the War.

In Manchester, Bishop Welldon has been lecturing on "Christianity and the War," and one would think the least said, by a parson on that topic the better. For the War is a fact that cannot by any means square with the Christian theory or with Christian claims. No reasonable person can harmonize this international slaughter with the "providential" government of God. Nor can it be adjusted to the claims made by the Christian Church as a civilizing, humanizing power. Of course, one admits the clergy are in a difficult situation. They cannot talk about the War with profit, nor can they remain silent without loss. They suggest doubts and rouse opposition whichever course they adopt. So Bishop Welldon carries the War into the enemy's camp He says:—

> The speculative basis of the War, and the spirit in which it has been waged by Germany, lay in the doctrine of evolution, or the struggle for existence, which was sometimes called the survival of the fittest. These doctrines had taken stronger root in Germany than in England. The whole of the theory of Darwinism had profoundly affected German thought and teaching. Germany had relapsed into a lower moral state, and that relapse was at least partly due to the absence of a consciousness of sin, and the unwarranted faith in the assurance of human progress.

That settles it. Germany went to war because it had adopted the theory of Darwinism. And all the other nations were planning, and plotting, and annexing, and preparing for war—because Darwinism had not taken so strong root with them.

* * *

Evolution and God.

Poor Darwin! Directly after he died a Roman Catholic bishop said he was burning in hell for having written the *Origin of Species*. Now Bishop Welldon saddles him with the responsibility for the European War. And yet one seems to have heard of wars before Darwin was born, or Darwinism heard of. And what is the good of finding fault with Darwinism, anyway? If Darwinism, if evolution, be true, it is no more than a statement of certain natural processes. And as no scientific man doubts the truth of evolution, the one who should be blamed is Bishop Welldon's God. For

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on the Bishop's own theory, evolution is God's way of working. He designed the struggle for existence; he made it the condition of the development of animal life. Germany may be responsible for much, but it really had nothing to do with establishing the order of nature. Nor is it true that evolution has taken stronger root in Germany than in England—and it would be a national disgrace for us if it were true. The hypothesis of evolution has taken "root" with the world of science everywhere. No one doubts it—except bishops and smaller theological fry. And we would advise Bishop Welldon to stick to discussions on incense, and candles, and vestments, and other ecclesiastical tomfoolery. He is evidently at sea when talking about evolution.

* * *

Implications of Darwinism.

But the implications of Darwinism? These are, probably, what Bishop Welldon had in mind. Do these favour war? General Bernhardi said, yes, although he was not a scientific authority. And on our side Lord Roberts, and Lord Kitchener, and Theodore Roosevelt, and Spenser Wilkinson, and scores of others agreed with Bernhardi. The biological benefits of war has been the common talk of militarists all over the world. They argued that a species progresses by the elimination of the unfit. The stronger survive, the weaker are killed off. And, therefore, war by killing off the weaker, or the less fit, makes for progressive improvement. That is the theory; but it is quite false, and scores of German and other writers on science, etheics, and sociology have pointed out its falsity. Modern war does not eliminate the biologically weakest but the biologically strongest. The halt, the lame, and the blind are left behind. It is the healthiest and strongest that go to the battle front and fall. That is so obvious that it scarcely needs elaboration. Modern war means the elimination of the strongest and the preservation of the weakest.

* * *

Evolution and Society.

Apply Darwinism to the group and the theory fares still worse. Man is a social animal. That is a root fact that dominates all other considerations. His survival, as an individual, is not a mere test of individual fitness, it is far more a test of *social* fitness, of his ability to fit into the social structure. No man in a human group pays the full price of a biological deficiency. The division of labour prevents this by finding a special occupation suitable to his natural endowments. And his "fitness" to his social environment is largely a question of mental and moral qualities. The extreme anti-social character is suppressed, the markedly social character is encouraged. Fitness thus tends to be expressed in terms that really makes for the general advancement of the world. For, be it noted, *it is not the biologically prize animal that is the fittest in human society but the socialized man or woman.* It is, in fact, the gradual alteration in the significance of "fittest" that makes the present War so disastrous. For the same process that has given "fittest" a social value within the group is fast giving, if it has not already given, it the same significance between groups. The interdependence of the world is growing. The hypothesis of evolution describes the lines on which that growth is taking place. And in a recognition of the real nature of the process lies one of the strongest incentives to work for human betterment.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

It is with diseases of the mind as with those of the body; we are half dead before we understand our disorders, and half recovered when we do.

The Newest Apologetic.

IV.

IT is a formidable charge against the Christian religion that in the exact degree in which the belief in it is sincerely and fervently held it engenders an utterly intolerant and savage spirit towards all who either repudiate it altogether or even advocate unauthorized versions of it. A Christian of the New Testament type has no right to be on terms of fellowship with either opponents or corruptors of the Faith. Even the Gospel Jesus himself was at heart a persecutor. The Scribes and Pharisees were wholly intolerable to him, and he cursed them with the utmost severity. Indeed, intolerance is a Christian virtue, and it is historically verifiable that the decline of persecution in modern times has been accompanied by a corresponding decay of Christian belief. Let it be continually borne in mind, then, that, on the assumption of the truth of Christianity, the cultivation of the spirit of intolerance, so far from being a fault, is a duty of first-class importance. Our contention has always been that a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ cannot sit down, with folded arms, while damning heresies are being disseminated in the land, without being guilty of disloyalty to his Divine Lord. Therefore, it is alone on the assumption of its untruth, that we have ever utilized persecution as an argument against Christianity. In his little book, *The Achievements of Christianity*, the Rev. J. K. Mozley, B.D., frankly admits that his religion has systematically practised appalling cruelties and shed a vast amount of blood. He says:—

> It is true that in the Middle Ages the Church felt it an incumbent duty, fully accordant with the genius of Christianity, to repress heresy, and to hand over obstinate heretics to the secular arm for punishment. It is true that the Inquisition, especially in Spain, was responsible for an immense amount of suffering, inflicted under the supposition that it was pleasing to God. It is true that the Reformers were by *no* means prepared to repudiate the use of force against their theological opponents, and that in England, under Elizabeth, Roman Catholic priests were cruelly put to death. It is true that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Europe was drenched with blood as a result of the "religious" wars. It is true that religious toleration and the granting of full civil rights to those who did not profess the established faith of their several countries, to Jews and to unbelievers, was long in coming and was bitterly opposed. In a word, this charge, even when allowance is made for exaggeration by those anxious to paint Christianity as a whole, or some section of Christians, at its worst, is a serious one, and must be candidly and seriously dealt with (pp. 50, 51).

Of course, no one conversant with the history of the Church, could honestly deny the truth of such a charge, and Mr. Mozley deserves no praise for his frank admission of its truth. And yet we do congratulate him upon his statement that "all Christians to-day would acknowledge that for many of the things that belong to their own past history there is no possible excuse." But let us be quite sure which things they were for which there is no possible excuse. At this point Mr. Mozley displays no inconsiderable amount of ingenuity. Among the things enumerated as admitting of no justification were the pushing to indefensible lengths of principles in themselves arguable; the twisting of judicial forms to the detriment of justice itself, "as when an accused person before the Inquisition could employ no pleader on his behalf"; the occasional deterioration into sheer cruelty of what might have been viewed as righteous vengeance, "especially in connection with the Inquisition in Spain." To cut a long story short, Mr. Mozley perceives that

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"the fact that men believed they were serving God, and following out the will of Christ, did not save them on occasion from—I will not say—measures of the most drastic sternness, but not even from gross outrages and cruelties." The real question, however, is "whether the repressive measures of the Middle Ages and the religious wars that followed the Reformation were so undoubtedly wrong and condemnable in themselves, that the observer of these facts has a right to feel biased by them against Christianity, and, indeed, to look on them as facts whose force no defence can parry." This is how Mr. Mozley deals with the subject:—

> The whole question of toleration is much more difficult than the assailants of the Christian record in this matter allow. Modern feeling, Christian and non-Christian alike, runs in other and wider grooves than those which limited sentiment and opinion five hundred years ago. Christians, as well as others, have learnt from the past, and have come to emphasize afresh those elements in the Gospel which are unfriendly to the use of force in matters of religion, and to distrust the logic which builds up a theory and policy of repression on the unquestionable sense of the seriousness of wrong belief which pervades the New Testament. But to allow our present feelings to dictate our judgment of the past, to compound for sins that we in our modern civilization may be inclined to, by damning, with an indignation however real, those we have no mind to, is to reveal the spirit, not of the sober and intelligent critic and historian, but of the boisterous and undisciplined partisan (53, 54).

Whilst there is much truth in that extract, the whole of it is vitiated by an obvious fallacy. The author takes the existence of true and false religious beliefs for granted, though he possesses no data upon which to base an intelligent judgment on the subject. What the Church persecuted in the Dark Ages was, not "every kind of moral poison," but every kind of theological heresy. The Albigenses were morally a superior class of people, and on the score of mere morality there was no complaint against them, but because they held views condemned by ecclesiastical authority, upwards of a million of them were cruelly murdered. It is a truism nowadays that no theological opinions whatever can be proved to be either true or false. They lie completely outside the sphere of proof or disproof. Mr. Mozley says:—

> I must point out that we ought not to make our modern assumptions of the unimportance of intellectual error and the absolute right of speculative freedom the tests whereby to judge Christians of past ages. We have no very good ground for the former assumption, and as to the latter, however great be the advantages of complete speculative freedom, the disadvantages are not inconsiderable (p. 52).

It must not be forgotten that Mr. Mozley is an apologist, and that as such alone he has written his book. To him "theological" and "intellectual" are seemingly synonymous terms, and "theological error" is "moral poison." As a theologian, he asserts that it is sheer unreasoning dogmatism to limit the results of every kind of moral poison to the present life; but he does not see that it is equally dogmatic to extend the consequences of anything beyond the tomb. The dogmatism always begins with the theologian, while the Freethinker contents himself with simply denying anybody's right to dogmatize at all in such a region. As a matter of fact, the main difference between Mr. Mozley and ourselves is that, whilst he deems it expedient to offer excuses for the persecution practised in past ages, we undertake to justify it on the ground that people should have the courage of their convictions, whatever they may be. It is not the persecutors that we judge, but the religion which makes them such. It is not Martin Luther or John Calvin we denounce, but the hideous theology that produces such monsters. The reason why the Church of to-day does not persecute on the same scale as her predecessor of the Middle Ages did is that she lacks both the power and the intensity of belief requisite to do so. On occasions, indications are given that, if she had the power, the fires of persecution would once more blaze out as fiercely as ever, the spirit being indeed quite willing, but the flesh hopelessly weak; but such occasions are few and far between. Generally speaking, the Christian religion is now not even the ghost of its former self.

J. T. LLOYD.

Coleridge's Table-Talk.

> That which will stand of Coleridge is this: the stimulus of his continual instinctive effort to get at and to lay bare the real truth of the matter in hand, whether that matter were literary or philosophical, or political or religious; and this in a country when at the moment such an effort was almost unknown.—*Matthew Arnold.*

"NOT one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be Atheist." This is a quotation from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Table-Talk*, of which a new edition has been published by Mr. Milford, with an introductory essay by Coventry Patmore. It was a man with a big heart and a big head who said that. It loses none of its force from the fact that Coleridge was a Christian, although not an ordinary one, for he was a man of real and unmistakeable genius. Always he wore his "rue with a difference." Coleridge had read too much, and thought too much. Some of the best men he knew, such as Charles Lamb, were heterodox. His close friend, Wordsworth, was not without a suspicion of Pantheism, and the world was ringing with the Rationalistic message of the French Revolution. Coleridge knew that it was not stupidity and heartlessness that made men doubt the existence of "god," but sleepless intellect that would not be lulled by priestly incense, and sympathy that not only saw, but felt, the miseries of man.

Coleridge was as great a talker as Dr. Johnson, but he had no Boswell at hand to record all of his remarks. His friend, Robert Southey, said that Coleridge's mouth "seems incapable of being at rest." Southey was hard to please, for he had the richest talker in England in the same house with him, and it only made him peevish. The explanation is that Southey had a commonplace mind, and was the antipodes of Coleridge. In all Southey's shelf-full of books there is not any spark of genius. Charles Lamb, who was a genius, had a very different impression of Coleridge's talk. Writing of one of the poet's visits, he said: "I am living in a continual feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh on three weeks." The picture which Thomas Carlyle gives of Coleridge at Highgate Hill is exceedingly graphic, and endorses Lamb's view:—

> Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from life's battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. He had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. No talk in his century, or in any other, could be more inspiring.

Coleridge did other and finer work than talk across the dinner-table. Endowed with an intellect of the first order, and an imagination at once delicate and splendid, Coleridge left enough poetry and criticism to place him in the front rank of authors. This is no disparagement of his conversational ability. Except Selden's *Table Talk*, there is hardly so rich a treasure-house of wisdom

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in the language than Coleridge's *Table Talk*. It represents the mature thought of a princely intellect equally at home in the book of the world and in the world of books. His friends had better entertainment than food and wine, for there have been few such brilliant talkers than Coleridge. The pages of his book show us how an accomplished man, famous for his conversation, entertained his company near a hundred years ago. For, like Lord Mansfield, who, in his youth, "drank champagne with the wits," Coleridge enjoyed the best of good company from first to last.

The contributions which Coleridge made to modern thought, rich, ample, and suggestive as they are, have all the characteristics of his varied and eventful life. In whatever he attempted, he drove the shaft deep, and gave us samples of the wealth of ore lying in its confines. Although he worked these mines only at irregular intervals, and passed from one to the other, yet, by stimulating others, he caused the ground to be explored as it never was before in England. If it cannot be said that he left a complete system, yet it can be said, and it is a noble tribute, that he made it possible for others to grasp the principles underlying all systems. His contribution to the literature of power is almost unsurpassed by any modern writer.

Yet, great as Coleridge's genius was, he suffered from laxity of fibre. He wrote a lot, and the notes he made would have been a task for most men. But he was incapable of continued and concentrated labour. Intellect he had; the frenzy of poetry was in his eyes; but he was indolent. The result was he illuminated the world, not with a steady light like Shakespeare, but in meteoric flashes, which, in Milton's expressive phrase, "made darkness visible."

The living Coleridge was ever his own apology. Men and women who neither shared nor ignored his shortcomings not only loved him, but honoured him. He must have had a rich and royal nature to have gathered about him such choice friends as Wordsworth, Scott, Lamb, De Quincey, Byron, Hazlitt, and Sterling. In fancy we cannot fail to conjure up his placid figure during his later years—the silver hair, pale face, luminous blue eyes, the portly form clothed in black, slow walk, benignant manner, and the inexhaustible talk that was the flow of a golden sea of eloquence and wisdom. A great man and a great poet, the wings of his imagination wave easily in the ether of high Olympus. Yet how forlorn the end! For more than thirty years he was the slave of opium. It broke up his home; it alienated his wife; it ruined his health; it made him wretched. Back of all this he was the slave of irresolution and character, some of the enervating dejection of Hamlet, which kept him for ever at war with himself, and at last cast him out upon the homeless ocean of despair, to drift away to ruin and to death. Before its fierce and pitiless blasts he was driven by the storm like his own mariner:—

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide, wide sea.

A brief dawn of unsurpassed promise and achievement; a trouble as of clouds and weeping rain; then a long summer evening's work done by the setting sun's pathetic light—such was Coleridge's day, the afterglow of which is still in the sky. A dreamer of dreams, it is in his descriptions of his visions that he is most original. Poet, mystic, seer, he dreamed continually. He knocked at the portals of the world of imagination and caught glimpses of its magic, and it is this that gives him his secure, his exceptional place among the masters of English letters. His hand opened the magic casements on the perilous seas sailed by "the Ancyent Marinere," and the fairylands of "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel."

MIMNERMUS.

The Orb of Day.

VI.

(Concluded from p. 109).

FEW realize the depth to which this world's temperature would decline were the solar radiance cancelled. The exact lowering of temperature remains undetermined, but there is general agreement among those best qualified to speak that the temperature at our planet's surface would decline at least 300 degrees Fahrenheit below zero. A certain sum of planetary heat arises from the earth's interior, but almost all the heat existing at its surface is derived directly from the sun's rays, while the heat evolved from the combustion of wood and coal, and the energy of wind and water power, represent the indirect effects of solar radiation, either past or present. The writer remembers an otherwise reasonable man who persistently asserted that the sun cannot be a heated body, and he insisted that this is conclusively shown by the fact that when we ascend a mountain, or rise in a balloon, the temperature, instead of increasing steadily, falls. According to his theory, as we leave the lower earth and approach the sun then, if the sun be really a hot body, the very opposite would necessarily happen.

Yet, despite the utter insignificance of the elevation above the earth's surface attainable by man in comparison with the radius of our planet's orbit, an appreciable increase in the intensity of the sun's rays does accompany the ascent beyond the lower particle-strewn terrestrial atmosphere. On the surface, astonishment seems warranted at the fall in temperature at great altitudes, notwithstanding the increased radiation from the sun. Simple, however, is the explanation of this seeming paradox. Solar rays heat those substances only that absorb them. Transparent materials, such as glass, absort little radiant heat, and the clearer the atmosphere the more readily heat rays pass through it unchanged. Lamp black, however, is a powerful absorbent which intercepts nearly all the rays and transforms their energy into heat. And in varying degrees this is true of many other substances. Now, near the earth's surface, the atmosphere is in touch with the soil which is highly absorbent, and is heated by contact with it. At great elevations the freer air is less in touch with the ground, and as it transmits the solar rays with avidity it is very slightly warmed by them. Even more, air at high altitudes contains carbon-dioxide and other constituents, all of which serve as rapid radiators of heat into surrounding space. Thus, the upper currents are cold, and their refrigerating powers are all the greater on mountains where strong winds usually prevail.

As it rises the atmosphere thins materially, and warm currents ascending into the upper regions heat the attenuated air less than they would do were the density of the atmosphere uniform. Air currents rising from the globe's heated surface expand as they move upwards and are, in consequence, cooled. The marked frigidity of high table lands, such as the plateau of Tibet, is largely attributable to the dryness of the upper air. The moisture arising from the Indian Ocean fails to influence the tablelands of Tibet, because in its passage through the atmosphere to a height so great it is so seriously reduced in temperature that it is mainly precipitated either as rain or snow. Water vapour, although practically transparent to light, and likewise to over 80 per cent. of all the solar rays, yet acts as a potent absorber of the rays emitted by the relatively cold earth. At the lower levels where water vapour is abundant in the atmosphere it serves to delay

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the escape of terrestrial rays into space. Owing to the avidity of the air environing the highlands of continental countries, particularly in their inner areas, the cooling of the earth through radiation proceeds more rapidly than in regions nearer the ocean, with the result that conditions of cold prevail. In mountainous districts the general surroundings are favourable to depressed temperatures, for the sun's radiation is obstructed, and such areas are constantly subjected to cold blasts.

The solar rays, until recently, were regarded as forming three separate phenomena. These were classified as actinic or chemical rays; light or visible rays; and heat or invisible rays. As Dr. Abbot states:—

> These distinctions are now known to be misleading, for the rays which affect modern photographic plates extend in the spectrum from far beyond the furthest violet to far beyond the furthest red, and the rays which can produce heat include all these and many more still further beyond the red. All rays may be totally transformed to produce heat, however they may differ in their effects upon the eye, or in different chemical substances. All these rays travel with equal velocity in free space, and this velocity is about 300,000 kilometers (186,000 miles) per second.

The wave lengths of visible rays vary greatly, and their respective vibrations per second range from 430 to 750 millions of millions. Photographic processes disclose rays which vary in length from 0.0001 millimeter to wave frequency of 3,000,000,000,000,000. By delicate heat measurement wave-lengths of extraordinary range have been determined. All are of solar origin, while many others are probably intercepted by our atmosphere as they speed from the sun towards the earth.

Although absolutely indispensable to us, the sun, and, indeed, the whole solar system, occupies an extremely small position in the universe. Our luminary is only a tenth-rate sun, one of that mighty host of suns or stars of which more than one hundred million are accessible to the astronomer. Our orb, while hotter than some suns, possesses a much lower temperature than others. Like other celestial bodies, the sun sails with its retinue of worlds on a ceaseless voyage through space. Our orb is larger than some stars, while others vastly exceed it in mass, in motion, and in lustre. Arcturus appears to be a sun of far greater magnitude, and shines with a brilliance at least 100 times the brightness of the sun. And while our luminary travels at the rate of a few miles per second only, the star Groombridge No. 1830 speeds with a velocity of 200 miles per second, and Arcturus rushes through the heavens at the tremendous velocity of 380 miles per second. Throughout unthinkable ages, the sun and his family have been flying through space towards the constellation Lyra. Every day of our lives we are nearer to it by about a million miles. Yet so unspeakably vast are the stellar distances that the solar system will not reach the present position of the star Vega, towards which we are travelling, until over half a million years have passed away. Nor does it follow that when the sun arrives in that region where Vega is now shining that the solar globe will meet that majestic star. For Vega is proceeding on its own journey, and is departing from its present position nearly as rapidly as our system is approaching it.

It has long been realized that all flesh is grass. The herbivorous animals derive their nourishment from vegetation, and carnivorous creatures devour the flesh of their less ferocious plant-eating neighbours. Every representative of the floral kingdom depends, directly or indirectly, upon the activities of the sun. The higher plants of the field and forest not only furnish sustenance, but provide an endless variety of commodities for building, manufacturing, and other purposes essential to civilized life.

Various chemical constituents enter into the composition of plants, but carbon is their most important element. Plants differ in their methods of obtaining carbon. There are the Autotrophic—the self-nourishing—which, under the influence of light, obtain it through their foliage from the carbonic acid gas of the atmosphere; while the parasitic plants secure their nourishment from the superior vegetation to which they attach themselves. Lastly, the inferior Saprophytes absorb their nutriment in large measure from decaying organic matter. All vegetation is extensively composed of water, which is indispensable to the vital activities of the higher flora. Water is essential to all green vegetation, and the enormous quantities drawn from the soil and evaporated through their leaves by forest trees are simply astounding. According to Von Hohnel, a large birch tree will discharge into the atmosphere in one day eighty pounds of water. Therefore, "If 200 such trees grew on an acre, their water output in a season would perhaps reach 1,500 tons." Apart from the sun, this liquid would immediately assume the solid form; and solar energy is also essential to evolve and sustain the atmospheric currents upon which the rainfall depends. Temperature and moisture on our planet depend absolutely on solar activity. Thus we discover that the orb of day is not only the dispenser of light and heat, but the lord of life as well.

The outcome of a collision of two dark stars, the primeval nebula afterwards evolved into the sun, planets, and moons of our system. As our planet cooled, and the life-bearing stage was reached, those chemical elements which form living substances combined to give birth to protoplasm—the elementary material of organic Nature. The Earth Mother was then made germinal by the embraces of the all-creating sun. A poet of true genius, William Watson, in his "Ode in May," has pictured in splendid verse the genesis of life on our globe. Thus he sings:—

For of old the Sun, our sire,
Came wooing the mother of men,
Earth, that was virginal then,
Vestal fire to his fire.
Silent her bosom and coy,
But the strong god sued and pressed;
And born of their starry nuptial joy
Are all that drink of her breast.

And the triumph of him that begot,
And the travail of her that bore,
Behold, they are evermore
As warp and weft in our lot.
We are children of splendour and flame,
Of shuddering, also, and tears;
Magnificent out of the dust we came,
And abject from the spheres.

O bright irresistible lord,
We are fruit of Earth's womb, each one,
And fruit of thy loins, O Sun,
Whence first was the seed outpoured.
To thee as our Father we bow,
Forbidden thy Father to see,
Who is older and greater than thou, as thou
Art greater and older than we.

T. F. PALMER.

Concealment regarding a question of such vital importance as the truth of Christianity is to be deplored; while an attitude of indifference on a subject that should be of surpassing interest to us all can only be characterized as amazing—unless, indeed, the real explanation be that men have ceased to believe.—*Philip Vivian.*

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Belief in God.

A Lecture by the late G. W. Foote, at St. James's Hall, on October 29, 1909.

I AM to speak to you to-night on why men believe in God. Of course, the word men is used generically. I would have made it men and women, but it would have been much too long a title. The ladies must regard themselves as included, but all Acts of Parliament don't include them. On this occasion there is no reservation whatever; nay, I am inclined to think that a very large number of men believe in God simply because a woman, in the form of their mother, taught them so. I should say that not one man or woman in ten thousand in this or in any other Christian country believes in God for any other reason than that of early education; and one corroboration of this proposition is, that just according to the education is the name and personality of the God who is believed in. In England, a man is taught to believe in a composite kind of God: God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and, indeed, one ought to say, in many cases, God the Devil, too; and I am not sure that the Catholics do not add a fifth, far better than all the other four put together—the Goddess, the Virgin Mary; and if I had to make a choice, I would rather worship a beautiful woman than I would worship an old person who never had a child.

Now, if you were brought up in Turkey, you would swear by Allah—a god who has no rival and no partner. That, of course, is a sneer at the expense of the Christian Deity, which is at least Trinitarian.

If you were brought up in the Southern part of Africa, you would be a believer in "Mumbo Jumbo"; and just according to the geographical accident of birth, is a man's religion in after years. The place of birth settles it. But why? Because of the education (rude or complex and intricate) which is obtained in the part of the world where he happens to be born. I heard Lord Coleridge—the late Lord Coleridge say from the Bench at the time of my own trial under the Blasphemy Laws—I heard him say to the gentlemen of the jury that "you and I, gentlemen, would probably be of the same religion if we had not been brought up in it"; and if I had had to speak after the judge, instead of before him, I should have challenged that statement. Because, as a matter of fact, all the missionaries, in all parts of the world, make practically no impression upon the native heathen population. Just as men are brought up, so they live; and as they live, so they die. The solicitations of religion at death are simply the consolations which they have been accustomed to in life. Whoever heard of a dying Christian sending for a Mohammedan dervish? Whoever heard of a dying Mohammedan sending for a Catholic priest or a Protestant parson? Every man dies comfortably enough in the creed in which he has been brought up, unless, of course, there is so much hell-fire in it that no one could possibly die for it.

But if people believe in God and tell me that they believe because they think, I say that I don't believe that one in ten thousand has given five minutes serious and consecutive thought to the matter during the whole course of his life. You know little children are put upon their knees—a thing they never take to kindly—you have got to keep them there—a child will always get up if he can, which shows that there is something artificial about the whole business. But he is put on his knees, and in this country he is made to repeat the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven." Our Father! and sometimes that little boy has no father alive; and sometimes he has a father alive who might better be dead; and sometimes he has a father alive whom neither he nor his mother ever sees; and although he cannot find his own father always, he is taught to be quite sure about his other father "which art in heaven," and that is farther off, when the earthly father has deserted him, than any Board of Guardians could possibly wish. And, by-and-by, when he grows up, he is taught what is called "The Apostles Creed." The very name is a fraud. The Apostles had as much to do with framing it as you or I. According to a tradition, the Apostles all stood in a row, and the first began "I believe," the next said "in God the Father," and the next said "Maker of Heaven and Earth," and so the inspiration ran through the twelve until it came to the last, and all that was left for him to say was "Amen." Well, that is the only part of the creed I believe in.

Now, in that creed, the boy—the girl—is taught to believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. The largest order on record! Why, fancy teaching a boy or girl, who can't yet make anything worth making, to believe in the maker of heaven and earth! Any child can use that expression; not one man or woman can understand it. In fact, religion consists of unintelligible propositions stated in artificial language. Do you know why they drone so in places of worship? why they talk through their noses? If a man were to say right out in a plain, honest, commonsense address to commonsense people:—

> The Father is incomprehensible, The Son is incomprehensible, The Holy Ghost is incomprehensible, ye there are not three comprehensibles, but only one comprehensible.

You could not stand it like that. People would all laugh in his face, but if you were to stand and say it in the way in which people say it in church, you know nobody would think of criticizing it. Why, what does it matter what the thing means when you say it like that? You take it without criticism; you swallow it.

Lord Forbes says that religion is like a pill; if you chew it, you will never swallow it. And that is why the priests of all religions want the children.

They know, if you come to a grown-up man or woman with a pack of nonsense, he or she is likely to look at you. If you come to a grown-up man or woman and say, "Here is a nice little box; there is something that will make you happy for ever and ever, and the price is only 7s. 6d.," you will find very few purchasers. But if you get hold of a little child and teach him that, he will pay 7s. 6d. a year as long as he lives. Why don't they let the child alone? They can't afford it. No religion in the world dares to let a child grow up strong enough to think for himself before they commence to operate upon him.

And you notice they always teach a child what is of no use to him. I defy anybody to point out one single clause in the Apostles' Creed (setting the Athanasian Creed aside altogether) which is of the slightest importance to any man, woman, or child in this world. It is all about the next. And a healthy person always feels that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

They never teach a child anything they know. Every religion teaches a child to say "I believe," "I believe." That is what they start with. That is the unit. They get that unit well planted in the child's mind, "I believe." What? Never mind, the religious teacher says. Get the "I believe" well in first. That is the unit; then we add the ciphers to complete the sum at our pleasure afterwards.

Now, I call that a nefarious business. I would not prejudice my own child in favour of Freethought. I would give my child the absolute right to think for his own self, and there is no other freedom really than that.

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Certainly you have the right to tell your child what you please, or if other people tell him things which you don't believe, you have the right to say that you personally don't believe them; but you have got no right to demand that your child should not believe them; and I believe that if you only practise respect for the intellectual rights of the child, you will have future generations of men and women who will dwarf intellectually and morally everything that the world has ever seen.

I believe, however, that if we believe in God to-day because we were taught so, there must have been a time when people believed in God because they thought so. Now, when and where did people first believe in God? In the old dark days of human or semi-human savagery. All the great world religions, such as Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Judaism, are only special weavings on special looms of the raw material of savage superstition. All the great religions have their belief in providence, worship, prayer, miracles, sacrifice; and all this clearly shows us the savage origin of religion.

If you asked a savage, for instance, why he believes in dead men living, he does not give you a long rigmarole which, at the finish, may mean nothing at all. He says: "I know it. I see them; I talk to them; they talk to me"; and if you ask him further, you discover that he sees them and talks to them, and they talk to him in his dreams. Ah, you say, "it is a dream"; but the savage makes no distinction between one memory and another. He has not reached that stage of sociological criticism. Put yourself in his place, and you will see that you would be obliged to conclude as he does. While he has been lying there, and his companions—his squaw, perhaps—assures him that he has never budged, he has seen dead people. He may even have fought dead enemies, embraced dead friends—talked with them, they with him; and when he awakes and recollects these things, he can only conclude that while his body was lying there quiescent, something else has been out of him, and has seen these distant places and these dead people, and talked with them. With his feeble information, he is nevertheless logical. He concludes that they are living, and that when finally his dull nature breaks up, and the something which went out of him in sleep goes out of him finally at death, that something will go into ghostland with the dead people whom he has seen and spoken to in his dreams. Now, then, the soul goes in and out of the body, and a most elaborate superstition has been based upon that.

Go back to your Old Testament; read how the Israelitish prophet came to bring back to life a little boy. The prophet stretched himself on the boy seven times, and at the seventh time the boy sneezed. Why did he sneeze? Ask any parson, and he will probably say, "I really don't know." Why did the boy sneeze? Because the spirit or soul which had gone out of him came back through the nose. That is the way the soul went in and out; and if your soul came back through the nose, you would naturally sneeze.

And during the Middle Ages exorcists went about, and you may see pictures of them casting out devils, and the devils generally went out through the nose. Why? Because the breath went in and out of the nose; and the breath was the life, so they concluded. We know it is the life, but it's a necessity of life; and still, you know, they will bring a glass to see if dead people will stain it in any way, to discover if they are still breathing. Well, the soul went in and out of the nose, and I have sometimes thought that it was for that reason that the gentlemen who trade in the ghostly business select that organ to lead us by.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The longer the War continues, the more ridiculous do our "spiritual pastors and masters" make themselves. When the War commenced, they were full of the "spiritual uplift," the "bracing moral tonic," war had given the nation. Now, rather late in the day, the bishops are beginning to declaim against the "vice" and "immorality" amongst the soldiers. And even now they lack either the intelligence to see or courage to say that this alleged "immorality" is a necessary consequence of taking millions of men in the full flush of manhood, separating them from all influence of normal social existence, and keeping them under the anti-social conditions of a military life. The things complained of are not an incidental or accidental result of war; they are one of its normal consequences. You cannot have war, you cannot have even militarism without actual war, without debasing the moral life of a nation. We said this when the War began. We have been saying so ever since. And after three and a half years of war, the Bench of Bishops apparently have not the intelligence to see it or the courage to say it.

The other day Lord Coleridge, in presiding at the trial of a soldier, said we must not judge a man who had spent three years at the Front by the standard with which we judged other people. The remark was a very sensible one, and should provide food for reflection. This man, and millions of others, has been engaged in devoting a lengthy period to either killing or preparing to kill a number of his fellow-men. The killing may be inevitable; it may be quite justifiable. These things may be admitted, but they are beside the point. And the point is that, however justifiable the slaughter may be, the brutalizing process cannot be avoided. Human life becomes a cheap thing. The sight of slaughter makes men hard and callous. And when these men return to civil life, it is impossible that these consequences should be wiped out all at once. Lord Coleridge said only what every sensible person knows to be true. To say otherwise is either stupidity or cant.

The dead hand is an important factor in religion, and the huge sums left for the furtherance of the Christian superstition should make Freethinkers think furiously. The fortune of the late Sir Edward Wood was sworn at £172,649, and the residue of this huge sum has been left to the Baptists.

The new Bishop of Hereford, Dr. Hensley Henson, preaching at the Temple Church, said that "the founders of the Christian Church were humble, obscure, and uneducated men." The Bishop did not explain how the Gospels were written in Greek by these "uneducated" folk.

The *Westminster Gazette* says: "it was emphatically for the promotion of science that Henry VIII. founded Trinity College, Cambridge." Henry's devotion to science was not so marked as his attachment to the ladies.

Christians are ashamed of the dogmas of hell-fire and eternal torment, but they are disingenuous in their apologies. The *Times Literary Supplement* says: "The doctrine of hell has undoubtedly often been presented in the past by popular writers and preachers in a form which would make it impossible for any right-feeling man to regard the maker of hell with any emotion short of pure loathing." "Popular writers and preachers" is distinctly good, when one remembers that the dogmas of hell-fire have been presented without a break from the days of Jesus Christ to those of Billy Sunday.

The Rev. George Charles Wallis, Vicar of Ormesby, was fined for hoarding food. Evidently, Brother Wallis thinks that the ravens who fed Elijah have retired from active service.

Shelley was a very modest man, and he would have been admonished at the interest that book collectors take in his

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works. The poet's *Refutation of Deism*, published in 1814 at a few pence, was sold recently at the Huntingdon Sale in New York, and realized the enormous snm of £690, which is a record price for a pamphlet.

Lord Hugh Cecil calls upon the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Canterbury "to make clear beyond dispute or doubt that the Church in common with the whole Catholic Church teaches as an essential part of the Christian Faith that our Lord was born of the Virgin Mary without human father, and that the narratives of his Nativity in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke are not poetical legend but historical fact." Lord Hugh is only a layman, but being a sincere Christian, he is to be admired for his courage in so uncompromisingly championing the cause of faith against that of reason. They are miserable trimmers, despicable time-servers, who treat as beautiful parable or poetic legend the alleged fact which alone would make a Divine Incarnation conceivably possible.

Lord Hugh Cecil is also perfectly justified in insisting upon the principle that "no person should be made a deacon, ordained a priest, or consecrated a bishop in the Church of England who does not thoroughly hold and will not faithfully teach the truth of the Church's teaching in regard to the Nativity of our Lord." When it is a question of more or less of an absurd or impossible belief, we are decidedly in favour of the more, even of the most, as against the least. Nothing can be more degrading, or more dehumanizing, than to subscribe a creed with mental reservations, and for the rest of one's life to play the hypocrite, as many of the clergy are known to do. The only consistent Christian is a thoroughgoing Catholic.

The secularization of Christianity is going on in the United States much the same as in the Old Country, and Mr. G. W. Coleman, an American Baptist, has been describing the efforts of the Bostonians to attract "non-churchgoers and the unorthodox" to the Churches by means of "the Open Forum" Sunday meetings, held for the discussion of "vital public questions." The sincerity of the movement may be estimated by the motto on the platform, "Nothing offensive to race, class, or creed," which reduces discussion to the level of a Bible class.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc declares that the miracle at Lourdes had changed the mind of modern Europe, and was the special providential act designed to upset the Materialism of the nineteenth century. The "miracle' was the alleged appearance, in a grotto, of the Virgin Mary in 1858 to a local French girl, and the holy lady must have been then over eighteen hundred years' old. If the "miracle" did not upset the Materialists, it certainly was a "providential act" to increase the revenues of the Catholic Church.

We referred last week to the taking over of Church property in Russia by the Bolshevik Government. As a supplement to what was then said, and as a comment upon the talk of "outrage" and "robbery" in some of the English papers, it may be well to remember that no later than 1904 an Act was passed by the British House of Commons (5 Ed. VII. c. 12) giving the right to the State of refusing to allow a religious body to have more property than in the opinion of appointed commissioners it can usefully employ in the service of its religion. This clearly gives the State the right of confiscation. We had forgotten this Act when writing last week, but it is clear that if the Bolsheviks were inclined, they might appeal for a precedent to the Britain of 1904.

The Rev. J. MacMorland, Chaplain to the Forces, says the Church has little attraction for the men. They have not lost all religion, for they have found a new one of their own. This was a relation of loyalty, comradeship, and good fellowship. And yet, says Mr. MacMorland, it was nothing but the living word of Christ resumed in a new form. Now, what on earth has loyalty, comradeship, and good fellowship to do with "the living word of Christ"? They are amongst the most primitive of the social virtues, and have about as much to do with Christ as with the man in the moon. The fact is that Mr. MacMorland, being a chaplain, must find somewhere a place for Christ. The loss of religious faith in the Army is patent—so patent that the clergy are forced to admit it. But Christ must come in somewhere. Hence Mr. MacMorland's apology—which most people will take at its true value.

A terrible fire occurred last week at the Grey Nunnery, Montreal. The newspapers report the death of nearly 100 babies, ranging from a few days old upward, and a number of wounded children. Those who have thanked God for preserving them from German torpedoes on the sea or German bullets on the land may, perhaps, ask themselves what he was doing not to pay a little attention to these hundred helpless children in Montreal. Atheism does not, of course, take away the horror of such a catastrophe, but at least it is free from the additional horror of belief in a God sitting aloft and watching the conflagration.

A Lieutenant (R.N.V.R.) writes to the *Nation*, asking:—

> Why do clergy and bishops, Churchmen and theologians, have such an exaggerated opinion of their own importance? Who, among the workers, literary, scientific, commercial, care "tuppence" for the opinions of the representatives of the Church? What experience have they of the Church on the problems (sexual, political, breadwinning) of the majority? Their opinion on vital questions is, to use a Canadianism, "damn all."

Of course, the opinion of the clergy on any vital problem is worthless; but they *talk*, and large numbers are fooled by their talking. If they ceased talking, no one would bother about them for long. We may be thankful that a smaller number every year attend to their talking.

One would scarcely have thought it, but, according to Cardinal Bourne, the true spirit of the Catholic Church is shown in—

> its passion for fair treatment and for liberty; its resentment at bureaucratic interferences with family life; its desire for self-realization and opportunities of education; above all, its conviction that persons are of more value than property.

If only Cardinal Bourne would explain how it happens that liberty has always been weakest where the Catholic Church has been strongest, that the Church's interference with family life forms one of the most disastrous chapters in European history, that education is poorest in Roman Catholic countries and centres, and that the Church has been one of the greatest "grabbers" of wealth and property, we should be rather more convinced. As it is, we have only Cardinal Bourne's statement, and, with many, the word of a cardinal is *not* above suspicion.

Canon Streeter has edited a volume of essays on "Immortality," which contains, among other things, an exposition of Biblical teaching respecting hell. You can always trust Christians to introduce hell in such discussions among themselves, but they keep the lid on when in the company of Freethinkers.

Twenty-four German missionaries have been shipped to this country from West Africa, and are now interned in London. Quite an ironical situation in a Christian country

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The dear *Daily News* is getting quite facetious. In a recent issue it asks: "Will Lord Rhondda go down to history as 'Lord of the Manna'?" Some of the pious readers of the *News* will be asking the editor to mend his "mannas."

Lady Nott Bower declares that many girls are marrying feeble-minded men, whom they would not have looked at before the War. This may account for the number of curates' weddings recorded recently.

"Fellowship of Silence" services are to be held in London churches during Lent. A cynic might call them wordless plays.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 3, Sheffield; March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; April 7, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

L. MUSKETT.—We are not responsible for the accuracy of the report; our only care is to see that it reaches us from what we believe to be a responsible source.

R. PARKER.—We quite recall you, and hope with you that the lectures will be resumed. As you say, the parsonic screed you enclose is rather "cool" in its impudence; but that is a way parsons have. Taking extra copies and distributing them is a good way of making the paper known.

J. M. K.—Sorry we are unable to use MSS.

MAJOR WARREN.—Received with thanks. As early as possible, but we are very much crowded with MSS. at the moment.

J. A. REID.—We also don't quite know what the clergy would do with Atheists if they could have their way. But we expect it would be something in the boiling oil way.

J. DRISCOLL writes *apropos* of last week's article on physical punishment in school that he was forced to protest against this in the case of his own child, and the protest seems to have been sufficient to stop it. We incline to the opinion that in the vast majority of cases the use of the cane is an indication of ineffectiveness on the part of the teacher.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings. Have passed on the review enclosed.

H. RAWLINGS.—Pleased to have been of service. The fact of our advice having achieved its purpose is sufficient thanks.

E. MAIN.—We note your opinion that God gives man every chance of repentance. Our opinion is that it is the other way about. Man has given God innumerable chances of behaving himself better, but with no tangible result, so far as we can see.

J. A. K. (Glasgow).—Thanks for verses, which we regret we are unable to use.

E. PETSON.—Pleased to know you are resolved to go on doing all you can to secure that thousand new readers. You appear to have worked with judgment and good results. Paper is being sent to addresses given.

H. JONES.—Received too late for use this 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.

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.

Next Sunday (March 3) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures at the Builders' Exchange, Cross Street, Burgess Street, Sheffield. The afternoon meeting is at 3.30, evening at 6.30. We hope there will be a good muster of local friends.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, to-day (February 24) at 3 and 6.30. His subject in the afternoon is "Religious Mania"; evening "Christianity and the War." Both subjects ought to attract good audiences, and we hope that the local friends will not alone be present themselves, but will see that they bring a friend with them. The Manchester Branch is working hard, and deserves all support.

Following the letter of Mr. Breese, published last week, one of our readers writes that in his turn he is devoting special attention to inducing newsagents to display copies of the *Freethinker*, and this has resulted in securing several new subscribers. He asks whether this policy cannot be systematically followed all over the country. We see no reason why it should not be done; and when it is done, the results are always good. Meanwhile, we are pleased to note that a very general effort is being made to secure that thousand new readers. We are receiving letters reporting one here and two there, and many are secured of whom we hear nothing, but can only judge from the demands made at this end. There is a *large* public awaiting the *Freethinker*, if only it can be brought into touch with it.

London Freethinkers will please note that Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner concludes the present course of Sunday afternoon lectures at the West Central Hall, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, with a lecture on "Belief, Make-Belief, and Unbelief." The lecture commences at 3.15.

The *Globe* is not a Radical publication, but it raps the Bishop of London over the knuckles in a recent issue. It appears that the Bishop is apparently consumed with anxiety because wet canteens have been started in connection with the special battalions for lads of eighteen. The *Globe* says: "We trust it will comfort His Grace of London to learn that these canteens only supply beer, and that the liquor is of such low alcoholic content that before it produces anything akin to intoxication the imbiber—to use an expressive if inelegant Americanism—must have 'his back teeth under water.'"

The Church of England is not only an old-fashioned institution, but it is centuries out of date. At a recent meeting of the Upper House of Convocation the question of the inclusion of King Charles the Martyr in the Church Calendar was debated with becoming solemnity. This strange devotion to ancient history may partially account for the astonishing attitude of the clergy concerning the present national crisis.

"Wet Canteens."

We hear, alas! the Bishop's voice upraised.
(His bleating seems a part of London's roar!)
We hear such things as strife and hate well praised
In gushing adulation of the War.

Of "loathesome immorality" we hear,
And learn how stubborn is the soldier's brain;
That in the face of death he does not fear,
Nor does he think of purgatorial pain.

The Bishop is depressed because the men,
Who fight a War he acquiesces in,
Seem prone to disobedience now and then,
And die like heroes, steeped in fearful sin!

Good, gentle Christ! what age is this, we ask,
Wherein such clergy, paid by Mammon State,
Scream their foul thoughts, and give themselves the task
Of conquering lust with War's ignoble hate?

There is a host of men beneath the sod,
Out there in France where bishops never go;
Who gave their all, and never prayed to "God,"
Who died because they thought it must be so.

Fat bishops with their motor-cars and gold
May batten on the sacrifice of these;
May raise their hands in modesty, and scold
The minor faults of soldiers who displease.

There is no "God." There is no Deity
Who watches o'er the stricken widow's head,
Or cheers the orphans in their misery,
A God would strike each dreadful bishop—dead.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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John Smith in Khaki.

III.

(*Concluded from p. 102.*)

I HAVE not had any very flattering things to say about the influence of religion. The religion of the bulk of mankind can only affect morality for the good—if it does so at all—through the crude agency of bribes and threats. To my mind, real morality cannot come in until all bribes and threats are abandoned, and the appeal is made to justice, honour, and mercy in terms of their intrinsic worth. But the logical inferences to be drawn from religious doctrines and the actual conduct of the people professing them differ. People are, in the main, as superior to the crudities of Christianity in actual practice as they are inferior to the extravagantly idealistic altruism which that great composite and inconsistent sect also includes. Few Christians really believe in the fine teaching of universal love, and still fewer ever attempt to carry it out; but happily, the horrible doctrine of eternal punishment and other barbarous teachings are also silently but definitely dropped. The consequence is that much that is done nowadays in the name of religion is really secular activity.

A word about that curious chap the "Christian" in the Army. There is nothing very curious about *him*, but it is a strange reflection on the power of Christ, as they call it, that in a country where the vast majority are supposed to be Christians, there should be an inner group whose claim to distinction is that they take Christianity seriously. Still more curious is the use of the word "conversion" in connection with those who, from being Christians in a general sense, become Christians in a particular sense—or "get religion."

These are rare birds. They are generally harmless. They soon betray themselves by the use of such words as "blooming" for emphasis; which generally elicits some chaff from their fellow-Christians. Nothing worse than chaff is ever thrown at them; and, indeed, if they have "got it bad," and are known to be sensitive about it, they are generally saved even that. The Army is no place to suffer for your religious faith.

I think it only reasonable to admit that there is some good in evangelical religion (for your "Christian" is almost invariably of that ilk). The evangelist will not admit that there is any good in my philosophy, but I feel strong enough to give away points like that, and would sooner give him a peg to hang an argument on than justify a charge of being as narrow-minded as he is. His cardinal virtues, apart from the ridiculous "virtue" of belief in a certain brand of theology, are a series of don'ts. Some of these don'ts are of doubtful moral value, but others are salutary enough. If evangelism saves a man from drunkenness or venereal disease it scores. Let him rest in peace with it. It would be more likely to drive me to drink. *Chacun a son gout.* But Freethinkers never need hesitate to pursue their propaganda from fear of robbing some poor cripple of his moral crutch. No amount of argument would ever drive the thinnest wedge of reason into the skull of such a man. No man is ever converted by arguments alone. You must first prepare his mind for their reception. And he who attempts to prepare the mind of the man who is temperamentally inclined to religious mysticism for the reception of arguments that only appeal to reason and common sense, might as well sow spuds in a sandpit.

I once tried to get up a debate of a sort with one of these Lord's anointed. I was willing to accept the idiotic title, "Which is the Better, the Christian Life or a Life of Sin," but even with poor me weighed down with the implication of being the Devil's advocate, he backed out of it. He practically admitted that although I should not convert him (which I had not the least expectation of doing), he feared the effect of the argument upon the audience. Is it not passing strange that a fervent believer should fear to display the wares of God in competition with those of the other party, where there was a fair field and no favour? Surely he, with the help of Jesus, could have made a good show.

The object of this note has been to indicate briefly what seems to me the general attitude of the men of my country to morals and religion. The more spectacular virtues of heroism and self-sacrifice I have purposely refrained from discussing, for the reason that they are dealt with very amply elsewhere at the present time. The libel on Englishmen as regards physical and moral deterioration that patriots of a certain class used to indulge in, has been sufficiently silenced by the glorious deeds and patient endurance of the "common" man in this long day of agony. There are many other things that ought to be said, but I fear to tax the reader's patience further. It is hard to lay down the pen without saying a word about the moral significance of the War itself and the people who are responsible for it, but as I have no wish for a melodramatic exit from this best of all possible worlds, I refrain.

If, as I have suggested, the attitude of the average man towards religion is indifference, it may be asked, is our propaganda then worth while, or are we flogging a dead horse? I answer that our work will be done when every man and woman has definitely forsaken superstition for Secular philosophy, and not before. We are not out to make people indifferent about the vast questions raised by theology. We want to get rid of the God-idea because we consider that anthropomorphism is a paltry attitude of mind towards the great problems of space, time, and destiny. To many whose keen intelligence and warm sympathy with the aspirations of democracy to free itself from the domination of capitalists and aristocrats is not balanced by that ability to appreciate the value of disinterested research which is necessary to the philosophic mind, every activity which is not concerned with satisfying some material need may seem a waste of time. That is one of the most profound and disastrous mistakes that any who work for the betterment of mankind can make. Men and women have heads beside stomachs. All honour to those who work for the bodily health and comfort of the multitude. More power to their elbow, and may their tribe increase. But the culture or neglect of the nobler functions of the mind will alone determine whether men and women are to sink to the level of the swine on whom they feed, or stride, graceful, majestic, and beautiful among the lower creatures of this earth, like the Gods and Goddesses of that glorious race who first raised aloft the standard of love, beauty, and liberty.

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

The Organism as a Whole.

To those who have allowed themselves to be influenced by pulpit twaddle concerning the abandonment of "Materialism" by the scientific world, we warmly commend a careful reading of the latest work by Professor Jacques Loeb.[1] Professor Loeb is one of the world's leading experimentalists in biology, and is dowered in an eminent degree with that quality of "scientific imagination" which Tyndall declared essential to all valuable scientific work. And in addition to this scientific

[1] *The Organism as a Whole*, by Jacques Loeb. Putnam: 12s. net.

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imagination, Professor Loeb possesses the not less necessary quality of courage. He has not alone the quality of mind which enables him to plan experiments and to detect the significance of the results; he has also the courage to state those results in a plain and uncompromising manner. He writes as a convinced "mechanist," which is the newer, and perhaps better, name for Materialist, and finds no use for the "vitalism" of writers such as Dreisch, or the "Directive Force" of Sir Oliver Lodge. In his own words:—

> The ultimate aim of the physical sciences (is) the visualization of all phenomena in terms of groupings and displacements of ultimate particles, and since there is no discontinuity between the matter constituting the living and non-living world, the goal of biology can be expressed in the same way.

There is "Materialism" or "Mechanism" in a sentence, and the whole of Professor Loeb's work—particularly his *Comparative Physiology of the Brain and Psychology*, published in 1900, and his more recent *Dynamics of Living Matter*—emphasizes this point of view.

Every living animal is a chemical machine. That is Loeb's basic view, and his experiments go far to prove its soundness. Theologians have dwelt upon the wonders of "instinct," and all their wondering has brought us not a step nearer understanding. Years ago, Professor Loeb set himself to understand. Why does a moth fly towards the light? Why does a flower turn towards the light? Why does a caterpillar crawl towards the end of a branch in search of food? By a series of experiments, Professor Loeb showed that these "instincts" were no more than the consolidated consequences of the effects of light and heat operating on the organism. A fly will lay its eggs on meat, but not on fat. "A directive instinct," cries the theologian. Not so, says Loeb; the meat provides a chemical stimuli, causing the fly to deposit its eggs. In the fat, these stimuli are wanting. It is a chemical reaction we are studying, not a metaphysical conundrum.[1]

Again, a few years ago the question of how a spermatozoon could cause an egg to develop into an individual was a "mystery." Professor Loeb took the unfecundated eggs of the sea urchin, raised the concentration of the water by the addition of a salt, and, behold! the egg was fertilized without the spermatozoon. He obtained the same results with the eggs of the star-fish, of worms, and of molluscs. The "mystery" of fecundation had become a physico-chemical phenomenon.

In the present volume Professor Loeb takes the reader with him in the discussion of such questions as the chemical laws of genus and species, the determination of sex, animal instincts, the mechanism of mendelism, etc. We wish to specially note two intensely interesting chapters on "The Influence of Environment" and "Adaptation to Environment." A few popular delusions are corrected here—not popular merely with the general public, but also with those who lay claim to some amount of scientific culture.

We much regret that considerations of space prevent our writing at greater length on a most important statement of the fundamentals of the case for Materialism. Necessarily, the work is rather technical in form and language, but there is nothing which readers of average education and intelligence will not easily master. And every reader will have forced on his mind the conclusion, that the more exact our knowledge of the mechanics of the living organism becomes, the more is "Materialism" justified. The conception of the organism as one with the rest of nature, and as a complex of forces that meet us in a simpler form in other phenomena, is a working postulate that not only dominates every scientific worker, it is the only one that is possible to a sound science.

Professor Loeb dedicates his book—

> to that group of Freethinkers, including D'Alenbert, Diderot, Holbach, and Voltaire, who first dared to follow the consequences of a Materialistic Science—incomplete as it then was—to the rules of human conduct, and who thereby laid the foundation of that spirit of tolerance, justice, and gentleness which was the hope of our civilization, until it was buried under the wave of homicidal emotion which has swept through the world.

Held in check, we believe, not buried. But it is well to find so brave a testimony to the heroic Freethought fighters of the past.

PHILIP SIDNEY.

[1] A number of these experiments are fully described in the author's *Studies in General Physiology*, 1905.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

X.—THE CROSS.

EVENING shades fell. Stars sparkled. Under the olive trees of the Garden of Gethsemane, a band of the disciples sat, while the Master, a stone's throw off, knelt and prayed, and he said—

"Father, if I must needs drink of this bitter cup, I will. Not my will, but thy will, be done."

An angel, whose face gleamed in the darkness, stood at his side, comforting him; and the face of Jesus was bedewed with sweat.

The disciples fell asleep.

A noise!

"My Lord, are you here?" cried a voice—the voice of Judas Iscariot; and Judas kissed Jesus.

"We arrest you," cried a group of constables, as they seized the Master of Demons.

A scuffle took place; the disciples had awoke, and one had drawn a sword, and slashed a constable's ear. A touch of the hand of Jesus healed the ear. Then said Jesus,—

"Darkness is now in power."

In a chamber of the High Priest's house were gathered Lecturers, Pious Men, Priests, and Temple-Men. More joined them during the night. When dawn came, they would hold a meeting of the Sanhedrim, and decide what to do with the man they called false prophet. Meanwhile, a charcoal fire in a brazier was lit, and guards and other folk basked in its warmth. Peter the Pilot had crept in among them. Jesus was watched by constables.

A servant-woman said, as she pointed at Peter,—

"This fellow is one of the Galilean mob! He is a comrade of the wicked agitator!"

"It's quite untrue, quite!" replied Peter.

A cock crew. The dawn had arrived.

Jesus looked at his timid apostle, and Peter went out, and wept bitterly; for he remembered how the Master had warned him at the Supper.

The council was now held, the High Priest being in the chair. The question was, whether Jesus pretended to be the Chosen Man, the Christ.

"Are you the Christ?" he was asked.

"You shall see me, the Son of Man, sit on the right hand of the Almighty God."

"Do you mean you are God's Son?"

"Ah, God's Son! You have called me what I am,' answered Jesus.

"To Pilate, to Pilate with him!" shouted the Lecturers, Pious Men, Lawyers, Priests.

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One councillor had silently slipped out. It was Joseph. He was a believer in the Kingdom.

Pilate, the Roman Governor, sat in a hall of his mansion. Guards, helmeted and bearing swords and spears, stood near his seat, and at the entrances, and in the court-yard.

"Sir," cried the crowd of priests and Pharisees, "this man is an agitator from Galilee; a traitor; a pretended King of the Jews; a most dangerous criminal."

A short examination followed. Pilate soon saw that Jesus was a harmless sort of prisoner; and he bade the guards march the prisoner to the neighbouring palace where lived the real King of the Jews—Herod Antipas—the man who caused the death of the Baptist.

However, Jesus stood before him as dumb as a stone. Not a word could be drawn from him. Herod scornfully said,—

"Let him be the festival King, if he is so fond of Kingship."

With roars of laughter, and with rude antics, the Roman soldiers arrayed Jesus in a gorgeous robe, and salaamed before him as to a king. Then the festival king was led back to Pilate, a multitude hustling at his heels.

"Well," said Pilate, "as this is the Passover festival, and, by old custom, a jail-bird is to be released at your pleasure, choose now who it shall be. I advise you to choose King Jesus, and then he can go free."

Confused shouts arose.

"Crucify this traitor! Give us Bar-Abbas! The Galilean to the cross! Bar-Abbas to liberty!"

Pilate gave way to their wishes. The jail-bird, Bar-Abbas, a murderer and plotter, was set free. A wooden cross was fetched from the barracks, and an African Jew happening to pass at the moment, the cross was laid upon his shoulders, and he carried it. A noisy multitude surged through the gate of Jerusalem, and up the hill Golgotha, which was round like a skull. The hill was also named Calvary.

Women followed Jesus, crying in pity.

"Daughters of Jerusalem," said Jesus, "weep not for me, but for your children, who will grow up to see the days of awful ruin."

On the top of Golgotha three crosses were set up, and Jesus was nailed on the middle one, and a thief was crucified on his right, and another thief on his left; and the people gazed at the three men dying.

"Father," prayed Jesus, "forgive those that kill me; they know not what they do."

The soldiers shared the prisoners' clothes amongst themselves.

Lecturers and Temple Men scoffed,—

"Ha, ha! Why doesn't the Christ, the Chosen Man, set himself free from the cross?"

"King, King, come down!" jeered the soldiers.

Somebody fixed a scrap of parchment, on a tablet, over the Pioneer's head, and on it was scribbled—"King of the Jews."

"Yes," groaned one of the thieves, "if you are the Chosen Christ, help yourself, and me, and my mate."

"Hush," cried the other thief, "hush, comrade! You and I are guilty; this man is innocent. He is no rogue. And, perhaps," he added, "you will remember me, my Lord, when you are in your Kingdom."

"To-day, my friend," replied Jesus, "to-day you will be with me in Paradise."

Hours before sunset, shadows, black shadows, crept over the city, and the Temple, and the Place of a Skull, and the crowd, and the three crosses; and, in the Temple, a great curtain split from top to bottom, as if a gate opened for someone to pass through. And Jesus, uttering a loud cry, bent his head, and died.

The people slowly dispersed.

Calvary was a silent hill. Soldiers kept guard over the three dead.

The Roman captain, who had charge of the crucifying, muttered,—

"This man they call king was a righteous man."

Before midnight, a visitor presented himself at the porch of Pilate's mansion, and asked to see the governor. It was Joseph the councillor; and, as he was a person of rank, he was permitted to go in.

"Sir," he said to Pilate, "I beg, as a favour, that I may bury the body of the King of the Jews."

Pilate smiled,—"Oh, yes."

The descent from the cross soon took place; and the body of Jesus was wrapped in white linen, and borne to a garden which belonged to Joseph, and here a cave had been hewn out of the side of a rock for the purpose of a tomb. In this sepulchre the dead Master of the jinn was laid.

Women, soft-footed, had followed, watching.

Hastening to a house in the city, the women busied themselves in mixing sweet ointments, with which to embalm the body of the Wonder-worker.

The sun rose. The women, who had toiled all the night, stopped their labours. It was Saturday, the holy Sabbath. Next day, the day of the Sun, as the worshippers of the god Mithra would call it, they would go to the rock-tomb.

* * * *

Slaves who enraged their Roman masters were often nailed to crosses, to die a dreadful death. But the people of the ancient ages had happier ideas of the cross. It might make them think of the Father and Mother, whose joining in marriage was a beautiful Cross of life; and such was the belief of the Egyptians, with their Tau, or sign of the cross. It might make them think of the great world, divided by lines pointing north and south, east and west, in the way of a cross on a Good Friday cake. The ancients cherished the cross, as an ornament to be worn, as a symbol (or sign) of life and the world, as a thing to be worshipped.

Some of the people of Asia were wont, at the spring season, to dress up two men as kings, one a king of the Good, the other of the Evil; and, of these, one must die. In such a custom, or rite, the men chosen for the two kings would be prisoners from the jail, of whom one would be spared, the other slain. Perhaps, at Jerusalem, such a custom was kept up. Perhaps Jesus, with whom the scribes were so angry, was thus marked for death as a "King of the Jews," and the Romans may have allowed the poor prisoner to die as a king, crowned in mockery by his enemies.[1]

It is very likely that, in the first and second centuries—the days of Josephus the Jew, Plutarch the Greek, and Trajan the Roman emperor—people would act plays, or dramas, in which the Supper, the Agony in the Garden, the Death on the Cross, and the Burial, and other scenes were performed in the presence of crowds of spectators. The audience would listen in deep silence to the talk at the Supper-table, gaze with hatred at the kissing Judas, weep when the women wept, and sigh when Jesus sighed the prayer of forgiveness for his murderers. Eagerly they beheld the descent from the cross, the burial in the rock-tomb, the mixing of the sweet balm by the women. Whispers would pass round,—

"The next scene will show the Risen Christ."[2]

[1] Sir J. G. Frazer's *Scapegoat*, note on "The crucifixion of Christ."

[2] The theory of the Trial and Crucifixion-drama is given in Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*.

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Sometimes, the scenes would be acted one way, sometimes another. And, if you look at the Gospels in the New Testament, you see how the story was told with different dialogues and different tableaux.

F. J. GOULD

The Specialist.

"WHERE is the young scamp? This requires severe treatment." And I reached for the family corrector.

"Now, Jack," said Minerva, "you really must not interfere this time. This is a case for the specialist. I have sent for the Rev. Mr. Teachem to call and examine Tommy."

"Specialist! The Rev..... What has the parson got to do with it? What do you mean by 'specialist'?"

"Suppose Tommy were sick—physically sick—and you didn't know what ailed him, what would you do?"

"Give him a dose of castor-oil and send for the doctor, of course."

"Precisely! That is what I have done. The clergyman will be here directly."

"Minerva," I said soothingly, "this trouble is going to your head. You must not allow it to get such a hold. I admit I am rather shocked myself to hear that Tommy swears; but, after all, what's in an oath? I mean, of course, an occasional and appropriate swear-word on the lips of a man of judgment and discretion. The boy is still too young to be permitted the—the....."

"The free use of the verbal safety-valve of temper?" suggested Minerva.

"Quite. Thanks. But the fact that he has dared to taste the forbidden fruit of the English language should hardly cause a woman of your sense and experience to—er.....Come, come, my dear, don't you worry. *I'll* attend to Tommy. You sit down here and rest a bit, and after your poor head is better, you can tell me all about it."

"Jack," said Minerva, regarding me with that calm, appraising look of hers, "you set me wondering what made me marry you....."

"Well, I hope....."

"When you talk such nonsense. You do not appear to realize that Galileo lived and worked in the seventeenth century."

"Now, what in heaven's name has Galileo got to do with Tommy's bad language?"

"Everything. Galileo discovered that the world moved."

"And so caused Master Thomas Spratt to say 'damn' three hundred years later. I see! New demonstration of the evolutionary theory: Darwinism, Herbert Spencer, and all that sort of thing."

"Now, dear, do be patient while I explain. Don't let it be said that Galileo lived in vain. Had Tommy said a swear in the days of Galileo, Tommy would have been spanked—*hard*."

"Long live Galileo! Tommy *will be* spanked. *Hard!* Tommy's father swears it."

"Now you are off the track again," she grumbled. "The point is, Galileo is dead. You may have been too busy at the office to notice it, but he died quite a long time ago—and spanking has gone out."

"In consequence?"

"M'm! It might be better to say that spanking has gone out because Galileo *lived*, since we owe it to him that things move. But the real point is that spanking is as obsolete as blood-letting. Science has proved each to be a useless and wasteful dissipation of energy. The medical specialist has been followed by the moral specialist—for this is the age of Reform, you know."

"Be careful, my dear," I warned her. "Too many Reformers spoil the State. Withdraw the right to spank and the institution of Fatherhood will crumble to the ground." But just then the Vicar was announced, and I missed the opportunity of proving my case.

"Good evening, Mr. Teachem," said Minerva, "I am so glad you were able to come. I am worried about Tommy, and wish you would look at him and tell me what you think."

"Tommy!" The Vicar was puzzled. "What is wrong with Master Tommy? Not sick, I hope?"

"Yes—*very*," replied Minerva. "Or perhaps not very. He may be only a little sick. I—I don't quite know. That is why I sent for you to examine him."

"But, my dear Mrs. Spratt, if the boy is sick, surely you should have called in Dr. Thom, not me." And the dear, good Vicar radiated astonishment.

"Oh, no," explained Minerva; "It's not that kind of sickness. Tommy is ill morally."

"Ah!" murmured the Vicar, getting into his professional stride at once.

"Yes, he used bad language to-day, said a swear-word, and—and—and I feel so miserable about it," Minerva, tearful, broke off abruptly.

"My dear, good lady," purred Mr. Teachem, "I am extremely sorry. But you must not worry over much. Boys will be—er—the sons of men, you know. *I* shall have a talk with Master Tommy, and all will be well."

"But please understand me," urged Minerva. "I have already given Tommy his castor-oil. (The Vicar gasped.) I mean I have myself administered the usual dose of texts and goody-goody talk generally prescribed—but it's no good. Tommy seems suddenly to have grown beyond the stage when that sort of thing is effective. He has been with his father so much of late."

Before I could think of a sufficiently biting protest she had swept on, and, when I caught up, was saying, "and as I look upon you, Mr. Teachem, as our specialist in morals, I do wish you would make a careful examination of my little boy and tell me how it stands with him."

"Most certainly," said the Vicar. "Although I can only claim to be a sort of general practitioner myself, I think I shall be able to diagnose Tommy correctly. Where is the patient?"

"Confined to his room," said Minerva. "If you prefer to see him alone, the maid will show you upstairs."

"By the way," observed the Vicar, as he turned to go, "there is no hereditary taint, I take it?"

"My people," I replied, "have all been respectable grocers for generations. Wholesale."

"I had a grandfather in the Indian Army," confessed Minerva.

"Ah!" said the Vicar. "Those grandfathers! They will reappear. I know them."

"But he wasn't my favourite grandfather," explained Minerva.

"That may have made a difference," said the Vicar. "We'll see."

. . . . . .

"No," reported the specialist on his return; "Tommy has inherited nothing objectionable from your grandfather, Mrs. Spratt. He has a perfectly sound moral constitution, and is merely suffering temporarily from a slight infection—caught, apparently, on the golf-links yesterday."

Minerva looked hard at me, then harder at the family corrector.

"The point is," said I, reaching over and throwing the thing in the fire, "Galileo is dead; and spanking has gone out."

F. L. B. G.

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Correspondence.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I should like to have an expression of views from the readers of the *Freethinker* as to the attitude we should adopt in discussing the question of the existence of God.

I have come to the conclusion that, from a diplomatic point of view, it would be better in the interests of Secularism, if Freethinkers were to press Christians to give in clear language their conception of "God" rather than we should say there is no God, or that we know of no God.

The other evening I had a discussion with a gentleman who is the superintendent of a large Sunday-school. I asked him to define exactly what he meant by God. He said what he understood was, that God was a word meant to convey the meaning—the spirit of goodness, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of justice, the spirit of mercy, and the spirit of truth. He had over and over again expressed himself thus, and at a meeting of the Y.M.C.A. years ago had shocked the infantile notions of quite a number of those present.

Now, with this conception of God, we, as Freethinkers, can scarcely disagree, but we accept these as human qualities, and their existence is quite demonstrable.

Where this friend and I came to disagree was in our beliefs as to what happened to the spirit or soul after death. He had a hazy notion that the spirit or soul continued to live on in another world, and that we were put into this world to prepare for the next, which would be eternal.

My friend thought the Book of Genesis was a fairy tale, and the Garden of Eden a myth, but he firmly believed in the immaculate conception and the "bodily" resurrection of Christ. He had no notion as to where Christ went or as to whether his body now occupies space, or still exists in the form of flesh and blood, but he is convinced that Christ's body rose from the grave, and he now sits at the right hand of God, who is in heaven, which, when you remember his conception of God, is absurd. My friend says he doesn't care whether people believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, the immaculate conception, or any of the other dogma as taught by the Church, so long as a man lives an upright life as taught by Jesus Christ, and then he is a Christian. Quite a number of Christians are at this stage, and there is now very little of the original faith to cling to.

Freethinkers can live the good life without the least reference as to what Christ said or did. We have quite as good a conception as to what is right or wrong as Christians have, and they have no special claim to the common virtues.

I think, when occasion arises, we should get our Christian friends to say exactly what they mean in plain, every-day English without mysticism of any kind, and a different construction would then be put upon their statements.

"FREETHINKER."

Society News.

West Central Hall (London).—Last Sunday's lecture by Mr. Palmer on "The Antiquity of Man" was greatly appreciated by the audience, and many of those present voiced the wish that our lectures could be more widely advertised. We hope that London Freethinkers will fill the hall to-day, when Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Charles Bradlaugh's daughter, will occupy the platform.—E. M. VANCE, Gen. Sec.

North London Branch, N.S.S.—Saturday's air-raid was responsible for a smaller audience than usual at the St. Pancras Reform Club. This is very regrettable as the debate between Mr. Percy Muir, the well-known Christian Evidence exponent, and Mr. T. F. Palmer, well repaid those who were present. We hope the audience all reached home safely before Sunday's aerial bombardment commenced. Truly our propaganda in London is conducted under difficulties these days or, rather, nights! Next Sunday Miss Nina Boyle, of the Women's Freedom League, opens the debate. Miss Boyle's name ought to be sufficient advertisement to fill the hall to overflowing.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Miss Nina Boyle, "Women's Place in the World." Open Debate.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Belief, Make-belief, and Unbelief."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK. 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Swasey, Kells, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, Important Meeting. All Members are requested to attend.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, "Thoughts on the War and After."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Religious Mania"; 6.30, "God and the War."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Meeting.

NUNEATON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Palace, Queen Road): Mr. T. F. Palmer, 2.45, "The Story of the Evolution of Life"; 6.30, "The Birth and Death of Worlds."

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): 11, "Is there any Evidence for the Survival of Human Personality." Open Discussion, for Members only. Affirmative, Mr. C. Terry. Members are particularly asked to attend.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): Mr. Joseph McCabe, 3, "Science and the Hope of Immortality"; 7, "Adult Education and the Churches."

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Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—*i.e.*, South African Information Department.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
The Puzzle of God.—The Editor	129
The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd	130
George Leslie Mackenzie.—Mimnermus	132
A Metaphysical Apology for Suffering.—Keridon	134
Official Education for Poor Children	134
Acid Drops	134
Our "Round-Up."—C. C.	136
To Correspondents	137
Sugar Plums	137
Belief in God.—G. W. Foote	138
Cambridge and Education.—Geo. Underwood	139
Letters to the Editor—Biology and God	140
Why a Clergyman?	141
Existence of God	141
Society News	141
Notice of Meetings	142

Views and Opinions.

The Puzzle of God.

Some of my Scotch readers may be familiar with the old rhyme:—

There was an auld woman of Sydney
That had a disease of the kidney;
She prayed to the Lord that she might be restored,
An' he could if he would, but he didnae.

If so, the lines must have often occurred to them during the last few years. For all real believers in God must assume that God "could if he would" have prevented this awful catastrophe of war, but he "didnae"; and the concern of his most faithful followers must be to find out why he "didnae." And on that rock the ship of faith, so far as thousands are concerned, bids fair to become a complete wreck. Apologies for God are, of course, offered; but they carry little or no conviction. God is neutral, argue some; he is powerless to overcome the resistance of the human will, argue others; he has some wise end in view, and therefore permits the catastrophe; suggest others. But all these apologies ring hollow. Neutrality has little to commend it on behalf of one who has the power to enforce right and prevent wrong. An impotent Deity is still less satisfactory. Men have always worshipped God because they thought he could do something; and to find he can do nothing when something is most needed is to remove all reason for bothering with him. And the God who would but won't is still less satisfactory. People are beginning to object to be moved this way or that in obedience to the arbitrary will of a Deity about whom they know nothing. Secret diplomacy is as objectionable in heaven as it is on earth. Of course, *if* there is a God of this kind, one who drives human beings hither and thither, as millions of men are driven to slaughter on the battlefield, so be it; but the time is passing when people may be expected to admire a system or a Deity that is an outrage on the finer human feelings.

* * *

A Quietist Deity.

The new incumbent of the City Temple, Dr. Fort Newton, says "the bitter tragedy of Atheism is, there is no one there." We do not see there is anything either bitter or tragic in the recognition of an absence of Deity, although there would be something tragically horrible in his presence. And in practice, what is the difference between a God who is not there and a God who does nothing? The more thoughtful—or the more astute—among believers warn us not to expect any interference by God with natural order. God, they say, works only through natural laws. Well, as an Atheist, we agree in the folly of expecting a miraculous alteration in the course of Nature; but what part does God play in the process? The Atheist says: "I do not believe in a God, and see no proof of his existence. Natural forces seem adequate to all that exist, and I cannot get beyond them." The Theist replies: "Yes, I agree so far; still, there is a God who is responsible for the whole cosmic order." Maybe; but where, in practice, is the substantial difference between these two positions? Neither believe in the actual interference of Deity in natural processes; both accept the universality and invariability of natural causation. Each, therefore, cancels the interference of God so far as life is concerned. The "bitter tragedy" of not believing in a God is evaded by professing a belief in one who is not the slightest good for anything or anybody. A hypothetical tragedy becomes an actual farce. The Theist commits suicide to save himself from slaughter.

* * *

God and Nature.

God's character, we are told, is vindicated not by a series of interferences with natural order, but by the order itself; less by the process than by the end. Thus, destruction and disease are facts, but a more perfect form of life emerges from the carnage. Hatred and love exist, but the latter is the more powerful factor. All this, and more may be granted, but it does not meet the real issue. If God's goodness is shown by the removal of obstacles to development, what is shown by their existence? Is it carelessness or cruelty? A tiger benefits by dining off a sheep, and the cosmic process is justified—to the tiger. And in the evolutionary process it is wildly untrue to argue that perfection is gained through suffering—at least, so far as the individual is concerned, and pleasure and pain are never other than individual. Some suffer and others profit. Consider the generations of men that have lived cherishing degrading superstitions, practising brutal customs, butchering and being butchered, before their descendants began to glimpse a more humane mode of life. How can we excuse the cruelty of such a process because some one benefits at the end? Surely, if there is a God, we are entitled to demand that progress shall not be bought at so frightful a price. The Atheist does not deny the process, he does impeach its morality. He declines to acknowledge as good a being who could deliberately call such a process into existence. If there is a God the world may exhibit his power, but common decency protests against the pretence that it demonstrates his goodness.

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Morality and God.

A great deal is said by preachers about the power of love in the world. And, thanks to man's social heredity, it is true that the power of love is more persistent than that of hatred. Yet nature—or God, if there be a God behind nature—cares nothing for the *moral quality* of our actions. Whether we act in a spirit of hatred or of love, strive to establish a right or to perpetuate a wrong, matters not. All we see in nature is a non-moral cause and effect. Says Maeterlinck:—

> If I am guilty of a certain excess or imprudence and incur a certain danger I have to pay a corresponding debt to nature. And as this excess or imprudence will generally have had an immoral cause.....we cannot refrain from establishing a connection between this immoral cause and the danger to which we have been exposed, or the debt we had to pay.....And we are content deliberately to ignore the fact that the result would have been the same had the cause of our excess or imprudence been.....heroic or innocent. If on an intensely cold day I throw myself into the water to save a fellow creature from drowning, or if, seeking to drown him, I chance to fall in, the consequences of the chill will be absolutely the same, and nothing on this earth or beneath the sky—save only myself, or man if he be able, will enhance my suffering because I have committed a crime, or relieve my pain because my action was virtuous.

What Maeterlinck is here emphasizing is the absolute indifference of nature as to whether our motive to action be good or bad. The desire to do right may lead to disaster; the endeavour to help others may call down swift punishment. The cowardice that keeps me from attempting to save a child from a burning house may preserve my life. The courage that sends me into the flames may end in death or disablement for life. If there is a God at the back of this frightful lack of moral discrimination the most and the best that can be said for him is that he does nothing. And what use has the world for a God of that kind? If man is left to reap the full consequences of his folly, or of his ignorance, what is the use of God? It is easy to talk of the "tragedy" of viewing the universe as a cluster of non-conscious forces with life as a mere iredescent bubble; but far more demoralizing is the contemplation of a universe in which God sits—to quote Mr. W. H. Mallock, like "some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not perhaps bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he has caused it."

* * *

The Hopelessness of Theism.

The bitter tragedy would, indeed, be if there were someone there; if, behind all the unmerited suffering and gratuitous cruelty of the world, there existed an all-powerful, intelligent Being to whom all this was part of a coldly calculated scheme. To the Atheist, the universe is simply non-moral; the Theist leaves all the difficulties where they were, and only succeeds in making the world profoundly immoral. At most, our struggles represent the fight of human intelligence against non-conscious forces; and we have the inspiration, based on experience, that, cleansed of superstition and armed with sufficient knowledge, human nature is adequate to the task of improving social life. Ignorance and superstition lie at the root of nine-tenths of our troubles, and the time and energy now squandered on religion would, if properly applied, make a substantial reduction of our difficulties in the course of a single generation. But in the name of God we make mysteries of our problems, and then despair of their solution. We create difficulties where none need exist, and ignore others that are only too palpable. The old Romans, among the numerous altars they erected, built one "To the Gods who take no heed." It was a curious thing to do; but one day the world will recognize it as a true description of every variety of deity, from the Mumbo-Jumbo of an African savage down to the attenuated abstraction of a modern Christian.

Chapman Cohen.

The Newest Apologetic.

V.

To the apologists the most puzzling of all problems at the present time is that of war. For three years and a half the pulpit has been forced to face it, and the longer the War continues the more perplexing it becomes. War is unquestionably a count against Christianity, and Mr. Mozley admits that it "never weighed so heavily as at the present time." The following is his statement of the problem:—

> This is not only a matter of external controversy between Christian and non-Christian, but of internal controversy between Christian and Christian. Whether war is ever a Christian duty, what conditions must be fulfilled to make a particular war a Christian duty, objectively considered, on the part of one of the combatants (it is obvious that, from an objective standpoint, war can never be a duty binding on both sides), how the Church, which is supernatural, should in each different country encourage patriotism, and yet deter from mere jingoism, foster national self-respect and abate national arrogance—these questions, and others like them, are most keenly probed among Christians in this time of war (*The Achievements of Christianity*, pp. 57, 58).

To a discussion of this subject the author devotes ten pages of his book; but his guiding principles seems to find expression in these lines:—

> Whate'er thou deem'st on earth
> Most evil, scan it well;
> A buried seed of worth
> Doth surely in it dwell.

On that assumption a Christian, naturally, is not prepared to say dogmatically "War is never lawful for the Christian; the Christian man may not take up arms, even in self-defence." It is true that if a Christian could take up that position, even theoretically, for him war would not be a problem at all; and, as a matter of fact, there are professors of Christ who take their stand on that principle, with the result that they come into open conflict with the State. With one exception, the parties engaged in this War are Christians, whose boast it is that they are fighting for the establishment on earth of the kingdom of heaven. Mr. Mozley maintains that "war can never be a duty binding on both sides"; but the truth is, that in this War both sides claim that they are fighting for the right, with the result that part of the author's argument necessarily falls to the ground. In its own estimation, each party is simply doing its duty. The point, however, is that the enormous majority of Christians believe that there are times when it is lawful even for them to use physical force against their foes. Indeed, many wars, such as the Crusades and the wars between Catholics and Protestants in Reformation times, have been of a purely religious character. Mr. Mozley confesses he does "not think it can be doubted that anything like a powerful anti-war sentiment has been deplorably absent from (at the latest) the third century of our era." To anyone acquainted with ecclesiastical history it is self-evident that the Christian Church, throughout the days of her might, harboured a war-like spirit, and not seldom engaged in actual warfare. Our author concludes that she was not at any time "seriously impressed with the moral problem of war," and he excuses her on the ground that, subsequent to the

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fall of the Roman Empire and the sweeping down of the barbarians from the north, "she had to deal with men and nations to whom war was as the breath of their nostrils." But Urban II. believed in and advocated war as in full harmony with the will of God. Standing on a lofty platform in the market-place of Clermont, his Holiness did his utmost, as Gibbon puts it, to "spread the flames of war from the Atlantic to the Euphrates." Urging the nations to undertake the first Crusade, he said:—

> It is indeed the will of God, and let this memorable word, the inspiration surely of the Holy Spirit, be for ever adopted as your cry of battle to animate the devotion and courage of the champions of Christ. His cross is the symbol of your salvation; wear it, a red, a bloody cross, as an external mark on your breasts or shoulders, as a pledge of your sacred and irrevocable engagement.

Mr. Mozley refuses to discuss the question, "Is war wrong?" or, "Is war compatible with Christianity?" preferring to ask, "Is it ever right for a Christian nation to go to war?" to which question, he declares, "we may, without treachery to our first principles, return an affirmative answer." Curiously enough, he avers that in "a perfect Christendom there would be no war, since the causes from which wars spring—causes which always involve on one side, and may involve on both sides, a morally vitiated outlook—would disappear"; a statement which implies the inevitable inference that war is essentially anti-Christian. An imperfect Christendom is an irrefutable evidence that the Christian religion has been a colossal failure. Despite all its pompous claims for itself, it has broken all its pledges, dishonoured all its promises, discredited all its prophecies, and trampled all its ideals under foot. It appeared on the scene as a supernatural device to set right a disjointed world; but after nineteen centuries the world is still in a state of woeful imperfection, crying out for deliverance as passionately and as hopelessly as ever. Does not Mr. Mozley realize that if war is incompatible with a perfect state of society, it must be incompatible with Christianity, whose alleged function it is to produce such a state? And does it not necessarily follow that when a Christian joins in a bloody conflict, he thereby confesses that he is acting disloyally to his ideal in a world imperfectly Christianized? It may be true, as Mr. Mozley says, that "war, with all its evils, has been an instrument, terrible and clumsy, and yet neither wholly fruitless nor simply ignoble, in human and moral progress"; but he forgets that it has been so in a world swayed by purely natural and selfish motives, and over which the supernatural has never exerted the slightest influence. The emancipation of the slaves in America was achieved by force of arms, simply because the slave-owners did not perceive that slavery was wrong; but that war was not waged by the Church, but in defiance of her teaching, and the man directly responsible for it was an Agnostic, believing neither in Christianity nor yet in war. In that case, war was an instrument, terrible and clumsy, for the establishment of right by might, and Lincoln used it because no other means was available. It may be said of the French Revolution that it put an end to certain gigantic evils; but, like the American Civil War, it was not conducted in the name of the Church. The Church has never been distinguished as a factor in political and social reforms, many of which she has discouraged and even opposed.

Now, if in a perfect Christendom there would be no war, and if it be the mission of Christianity to produce a perfect Christendom, there is absolutely no escape from the conclusion that war is, in its very nature, anti-Christian, and that when a Christian fights for his country he proves that he is a patriot first and a Christian "a long way behind," and by implication Mr. Mozley admits the truth of this statement. And yet he declares that the Church "could not (for it was not her belief) proclaim that it (war) was either essentially and always a moral evil, or productive of evil alone." Consequently, he takes his stand with the enormous majority of Christians, affirming that there are occasions on which it is lawful for Christians to take up arms in defence of what they believe to be the right. The absurdity of this position appears when we realize that the Germans, as well as the British, are Christians, who are convinced that they are doing their duty in waging this frightful conflict, and that both sides are praying for victory to the same God.

As an apologètic, *The Achievements of Christianity* is a conspicuous failure. The section dealing with war is utterly irrelevant, for surely no one would ever dream of pronouncing war a Christian achievement. Mr. Mozley quotes Lecky, who says that "Christianity for the first time made charity a rudimentary virtue"; but is it not true that charity in the form of alms doled out to the poor has been a curse rather than a blessing? Christianity has never attacked the social and economic conditions under which poverty has invariably prevailed, but has contented itself with urging the poor to be duly submissive, paying proper respect to their "betters," and promising them a reversal of conditions beyond the tomb. Such is the direct lesson to be drawn from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and such has been the teaching of the Church in all ages. "Ye have the poor always with you" is a Biblical expression that has been fruitful of incalculable mischief. "Society," says Sir Thomas More, "is a conspiracy of the rich against the poor," which means that the rich have been guilty of exploiting the poor to their own advantage; and in the Church they have instituted charity as a virtue that covers up the sin of exploitation. Does Mr. Mozley really regard charity as a satisfactory substitute for justice? Our author states that the graces of chivalry did something to lighten the horrors of the battlefield; but chivalry is not a *Christian* virtue, but was introduced by the Goths. He further asserts that it was due to the faith of Christ that "a public conscience was created in connection with the character of sports and of theatrical performances," which resulted in the abolition of gladiatorial shows in the year 404; but, as a matter of fact, those humiliating spectacles were not discontinued till much later; and it is well known that throughout the ages the Church has winked at most cruel sports, even in Great Britain as well as in Spain and other countries. Tertullian, for example, condemned not merely the gladiatorial shows because of their brutality, but all forms of secular amusement. To him an actor was an abomination. He says:—

> No one that goes to the play thinks of anything else than to see and to be seen. Is it possible, while listening to the declamation of the actor, to think on the sentence of a prophet, or in the midst of the song of a eunuch, meditate on a psalm.....The Creator of truth loves nothing that is false, all fiction is, to him, falsification. He who condemns all hypocrisy will never pronounce him good who counterfeits voice, sex, age, love, anger, sighs, and tears.

To the writers of the New Testament and to the Fathers of the Church generally, the world and its things were hopelessly corrupt, spiritual pleasures alone being permissible. Tertullian, the most powerful and eloquent of all the divines of the third century, says:—

> Tell me, pray, have *we* any other desire than that which was the desire of the apostle, to depart, viz., from the world, and be with the Lord? Wherever thy wishes are there are thy pleasures.....For what is there more joyous than reconciliation with God, thy Father and thy Lord—than the revelation of truth, the knowledge of

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> error, the forgiveness of so many past sins? What greater pleasure than the contempt of such pleasures, and of the whole world?

According to Mr. Mozley the writers of the New Testament and the Fathers were radically mistaken, and "Christianity is not committed by its principles to think of the next world as its only interest"; but we venture to contradict his assertion. Christianity is fundamentally a religion for the world to come, not for this; but the priests exploited both it and those who professed it to their own enrichment and comfort here below. Consequently, its achievements, in relation to the people at large, have been few and far between, and, at best, indirect; but, in relation to the Church, as an institution, they have been multitudinous, and of a most substantial character. In so far as they possess evidential value the Freethinker finds them of inestimable service to the cause he has so much at heart. He claims them as witnesses *against*, not *for*, the truth of the Christian religion.

J. T. Lloyd.

George Leslie Mackenzie.

> Alas poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest; of most excellent fancy.—*Shakespeare, "Hamlet."*

The other day I purchased on a bookstall a soiled and well-worn copy of George Leslie Mackenzie's *Brimstone Ballads*, and it set me thinking of the personality of the man whose lively verses were, years ago, one of the constant delights of *Freethinker* readers. The book was to me a veritable link with the past. For the name on the title-page was of one who was my familiar friend. It was not often that we met, but I loved him well. If I were writing one of those chilly obituary notices, I could not make a great story of what he had done with his life. He was a minor writer, and not a famous author. Yet to those near to him he had the qualities which are quite as precious as those which make for fame and reputation. He had a merry heart and a kindly one. There was never a company not the merrier that he was in. Many are duller because he is dead. For he possessed that vagrant, potent thing which men call charm. No wonder he took hold of one's mind as he took hold of one's hand, with a warm, affectionate grip that lasted.

Although a good speaker, Mackenzie was never at his happiest in the garish light of publicity. He loved better a few friends with whom he could talk metaphysics and literature, especially of the great French authors, for whom he had a real liking. He had the spirit of the idealist without the sharp edges that sometimes make the missionaries of ideas less attractive to the world than one might wish. He was, above all, sociable in his idealism. A most modest man, he preferred the position of a common soldier in the Army of Freethought. This is the kind of work which does a man honour but brings him none. He would have sympathized with the modest Frenchman who, when Napoleon took him familiarly by the ear, and offered him the Legion of Honour, answered, "Thank you, sire, but could not your Majesty give it to my father?"

His professional position would have made most men cautious, but timidity was unknown to him. All his contributions to the *Freethinker* were signed with his name. It was in the scant leisure of a busy career that he composed his verses, and he chose the metrical form of writing because it demanded a certain amount of skill in using words. He was under no illusion as to the merits of his verses. "I know too well what a poet ought to be," he once told me, "to imagine I am one." For, in my impetuous way, I had dubbed him "The Laureate of Secularism."

Mackenzie only published one book, but it was, to use Lord Morley's expressive phrase, "a thunderous engine of revolt." Within a couple of hundred pages, *Brimstone Ballads* contained an astonishing amount of wit, satire, and argument. It was a happy idea on Mackenzie's part to commence his very profane book of verses with lines on "Genesis," and to finish with some verses on "Cremation." In this volume he proved himself the most uncompromising rhymester that ever attacked superstition in general and Christianity in particular. He showed the orthodox faith no sort of mercy, and his statement of his point of view is well worth reading. So comprehensive an indictment of a vulnerable institution could hardly fail to contain a great deal of truth.

I first met Mackenzie on a South London tramcar. We fell into conversation, and I offered him a copy of the *Freethinker*. He replied, "I not only read it, but I write for it." "Who are you?" I queried, and I recall his humorous smile as he answered, jocularly, "Mackenzie, if it doesn't *mak enzie* difference." My first impression was something of a shock. You could hardly imagine that this quiet, smiling, respectable, professional man could write a lyric, or turn a profane phrase against the orthodoxies of the world.

A thorough Freethinker, there was no shadow of turning, no trace of compromise about George Leslie Mackenzie. It was this, perhaps, even more than his ability which earned for him the confidence and admiration of his friends of many years. I saw him for the last time at Southend, and he then talked with difficulty, and I could not but admit that my dear old friend had then only a short time to live. Since then the fates have had their way with him. His name is with many other names, and the sight of his book has set me thinking of him. I can, in my mind's eye, see him now as he stood quietly watching the sun shining on the sea that stretched far away. Now he is—

> gathered to the quiet west,
> The sundown splendid and serene,
> Death.

Mimnermus.

A Metaphysical Apology for Suffering.

Of all the square pegs which man has ever worried himself with the task of fitting into round holes, probably the most irresistibly seductive, yet hopelessly futile, is the postulate that an omnipotent, omniscient, and beneficent God is the "director and organizer" of sentient life, and implicitly the "author" of sorrow and suffering. And probably of all the defensive pleas which have been put forward for the assumption, the most sophistic and hollow is that advanced by the "individuation" apology of the metaphysician now revived by Mr. Archer in his book on *God and Mr. Wells*.

For the sake of those who may have not read the book we shall quote those sentences which are meant to convey or imply his contention and "argument." He starts by repudiating the idea that "sentience"

> was an article capable of accumulation like money and merchandise, in enormous aggregates—as though pleasure, and more particularly pain, were subject to the ordinary rules of arithmetic, so that minor quantities added together, might mount up to an indefinitely gigantic total.

Though this statement does not lack in dogmatic emphasis, yet the argument is seen only "as in a glass

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darkly." Mr. Archer's allusions are too tangential to be explicit, and his language too rhetorical to be precise. For that reason we subjoin the following alternative expressions in case they might prove to the reader to be more definite or lucid:—

> Individuation forbids the adding of units of sentience.
>
> Individuation is, beyond doubt, the boundary and limit of human misery.
>
> The sufferings of victims cannot be added together.
>
> There has not been, and never can be, in this world more suffering than a single organism can sustain.
>
> Every sentient organism is immured in his oron universe.

The pith of this "individuation" morality, when divested of its metaphysical garb, seems to be that a responsible moral agent may inflict, or allow to be inflicted, as much suffering as he likes, without incurring any increase of guilt, provided only it falls to the lot of different or new individuals. For example, to starve, torture, or burn a *million* sentient beings is no bigger a crime than if only *one* victim were involved, since their agonies "cannot be added together." It is a moral principle quite befitting a *fiend*, Satanic or human, but one infinitely incompatible with the idea of a benign God. For, after the perpetration of one crime, it could freely indulge its villainous propensities without scruple or fear. Well may the Huns exult so deliriously over their ceaseless *repetitions* of the most revolting crimes, since, by this divine morality, it steeps them no deeper in guilt!

Mr. Archer, however, does not appear to have ever troubled himself with the task of inquiring into the meaning of "adding," either as a physical or as a mental process. The "aggregating" or "adding" of sentience differs in no particular from what it is in respect to every economic attribute of "money and merchandise."

In this contention Mr. Archer confounds two independent issues. He identifies sentience, or the *capacity* of feeling pain, with the pain itself. Sentience and suffering are, of course, "causally" related, yet they are wholly independent in respect of their computability, or of the moral responsibility attached to them. Sentience is an attribute of neural substance, and shares the nature of all attributes save that of extension, gravity, and inertia in being insusceptible of direct measurement for the obvious reason that no unit—*the basis of all reckoning*—can be delimited or carved out of it. The fact is not in the least degree unique to sentience, as Mr. Archer seems to think.

Sweetness, edibility, or any other economic attribute is no more measurable in terms of itself than sentience is. Extension, however, being spatial, and gravity through having spatial effects (motion or displacement), are divisable into portions which may act as units. These two attributes, being fundamental and absolutely general, are made to serve as proxy-units of any of the specific properties associated with them. The only calculation, therefore, that an attribute is capable of is that obtained through reckoning the individuals or units in which the particular property appears; that is, by counting the proxies of "volume" and weight. And the prevalence of sentience is estimated in exactly the same way by counting sentient beings.

When, however, we come to consider *Suffering* as an estimable quantity, we are on a totally new ground. We have shifted from the potential to the actual; from capacity to sensation or experience. Now, sensation, either as pain or pleasure, is the mental product of the acting and reacting capacities of object and subject conjointly. Sweetness is neither in the molecule of sugar, nor yet in that of the brain, but is the "physic offspring" of their joint activities. This mental offspring of pleasant or painful experience, however, is born into consciousness with two new and characteristic attributes —*viz*, a sense of Duration and of Intensity; and the measure of suffering, if practicably measurable, would be the product of these two factors.

But in the name of all reason, what would have been gained by measuring it? Would its sum total be any different through being expressed as a numerical multiple of some arbitrary unit of spatial elements, as if the act or process of calculating possessed some magic power over the computed magnitude! Calculation has no more effect upon the quantity calculated than a shadow has upon the object that casts it. Did Mr. Archer suppose that if the gigantic total could not be expressed in human units, the prosecution would be non-suited by a forensic quibble on a technical point, and that his august client would be thereby acquitted! Human devices of computation are wholly irrelevant to the question of divine guilt; the indictment is not preferred extraneously by some *advocatus diaboli*, but is implicit in each experience of pain, agony, or anguish, irrespective even of the status or of the individuality of the sufferer.

Mr. Archer, by the by, does not even refer to the time factor—a most remarkable omission, since to say the least, it is not of less moment than intensity in the ceaseless tragedy of sentient existence. The common question is not merely how acute was the pain, but how long it lasted? Hell's ineffably abhorrent fiendishness was due to its eternal duration rather than to its imaginary agony, though that was the most excruciating known to sentient flesh.

Again, as regards moral responsibility, suffering is likewise on a totally independent footing. Sentience implanted as a sentinel to safeguard the organism, is susceptible of a plausible defence, though very inferior to the instinct that intuits danger without having occasion to taste a single painful experience. The moral responsibility and guilt of the postulated author and director of sentiency arises not from the endowment but from the ordering of living existence in a way that the capacity is evoked into activity as *bootless* suffering. And above all, from the grafting upon the animal stock of rapacity and passion the endowment of self-consciousness —a superadded capacity to which the deluge of mundane evil is mainly due; it enabled man, with whip, lash, and goad, to exploit the sentiency of his fellow-creatures in order to gratify his natural cruelty and his insatiable greed.

The fact that each sufferer is "immured in his own universe" does not extenuate the divine guilt; on the contrary, it magnifies it to infinity. This fact makes it impossible for the sufferer to ease his pain by sharing it with his fellows; or for them to soothe his agony by sharing with him their life, health, or joys. The keen enjoyment of those who feast can bring no relief or soothing to the pangs of the starving, whether far or near. The predicament of a sentient being is not unlike that of a person immured in a building destined sooner or later to be set on fire, but which is so isolated that neither escape nor relief is possible; and thus imprisoned, he is doomed to endure his agonies alone. And this is the "individuation" predicament that Mr. Archer considers to confer upon the divine artificer immunity of guilt!

Inalienability is not, by the by, unique to sentiency; it is an essential truth of all attributes due to their *functional* nature. But though it is thus impossible to "aggregate" or intensify an attribute by any process of concentration, it is usually possible to amass its concrete embodiments so as to produce a simultaneous effect. One molecule of an explosive will burst no shell, but infinite millions of them will rend the toughest into frag-

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ments. You may make a bonfire sky-high by piling up masses of wood, but the combustibility of its ultimate elements is absolutely "inalienable," and is therefore, as such, incapable of being amassed or intensified. So with sentience; yet a hungry nation may demolish a throne, though a starving individual is impotent.

In his parable of the one hundred million people, each of whom is born with an allowance of £5, in which he cynically compares suffering to spent capital, he follows the abhorrent example of Paul, in which the Apostle defends *his* God for dooming his *sentient* creatures to an eternity of torture, by comparing his divine right to do so to that of a potter over his *non*-sentient clay! The method of apologists has not changed!

Mr. Archer usually admits or defends intrinsic absurdities, and critically discusses trumpery claims that merit nothing but ridicule or silent contempt. He fortifies citadels, but tilts like Don Quixote at some windmill, or charges some flock of sheep with amusing energy. But what is the use of erecting a picturesque literary structure if, as he freely admits, he has no better foundation for it than a bed of quicksand? Having admitted that 2 and 2 may make 5, whatever is then to be gained by elaborating a lengthy argument to "prove" that they cannot amount to 5¼! None, save that of having a book to sell. Nothing is better calculated to endow an absurdity with immortality than to discuss it seriously, or talk about it with straight faces; and for this reason I consider that Mr. Archer has done the cause of Rationalism a *dis*service by discussing the Wellsian God.

The problem of evil is created solely by the "postulate"; abandon that, and all mystery vanishes. It is the natural and inevitable outcome of the cosmic evolutionary process.

Keridon.

OFFICIAL EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN.

On one occasion, when I was in one of the largest and poorest of the London Elementary Schools, where the children looked as pitifully sordid and poverty-stricken as I have ever seen them, I asked a few questions of one small girl in the front row of a class. Her outside dress consisted of an old dilapidated waistcoat worn over a dingy flannelette nightgown, while a ragged piece of serge fastened around the waist with a safety pin did duty for a skirt. But she was only one among a classful of rags and tatters.

"What is your name?" I asked, by way of starting conversation.

"Victorine," the forlorn-looking little thing replied.

"And what is your lesson about?" I then inquired.

"Therdelfykorrickul," she informed me.

Seeing the bewildered look on my face, the head mistress, who was showing me round, said, "Enunciate your words more carefully Victorine, and speak slowly."

Victorine understood what "speak slowly" meant, and so she said very deliberately, "The—Delphic—Horricul."

"So you are learning about the Delphic Oracle. And what are you going to do when you grow up?" was my next query.

"I'm going to work in the laundry, like muvver!"

We went into another classroom; here more ragged, unwashed clothes greeted me on every hand. I had no need to ask the subject of the lesson, for the girls were facing a blackboard on which was written, "The Characteristics of Shelley's Poetry." After I had seen more tatters in a third room, where a lesson was being given on "Infinitive Verbs," I said to the head mistress, "If I had this school, do you know what I should do? I should take a class at a time, and give out needles and cotton, and tell them to do the best they could to sew up the rags in their dresses and their pinafores. I would not mind if they did not put on patches even to a thread in the regulation way, so long as they made some attempt to run together those rents and slits and yawning gaps. I would let the other lessons go, till this was done And I would not let a girl take her place in a class in the morning till she had mended, as well as she could, any rents she had worn to school."

The head mistress shook her head. "That would not be practical; you see, it isn't in the Syllabus."

I don't pretend to understand the inwardness of Syllabuses but I couldn't help wondering if there wasn't an opening here for a new one. While so much unpractical stuff is taught to the poorer classes in Elementary Schools, is it any wonder that the children know so little of the things appertaining to daily life?—*Flora Klickmann, "Between the Larch-Woods and the Weir."*

Acid Drops.

If God Almighty has a sense of humour, the world just now—particularly the Christian part of it—must keep his face "all smiles." He will have noted that, while his Christian followers could not tolerate Sunday labour in the interests of education or rational enjoyment, they can put up with it quite easily when it becomes a question of carrying on a war. He will also have observed that with the same people the preservation of babies has become a burning question, when there threatens to be a shortage of men for the armies of the future. Lastly, he will see that, after opposing the equality of the sexes for centuries, a number of Churchmen are now busy seeing how her services can be utilized in the "ministrations of the Anglican Church." Woman has the vote, and the more astute are realizing it is time that something was done. And, of course, full Christian warranty will be found for all they are doing—as it was found for all they have done.

Catholics believe in miracles at Lourdes and elsewhere, but they realize that all the saints in the calendar are powerless in the present world shortage of food. Cardinal Bourne has absolved English Catholics from the necessity of fasting, and exhorts them "to follow strictly the advice and regulations issued by the Government in the matter of food." In plain English, Catholics are exhorted to look to the Government, and not to God, for their daily bread.

Defenders of the design argument will be pleased to note that a Northumberland ewe, belonging to Mr. J. Dunwoody, a Sheffield district farmer, has given birth to four lambs, one of which has two perfect heads.

The wife of Thomas Geoffrey Wall Henslow, formerly rector of Stanton St. Quentin, near Chippenham, has been granted a *decree nisi* of divorce on the grounds of his cruelty and immorality. The restraints of religion are conspicuous by their absence in this case.

This from the *Daily Sketch*:—

> I wondered to what extent the Kaiser would give thanks to the Almighty over the peace with the Ukraine business. His speeches, messages, and telegrams have of late demonstrated a *molto crescendo* of blasphemous piety. In pre-war days I regarded the Kaiser as a cleverly foolish person, who walked about with a lectern on his head and had no sense of humour. Now he has proved himself a criminal lunatic of the first order, and *any mental specialist will tell you that a constant invocation of the Deity is one of the surest symptoms of the malady.*

The italics are ours. And, we may add, that a constant invocation of the Deity is not connected with certain forms of brain disease alone. It is just as common with rogues of all varieties.

Sacred images are not so carefully looked after by Providence in this country as they are on the Continent. Thieves who broke into St. Paul's Church, Sheffield, and failed to find money in the collection boxes, vented their spite by smashing up a religious figure.

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Dr. Fort Newton, the American minister of the City Temple, London, in a sermon on "The Larger Rationalism," said: "When a man comes to me with intellectual difficulties I want to say to him—I do not always do so: 'What have you been up to?'" Dr. Newton has very quaint ideas of the charity that "thinketh no evil."

Wonderfully and fearfully made are the theologians of all schools. In his correspondence column in the *British Weekly* for February 21, Professor David Smith says that since it "took God countless ages to create the world by the patient process of evolution," it is no wonder "that its re-creation also is slowly accomplished." Does it not strike the reverend gentleman as passing strange that a world created by a perfect Deity should stand in need of recreation? Does he admit that the first creation of it was a colossal failure? And if the first creation turned out so disastrously, what guarantee is there that the second will fare any better?

Dr. Smith tells us that "the preparation for the Saviour's Advent occupied millenniums," and now since his advent nearly two milleniums have come and gone, but the kingdom he came to establish is still a thing of the future. So Dr. Smith solemnly informs us, and he is right; but it never occurs to him that he is unconsciously stating the most powerful of all arguments against the truth of the Christian religion. His acceptance of evolution renders his Theism and Christology laughably absurd. He knows the facts, but ignores their natural significance, thereby showing their absolute incompatibility with the so-called doctrines of grace.

Smaller newspapers, and its attendant restrictions, have not eliminated frivolity from the pages of the press. A recent paragraph is worth quoting: "Charlie, the pet seagull of the Bishop of Ely, who has been a feature of the palace garden for the past twenty-six years, has just died at the age of thirty-five."

The *Christian World* states that Gipsy Smith, the evangelist, has been asked by the Government to go to the United States on a special mission to help to draw England and America more closely together.

The Young Women's Christian Association is appealing for a modest sum of £183,000 to extend its work in connection with clubs and rest rooms, and the Young Men's Christian Association has already raised enormous sums for canteens and huts. Will this end in the endowment of Unsectarian Christianity?

The Bishop of London says he has made a habit of reading a chapter of a devotional book each morning. It is a pity his lordship did not give details. *Thomas a Kempis* and *Billy Sunday's Sermons* are both devotional works.

It is the business of parsons to gain adherents, and incidentally pecuniary enrichment, of their particular organization. It is, therefore, not a matter of surprise that, at the beginning of the War, they attempted to use the military machine for their own ends. Apparently they imagined that the horrors of the Front would cause the soldiers to be ready material for conversion to the dying faith. But the result has not come up to their expectations. Indeed, we may say they are disappointed. Undaunted, however, on this road, attention is now being paid to the raid-shelters of London, and in these assemblies, with the effrontery of their class, they are attempting to force upon people of all shades of opinion the nostrums of their trade.

An instance of this is reported to us from West Ham, where a cleric of St. Matthew's Church imposed himself upon the gathering in a Council school one evening last week, taking possession of the piano, handing out hymn-books, and, with the aid of one or two of his congregation, started something in the nature of a revival meeting. We are pleased to learn that, by way of protest, his little band of pilgrims were effectually silenced in the middle of a hymn by the rest of the refugees singing the popular song commencing, "What's the use of worrying?" Of course, it is quite impossible to expect that bigots will see that ratepayers have the right to use Council property without interference, but sharp rebuffs like this may teach them in time.

The Young Men's Christian Association made a special appeal for billiard tables, and received in response over eight hundred, the majority full size. Many people regard the Christian religion as a game, but few associated it with billiards.

Mrs. Sarah Begent, of Folkestone, has died at the age of 101, and editors are making paragraphs concerning her longevity. At that early age Methuselah was trundling a hoop.

The World's Student Christian Federation, which claims to have 189,000 members, advertises a Day of Prayer. Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity!

The Parish Priest of Clones is very plain-spoken on the question of the Church and the children, and for that we thank him. Addressing his congregation, he said that some of the teachers in Ireland were trying to do away with clerical management, and objected to the parish priests being their employers and paymasters. But, asks Canon McNeal, "Who else but the Church had the right to appoint them and be their paymasters? The Church must control the schools and appoint and pay the teachers, and not.....any official of the Civil Government." He also "warned the teachers to have nothing to do with a movement to do away with clerical management, and those who identified themselves with such would find themselves expelled from their positions." Now, that is good Christian practice, and again we thank Canon McNeal for being so straightforward. We know where to find him; and other people will know what to do with him.

An elderly lady died at Birmingham through swallowing her false teeth while singing a hymn at a local chapel. Had the lady been attending a Freethought lecture there would have been a powerful and impressive moral.

The glorious free press of England! The *Times' Literary Supplement* has been repeating the nonsense about the poet Shelley being "naturally Christian." Is it too much to expect that journalists should be "naturally truthful?"

Cardinal Logue has been speaking disparagingly of the Republican form of government. His Eminence has the consolation that heaven is his home.

"Out of 100 people who see visions, 99 are telling lies or are lunatics," says Mr. Hilaire Belloc. Presumably, the odd one-per-cent. is a truthful Roman Catholic.

The vicar of Goring was fined £5 costs for assaulting a choir boy aged fourteen. It seems the boy was singing out of tune, and refused to bow to the altar, so while the congregation were singing a hymn he sent the boy out, followed him, and, as a result, the boy's mother found behind the lad's ear a lump "nearly as big as a hen's egg," and other injuries. The vicar contended that he had a perfect right to thrash the boy, but the magistrates took a different view, with the result as above. But a vicar giving out a hymn to keep the congregation busy while he goes out to thrash a choir boy, and returning in time to finish the service, is quite a fine illustration of the inwardness of Christian ethics.

Four columns of the *Times* were taken up recently by Cardinal Bourne for a "Message to the Nation." The message is inserted as an advertisement, and, we presume, must have cost a good sum. And in the whole of the four columns Cardinal Bourne succeeds in saying no more than that the

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Catholic Church alone can save the world—which is precisely what all the other Churches are saying, and with just as much warranty in fact. We cited one passage from this "Message" last week, and our readers are therefore in a position to judge of its value. And when a Cardinal of the Catholic Church can insist, in four columns, that the Church to which he belongs has already stood for liberty, we can only congratulate him on the cool impudence of the assertion.

We should dearly like Cardinal Bourne's explanation of the state of, say Spain, which, more than any other country in Europe, has been under the domination of the Catholic Church. And the fact of one country after another being compelled to curtail the activities of the Church because its interference in social and political life threatened human progress, requires explanation. Cardinal Bourne says that people are becoming impressed with the ability of the Roman Church to bring back peace and justice to the world; and that, we take it, is no more than a bid for support from a class whose purpose is, not the progress of the world, but the conservation of their own interests.

And this, we think, gives the true inwardness of Cardinal Bourne's Message. The *Times* is not a working-class paper; it is not even a middle-class paper. It is the organ of the "upper classes," and, in the present state of the world, these feel anything but secure. They are beginning to wonder what will happen after the War, and the Churches are equally doubtful as to what will happen to them. And Cardinal Bourne's "Message" is just a bid for support, financial or otherwise, from those who have most to fear from any genuine scheme of social reconstruction. How far it will be successful we do not know. But we may be sure that the Churches and vested interests will work together till the end.

Lord Halifax is still greatly disturbed over the appointment of the new Bishop of Hereford. He says that if the Bishop's views are to remain unchallenged, it will be impossible for Christians to pray:—

> Grant us so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most Precious Blood.

Why it reads like the invocation of a tribe of cannibals! Even as imagery it is disgusting. Not even a period of food shortage can reconcile the really civilized mind to such language. Of course, Lord Halifax would explain that the language doesn't mean what it implies, and, doubtless, it doesn't—to him. But those who know something of the nature of religious signs, will readily recognize the hopelessly savage basis on which such symbolism rests.

What funny ideas of Atheism some people have! Mr Max Pemberton, the novelist, says that Sir Robertson Nicoll told him of a man who lost all his money through the Whittaker Wright frauds. Then he went home and burned his Bible, and afterwards professed to be an Atheist. Evidently becoming an Atheist is like using Pear's soap instead of Sunlight, or wearing a soft shirt instead of a starched. You have only to say "I will be an Atheist," and the thing is done. The appalling *ignorance* (we use the term deliberately, for a man may be educated and yet appallingly ignorant) indicated by such a statement is marked. Or perhaps it is an indication of reliance on the ignorance of those who are being addressed.

The following story is reprinted from the *Star*:—

> While the Rev. Joseph Johnson, of Marlington, W. Va., was conducting a baptism in the river he felt something in one of his trousers legs.
>
> He stopped the ceremony several times while he was putting a convert under the water as a cold, clammy thing got further up his leg, and finally passed the belt line and got into the folds of his shirt.
>
> At the close of the service he found the intruder was a one-pound bass, which he took home and ate at dinner.

It is a pity that the reverend gentleman, having secured the bass, was unable to transform it into five thousand. Was the fish trying to pull his leg?

We have every sympathy with the idea of a League of Nations, which, indeed, seems the only way by which future wars may become less likely. But we cannot see the connection between that and the "Prince of Peace," who is invoked in a manifesto just issued, and bearing the signatures of a number of well-known parsons. Whenever the idea of a League of Nations actualizes, it will be due to forces that have no connection whatever with Christianity. And if the "Prince of Peace" has never been able to keep any group of his followers out of war up to the present, there seems little warranty in invoking his name now. The idea of a United States of Europe belongs to Thomas Paine—who first used the phrase "The United States of America"—as much as to any other man. But it would never do for the parsons to admit that.

The "Bishop's Coadjutor" of Colorado thinks that Denver City has too many Episcopal Churches, and suggests abolishing five of the existing nine. If this suggestion is acted on we hope the citizens of Denver will not be outdone in this line by the Bishop. They ought to close those remaining to show they appreciate his excellent example.

Our "Round-Up."

Some time ago we set ourselves, with the cheerfully given help of our readers, to secure a thousand new readers. In the midst of a world-war, with so many readers leaving the country, and with other difficulties to face, it would not have been a matter for surprise had we failed to accomplish our purpose. But, instead of failure, we have to report success. The thousand has been secured. The circulation of the *Freethinker* now stands at about one thousand copies per week more than when we assumed editorship.

But success is useless unless it leads to further triumphs. The new readers secured must act as a base from which to gain a still further increase. And we are now out for a second thousand readers. They can be got as easily or more easily than the first thousand. We venture to say that if a quarter of the number of our present readers set to work, we could have them in a week. There are thousands waiting to become subscribers, but they must first make the acquaintance of the paper.

And that is just where the help of our friends is indispensable. Nothing can take the place of their individual interest and assistance. It is only with their aid that our 1918 "Round-Up" can be made effective.

So we again ask the help of all to secure this new thousand readers, and to secure them now. We are pegging away under such difficulties as no Freethought paper ever had to face, and we are making headway. That is the compensation for all our struggles.

The *Freethinker* is at present one of the few papers, if not the only paper, in England that remains unaltered in size and price. We are keeping it so under a great strain, because we are thinking of the period after the War. When that time arrives, we want this paper to be in a position to command the attention of the country in a greater measure than it has yet done. And there will then be a greater need for the *Freethinker* than there has ever been.

Really, the future of the paper is in the hands of its readers. We know they are interested in it in a way that holds good of few papers published. That is why we do not hesitate in asking their help. It has been cheerfully and fruitfully given before. We know it will be cheerfully and fruitfully given again.

C. C.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 3, Sheffield; March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; March 31, Blaengarw; April 7, Goldthorpe; April 14, Glasgow; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—H. Dawson, 2s; E. Langridge, 5s.; S. W. Soper, 5s.; C. F. Simpson, 10s. 6d.

"Tar Can" writes *apropos* of a Mr. A. C. Bowler leaving £40,000 to the Lancashire Congregational Union: "The 'Dead Hand' again! In these days the Christians have not the best intellects, or even a majority of believers, out of the population; but their wealth is enormous, and attracts parasites. Also they are well organized, so that if a religious pig squeals, it starts all the styes in the kingdom."

A. Wildman.—Very pleased to hear of the accession of new members and the growth in the number of *Freethinker* readers.

J. Bury.—The only work of the kind you inquire for is Mr. Cohen's *Foreign Missions*, but that is now out of print. The publishers of Mr. Clodd's work is Methuen & Co.; price 10s. 6d.

H. Y. C. Clark.—Book is being sent; but only 2s. was enclosed, not 3s., as stated.

H. Dawson.—Pleased to learn that the *Freethinker* "charms" you more than ever. We agree that the times are hopeful for a big Freethought offensive. The position of this paper after three-and-a-half years' of war is evidence to that end. And the membership of the N. S. S. is stronger to-day than it has been for years.

C. Broadhurst.—We are sending you a copy of the paper for a few weeks at our own cost.

S. P. (Manchester).—Sorry, but rather too lengthy for use in the *Freethinker*.

C. P. Milman.—Gibbon refers to stories that the Crusaders before Jerusalem were at one time so pressed for food that they ate human flesh, and similar stories were current in antiquity. But we do not recall any modern instances.

J. McCrachin.—See "Acid Drops." Naturally, the clergy will fight for the control of the children. It is vital to their interests. If they lose the child they lose everything.

S. Ames.—We note your suggestion for a series of articles explaining in non-technical language some of the more important experiments of Professor Loeb and his fellow-workers. Will see what can be done.

W. H. Owen.—Your lecture notice bore the post-mark "February 18, 8.30"; but it was not delivered at this office until the morning of the 20th. The delay may have been due to the air raids, but secretaries should see that their guide notices are sent in good time.

R. Chapman.—Sorry to hear of your indisposition. Hope it is nothing serious, and that by this time you are better. No report of the lecture was taken.

R. N.—Thanks. Can use next week.

C. F. Simpson.—It was very thoughtful of you to forward 10s. 6d. towards the increased cost of paper, which, by the way, is greater week by week. We are crediting the Sustentation Fund with your donation.

F. T. Knott.—Thanks for getting two new subscribers. We believe that with the French or Continental order of Freemasons the Theistic form is abolished. Many Atheists have declined to belong to the English order on account of the theistic pledge. We appreciate your regard for "our wonderful *Freethinker*."

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 delivers two lectures to-day (March 3) in the Builder's Exchange, Cross Burgess Street, Sheffield. The afternoon meeting is at 3.30, and the evening one at 6.30. Admission to both meetings is free, and this will give a good opportunity for Freethinkers to induce the attendance of their Christian friends and acquaintances.

Lance-corporal Rite sends us the following from France:—

S. O. S.

> On my front the line of Christianity is being subjected to a most intense bombardment by your literature, so intense that this part of the line will have to be relinquished.

This is in reply to a parcel of literature that was sent out from this office for distribution. We are glad to know that our munition is proving so effective, and we should be glad to be able to send out on a more extended scale.

This evening (March 3) Mr. F. E. Willis lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, on "Sacred Fetishes." Mr. Willis is just back from a visit to the Front, and will, doubtless, have something interesting to say about the state of religion as he saw it amongst the soldiers. A Freethinker's story will be worth hearing after so many parsons.

A South Shields stalwart, Mr. J. Fothergill, has been showing up a local parson, the Rev. S. Kearney, in a letter to the *Shields Daily Gazette*. A Sunday concert was given in the Queen's Theatre, Shields, in aid of the South Shields Soldier's Fund. The Rev. gentleman had taken exception to the hour, 7 p.m., at which the concert was held, evidently fearing that the inhabitants of Shields would go the concert rather than to church, and suggested it should commence at 8 p.m. Mr. Fothergill very sensibly points out the inadvisability of late hours for the young people, and strongly resents this clerical interference. We are glad to see the Editor of the *Shields Daily Gazette* has published his letter.

We are asked to announce that the postponed lecture of Mr. T. F. Rayner on "The Life and Work of Charles Darwin" will be delivered in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road, Southampton, this evening (March 3). Local Freethinkers will please note.

This paragraph is a hint to those N. S. S. members who have not yet sent on their annual subscriptions, they now become due in January. And while we are about it, we may remark that if members feel inclined to enlarge their annual subscription, no fault will be found. Needless to say, the Society cannot pursue its work properly on the basis of its minimum membership fee, and if non-members feel inclined to forward a substantial sum to the Society's funds, we are convinced the General Secretary's heart will stand the shock.

The annual report of Brechin Established Church notes that the total church collections works out at less than a halfpenny per member. The Rev. Mr. Bisset, commenting on this, says that he dreads the introduction of farthings into Forfarshire. For ourselves, we should hesitate to charge the congregation with niggardliness without knowing the quality of the sermons preached. Some that we have read would be well paid for at two a penny.

Owing to the transposition of a line, a contemporary was made to say, "The Archbishop of Canterbury has been confined," presumably referring to his Grace's indisposition. Hasty readers might have imagined that the age of miracles had not passed.

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Belief in God.

A Lecture by the late G. W. Foote, at St. James's Hall, on October 29, 1909.

II.

(Concluded from p. 119.)

The savage was ignorant; he could not help believing supernaturalism. He could not help it in his ignorance of explaining the world in terms of his own nature, just as a little child will talk to a doll or a teddy bear, or even a chair or a table; so the savage who was, and is, the child of the Race, regards everything moving about him as alive.

You and I in a thunder-storm may be physically frightened, but we are not morally frightened. Why? Because we know something about the thunder-storm. We know that the noise, which is the most appalling part of it, is absolutely nothing; and the lightning, which may be dangerous, is, nevertheless (considering the few accidents that occur), of infinitesimal danger to any one of us; and so a man may, if he be of a certain temperament, feel his whole being dilating with the storm, and he may enjoy the magnificent spectacle.

But look at the savage: he knows nothing about thunder-storms; the noise is not a nothing; it is a grim reality to him. The noise is the roar of a being vastly greater than himself, but of the same nature; the lightning is the flash of his anger; and the savage prostrates himself in the dust, with eyes searching the ground, afraid to look up, and beseeching the great power overhead to sweep by and spare him, whoever else is lost. For you will find that religion and selfishness always did, always do, and always will go together.

Now, what makes the difference between the savage and the civilized being? Knowledge. That makes the great difference. Knowledge. And as all the gods in the world were created out of ignorance by the imagination, so reason, working upon knowledge, will destroy them all.

I say that religion and supernaturalism are one and the same thing. If you understand a thing, what does that mean? You can assign its natural explanation; and if you don't understand a thing its ten to one you will say God or the Devil is in it. All the clergy trade upon ignorance. I never heard a clergyman try to prove the existence of God from anything which he understood. He always asks: "Do you understand this material fact?" and you say "No." "That is God."

Why just take an illustration or two: You know the clergy used to say "Who made the World?" and as nobody knew (they are always ready to rush in where other people fear to tread) they said: "God made it," and the people who heard it said: "God made it." And the two ignorances countenanced each other. But by and by, you know astronomers explained the origin—the growth and decay—the destruction of worlds. Everlasting creation and everlasting destruction out of the same infinite reality in nature's method; and so the clergy gave up who made the world. They said we must drop that now. So they asked: "Who made all the species of animals, to say nothing of plants, in the earth?" Species, you know, they said, which always keep apart from each other, and however much they may seem to be running into each other, nevertheless maintain parallel lines. "Who made them? You don't know? You give it up? God made them."

By and by Charles Darwin came. He explained the origin of species, and the clergy dropped that. Then they asked; Who made man?" And they stood up with that supreme air of wisdom which characterizes them, and said:—"Brethren, who made man? Who made you? Who made me? Brethren, do you think that anything short of infinite wisdom made me?" If you had looked at him you would not have thought it. Which reminds me of Mr. Victor Hugo. Addressing the priests, he said: "You tell me that God made man in his own image, then if he is like you, he is a very ugly thing."

Now, Charles Darwin explained at last the origin of man, and the clergy said to each other (the knowing ones, I mean): "We must drop that." So now they ask: "Who made life? you don't know; you give it up? God made it." The same old answer of impudence to ignorance. Science has explained all along the line, and you and I await the further explanations of science.

Whenever a catastrophe occurs, many men and women become at once religious. If an earthquake occurs, that is the hand of God. If a volcano belches out lava and destroys the whole population of a city, that is the hand of God. On the other hand, if a great good fortune happens, the same people see the hand of God in that too.

In anything unusual which they cannot explain, there is the hand of God—but more usually in evil. If a man is going out with money in his pocket, and his wife or his sweetheart on his arm for a good day's outing, he is not religious. Talk religion to him, he says, "to-morrow." But if the train gets into an accident and he pulls through, he feels religious at once; and without troubling his head about all the poor devils who are dead, religion drops in, and he says: "Thank God I am alright."

And men pray to God—not all of them now—but still most do at times, if not, regularly. They ask for what they know in many cases they will never get. Ingersoll said: "People ask God to do sheer impossibilities. Why the other day I heard a man, with his eyes shut, asking God to give Congress wisdom." Well, we do as bad. I don't want to discuss politics, but look at the House of Lords. I say, look at them; and yet if the Church of England is read up you would find that the Lord is supplicated to endow the Lords of the Council and all the Nobility with grace, wisdom, and understanding. And they have not got it.

Thomas Carlyle, in his old age, said despondingly to Mr. Froude that "God does nothing new." The philosopher of Chelsea need not have taken so long to discover this truth. He might have perceived it fifty years sooner if he had not been blinded by the religious prejudices—or, as they are generally called, the religious principles—of his early training.

We do not deny, we are not concerned to deny, the Pantheism of a Spinoza, or the idea of God as a vast irresponsible power, governing the universe by general and unchangeable laws, and working out far-distant ends without a special attention to the individual happiness or misery of his sentient creatures. Such was the deity of Pope, who sneeringly asked, "Shall gravitation cease as you go by?" He overlooked the fact that the constancy of gravitation is a poor relief to the man whose head is broken by a falling chimney-pot. He also overlooked the fact that the God behind such a law does not come into any sort of moral relationship to his "children." Indeed, it is nonsense to call them his children. He is not even their step-father. To call him "Our Father" is a wretched abuse of language. But the other God, the God of the clergy, the God who sees and hears and notices all that happens—that God is fairly entitled to be called a Devil. To know that outrage and murder are to be committed, and not to move a finger to prevent them, is the sublimation of infamy. The outrager is

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inspired by his lust, the murderer by his passion, but the callous onlooker is the lowest of the three in the sink of degradation.

Cambridge and Education.

An Oxford man of my acquaintance who, by the way, is nothing if not malicious, assures me that sausages are the only things associated in most people's minds with Cambridge. As I always make a point of avoiding this article of food, I am unable to question the truth of his assertion. I willingly accept his eulogy of its gastronomic virtues. If nothing else, it is both solid and mysterious, and thus is, perhaps, no unfitting symbol of the spiritual characteristics of the English race. Yet I am not wholly inclined to agree that Cambridge scholarship shows up badly against the Cambridge sausage, however good it may be. The University has always been, and is now, very strong in science. In history, Prof. Bury has a European reputation for both knowledge and acumen; and in English letters, Dr. Greg, Mr. McKerrow, and others, manage to combine exactitude with enthusiasm; while Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch brings to his lectures on our literature an unacademic skittishness, a refreshing want of reverence for official critical opinion and accepted reputations. I am afraid that my Oxford friend knows as much about Cambridge scholarship as I do about the sausage; or, shall I say, as Mr. Belloc does about Gibbon.

I.

However that may be, Cambridge does not always give us that light and leading in intellectual matters which we have a right to expect from her. The bulky co-operative *History of English Literature* is a mere dead weight—a vast mausoleum. As a memorial to the great dead it is as impressive as the hideous mortuary sculpture in the Abbey. And now we have *Cambridge Essays on Education* (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d., net) on similar co-operative lines, and equally futile, if not so preposterously dull. It is made up of eleven essays, edited by Mr. A. C. Benson, who is not remarkable for breadth of thought, and it is introduced by the amiable and fussy publicist, Lord Bryce. The object of the book is to restate and enforce by argument sound principles in relation to education. And in view of this laudable design it is curious to note that elementary or democratic education is quietly passed over. If here or there it happens to be mentioned it is nowhere discussed. When we consider that 80 per cent. of the democratic educative material of the country passes through the elementary mill, we wonder at the fatuity of Mr. Benson in not inviting a specialist to give us his views on this side of the subject. But education for Mr. Benson and many others simply means public school education—the training fitted to turn out good bureaucrats and "vocal," not thinking journalists and politicians. Then too, strangely enough, Mr. Benson, from his masculine point of view, seems to think that women have no need of education; at any rate, he has forgotten to ask a woman to write on the principles underlying the education of her sex. There is an essay by the Master of Mill Hill School on education as a preparation for practical life for which women have shown, as we might have expected, pre-eminent aptitude. Yet you may search in vain for the slightest hint that the services of women, practical or intellectual, are of any importance whatever. Can any man in his right senses wonder at the feminist movement when intelligent men are so stupidly highhanded?

The fault lies less with the writers of the different essays than with the editor who invited them to instruct us on certain subjects. It was for him to provide and see that every side of the subject should be discussed. But Mr. Benson is merely an amiable man-of-letters with a charming style, and a little practice in one branch of education. He is the last man we should have asked to bring together a collection of essays on the principles of education. Then, again, co-operation does not make for breadth and poise of ideas. It is questionable if any one of the writers would have ignored two important aspects of the subject if he had had to cover the whole ground himself. The title of the book, if not a misnomer, it is certainly misleading. We are led to expect a complete survey, and are put off with a sectional one.

II.

But I would not have the reader assume from my depreciation of the volume as a whole, that it is not good in parts. It is both very bad and very good; and some of the most stupid and some of the wisest things are said by parsons. The Master of Wellington School writes on the subject of "Religion at School." Now, the healthy school-boy is, by nature, non-religious. He is inclined to associate religion with sneaks and prigs. If chapels are compulsory he attends, of course; and habits once formed may last throughout life. But mere acquiescence in the national form of religion is in itself a dubious blessing. It makes for hypocrisy; or, at least, indicates easy-going pragmatism, which sets truth below utility. Mr. Vaughan believes in compulsory attendance. He also insists on the moral effect and religious value of confirmation at school, which he thinks will last on through life. It may, in some cases; but I doubt if these particular boys would have been any the worse if they had not been confirmed at school. On the other hand, I have known many boys on whom it had no effect.

No doubt I may be told that the teaching is at fault. "How seldom," the writer says, "does a Christian education teach one anything worth knowing about Christianity?" He then goes on to desiderate the qualities of an effective teacher of the national religion. He must be as broadminded as he is devout. He must assimilate the ideas of Harnack and Inge on the philosophy and history of religion; and, I suppose, must face the more disturbing criticism of Professor Drews and Mr. J. M. Robertson. But he will treat, if not the Old Testament, at least the New Testament, with becoming reverence. Of course, he will not try to drag his pupils to the point to which these books have brought him after years of study—that would not be a wise economy of truth. But what if one or two pupils of a more inquiring turn of mind should bring back with them some of the R.P.A. cheap reprints which they may have heard their parents and friends discuss? What a deep impression will be left on the mind of a boy who finds that his religious and moral guide has been hiding the truth from fear of its consequences, and supporting doctrines and facts in which he no longer believed. The ideal of religious education for Mr. Vaughan is that the boy should *know in his heart* (not in his head, which has nothing to do with religion) the meaning of the mysterious terms Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection. And this heart-knowledge will no doubt save him from scepticism when, later on in life, he finds that these cardinal facts of Christianity are either rejected or symbolized by the more intelligent, if less logical, of the supporters of Christianity.

As to the inculcation of the so-called Christian virtues of truthfulness, temperance, chastity, courtesy, I venture to think that a Rationalist with the moral fervour of Mr. F. J. Gould would do more in six months with

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ordinary tractable material, the average decent-natured boy, than the parsons would in six years.

III.

I do not wish to give the impression that all the essays in the volume are as nugatory as the one on "Religion in the School." There are at least two that are a pleasure to read. Dean Inge is always interesting because he always allows himself a freedom of thought which is noticeably piquant as coming from a parson. He writes on "The Training of the Reason." The aim of education, he says, "is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values. Values are facts apprehended in their relation to each other and to ourselves. The wise man is he who knows the relative value of things. In this knowledge, and in the use made of it, is summed up the whole conduct of life." He points out that we English gave too much importance to common sense, and that in all classes there is a profound distrust of ideas, often "amounting to what Plato called 'misologia,' *hatred of reason*. An Englishman, as Bishop Creighton said, not only has no ideas, he hates an idea when he meets one. We discount the opinion of a man who bases his judgment on first principles." We are not a quick-witted race, and if our actions are, in the main, on the side of rectitude, it is more by instinct than thought.

"Recent philosophy," he tells us, in a witty passage,—

> has encouraged these advocates of common sense, who have long been pragmatists without knowing it, to profess their faith without shame. Intellect has been disparaged and instinct has been exalted. Intuition is a safer guide than reason, we are told, for intuition goes straight to the heart of a situation, and has already acted while reason is debating. Much of this new philosophy is a kind of higher obscurantism; the man in the street applauds Bergson and William James because he dislikes science and logic, and values will, courage, and sentiment. He used to be fond of repeating that Waterloo was won on the playing fields of our public schools, until it was painfully obvious that Colenso and Spion Kop was lost in the same place. We have muddled through so often that we have come half to believe in a providence which watches over unintelligent virtue. "Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever," we have said to Britannia. So we have acquiesced in being the worst educated people west of the Slav frontier.

This surely is as well said as it is worth saying, and Dean Inge is equally wise when he says of the Englishman's call of "duty" that it is an empty ideal until we know what our duty is. He notes the confusion of means and ends implied in irrational accumulation, and the unhealthy reaction of the so-called practical man on educational ideals. Wisdom, he assures us, must be sought for its own sake, or we shall not find it. The trained reason is disinterested and fearless. He is dead against the examination system, with its dependence on the memory, which has been "called the most worthless of our mental powers." The importance of a good curriculum, he thinks, is exaggerated. It matters less what a boy learns than how he is taught. He would have him trained in two branches, science and humanism; and it is a sign of more intelligent ideals of education that he insists that the Greek and Latin should be read *in mass in translations*. In fine, the essay is packed full of ideas. It is a genuine contribution to educational thought.

IV.

If Dean Inge's attitude is refreshingly rational, Professor Bateson's is outspokenly rationalistic. His essay on the place of science in education goes to the root of the matter. Some of the things he says will startle the official educationist. He holds that many men are congenitally unscientific; they form the section from which are drawn the heads of government, temporal and spiritual—the lawyers, administrators, and politicians. To force science upon them would not alter their cast of mind in any way, this intellectual type being vocal rather than rational. We remember the foolish blunder a Home Secretary made over glycerine some while ago, and only lately the Bishop of London said that Nature helped him to believe in God, basing his belief on the fact that we are not "blown off" the earth as it rushes through space, and "declaring that that catastrophe had been averted by 'Someone's' wrapping twenty miles of atmosphere round the planet."

"Does anyone think," says Professor Bateson,—

> that the Bishop's slip was due to want of scientific teaching at Marlborough.....I would rather suppose that such sublunary problems had not interested him in the least, and that he no more cared how we happen to stick on the earth's surface than St. Paul cared how a grain of wheat germinates beneath it, when he similarly was betrayed into an unfortunate illustration.

Professor Bateson's suggestion—and in my opinion a wise one—is that every boy should be taught science in such a way as to confirm his scientific bias, if he has one; if he is congenitally unscientific, the fact will soon show itself, and he can be trained for one of the "vocal" professions, the basis of which is a more or less pragmatic compromise. He may become a light in the Church, in politics, law, or journalism, where ideas do not count for much, but he will be out of his element in science.

Professor Bateson has a righteous contempt for the humanists (often parsons) who are fond of telling us that science is vulgarly utilitarian—that it does not work in the sphere of ideas. "The splendid purpose which science serves," he says, "is the inculcation of principle and balance, not facts." The man of science to-day is as much opposed to religion, with its apocryphal glosses of evidential truth, as was Huxley to revelation. And "were Huxley here he would treat Bergson and his allies with the same scorn and contumely that he meted out to the Bishop of Oxford." "Agnosticism," he goes on, "is the very life and mainspring of science." We must believe nothing under compulsion. The whole essay is a proof of the value of ideas based on Rationalism the lead of which is followed with unwavering courage.

The other essays, which discuss the places of Literature, Athletics, Citizenship, Leisure in Education, do not call for any special comment. They say many things with which one agrees, but do not break new ground. They do not compare with the outspoken work to which I have given prominence.

Geo. Underwood.

Correspondence.

BIOLOGY AND GOD.

To the Editor of the "Freethinker."

Sir,—You have before now received letters asking for advice with regard to books which would be useful to the student of Freethought. On one or two occasions lists of books have been given in our beloved paper. Will you permit me to draw attention to a small introductory work on Biology, which I have found to be both interesting and instructive? It is *Biology*, by W. D. Henderson, M.A., B.Sc (Jack's "The People's Books," 7d.). The above-mentioned work contains so much compressed writing, in its eighty odd pages, that I think the Freethinker who takes a non-expert interest in Biology would do well to read it. This subject being the Science of Life, it is one of the most important spheres of study to the modern Freethinker. And

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who is the Freethinker who does not wish to know something of the scope and method of Biology?

In his "Introduction," Mr. Henderson maps out the field of biological study, pointing out "that Biology does not concern itself with the particular kinds of plants and animals; that is the aim of the special sciences of Botany and Zoology, but it has to answer questions dealing with the form and structure of living things, with their activities, their origin, and the factors in their evolution" (p. 9).

The work contains chapters on "The Origin of Life," "Cell Division," "Sensitivity in Plants and Animals," "Response to Certain Stimuli on Plants and Animals," "Reproduction," "The Struggle for Existence," and "Heredity." Of all these I cannot write now, but the impression left after the reading of the book, which is written only from the standpoint of a scientist, is that Biology is on the side of a Naturalist philosophy of the universe—if the reader be not of a biased mind. Without being dogmatic on the subject, the author sums up the modern biological position relative to the "Origin of Life":—

> Looking now at the evolution of living matter by the light which is shed upon it by the evolution of matter in general, there must have been a gradual process of change from material which was lifeless to material which has all the characteristics of what we call living matter. Now this gradually evolved material may have been in the form of minute ultra-microscopic particles, and so no traces of it are found in the geological record (p. 12).

This last sentence should be well kept in mind. The chapter on "The Criteria of Life" impresses upon us the difficulty of drawing a strict line of demarcation between the living and the non-living. While the chapter in which the evolution of the single-celled forms of life to the multi-cellular organism is outlined, causes us to reflect—if step by step we can trace the connection between lowly forms of life and the most complex forms, why should it not be possible for the lowest forms, to have developed from non-living forms of matter? But I must leave the reader to his own reflections, and close with the following quotation, which will give food for thought on the struggle for existence:—

> If anyone doubts the reality of this struggle, let him take a brief glance at the various forms of animals. Throughout the world there is a superabundance of weapons and of armour. From the simplest forms with their offensive threads we pass to the stings of insects, the large pincers of crabs and lobsters, the teeth of sharks, the horns and hoofs and fangs of mammals. With armour it is just the same; thus we have the shells of crabs and molluscs, the scales of fishes and of reptiles, and the hair and feathers of mammals and birds (p. 74).

What agents for the expression of divine love!

B. E. F., France. E. Egerton Stafford.

WHY A CLERGYMAN?

Sir,—I am an Atheist, father of ten children, eight of whom are living. I have tried to give them a good education, also tried to teach them the duties of being truthful and honest to others; in fact, I have done my best to make them, as they became men and women, fit citizens of the country. I find that they have to suffer for the supposed sins of their father, as witness the following: In response to an invitation from a large Tyneside firm a daughter of mine presented herself recently for a test examination for a clerkship. On the form she had to fill up was a request that she must give names of at least two persons of whom inquiry might be made as to character, etc. To this no sensible person could object.

But, mark, one must be a *clergyman!* Think of it! In this country where one hears such blessed words as Freedom, Toleration, and Equality, I, an Atheist, must go to a clergyman begging a favour of him, or otherwise my children will be punished. Well, my girl went through with the work set down for examination in spite of the fact that she was unable to give more than one person's name for reference. Until now she has not heard anything from the firm; of course, she may not have satisfied them as to her efficiency, but I expect that the clergyman's name being omitted has prejudiced her case. If such has been the fact, is it not intolerable that such a thing should take place at the present day, especially when we are boasting so much about freedom? It seems hard that after keeping them at school beyond the age when they could leave, my daughter is nearly sixteen years of age and still going to school, and I have paid a large fee to get her into a Higher Grade School, she has attended private classes in the evenings, all of which means a sacrifice. In conclusion, let me say my object in writing is to draw the attention of the public to the above facts, in the belief that any fair-minded person who has any such condition attached to the employment of anyone beginning their apprenticeship, will at least give them a chance to choose whom they may select for references, instead of a hard and fast line as in the present case.

Justice.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Sir,—I quite agree with "Freethinker's" suggestion in your last number as to adopting the measure, in discussions with Christians, of first asking them to define their idea of God.

"Freethinker's" friend gave the definition—"the spirit of goodness," etc.—and "Freethinker" says that we scarcely disagree with this.

May I be allowed to point out that the expression used is ambiguous? It may mean the idea (or ideal) of goodness, as it may mean the spirit (or spiritual being) with the attribute of goodness. From the account given, it is obvious that "Freethinker's" friend used it in the latter sense, and in that sense we do disagree.

R. H. N.

Society News.

South London Branch N.S.S.—It will be seen from our list of to-day's meetings that a debate will take place at the Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road (near Kennington Road Tube Station). The subject is, "That Modern Secularism is Useless as an Instrument of Social Reform." Mr. F. Vickers, a well-known South London Socialist, will open in the affirmative, and Mr. P. S. Wilde will oppose. The question is of current interest, and a good attendance is being anticipated, as the moon will not be favourable for a hostile air-raid. The Annual Meeting of the Branch will be held on Wednesday, March 6, at 8, at the above hall.—W. Hanmer Owen, Hon. Sec.

West Central Hall (London).—Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's excellent lecture was received with much applause, and followed by a good discussion. This is the final lecture of the series, as we are unable to obtain the hall for next month, much to our regret.—E. M. Vance, Gen. Sec.

North London Branch N. S. S.—Miss Boyle is always inspiring and stimulating, and, in spite of the ever-dreaded air-raids, a fair audience enjoyed her lecture on Sunday evening. To-day, Mr. Joad, of the Fabian Society, pays us his second visit. We expect a brisk discussion, and hope North Londoners will attend in full force.

Nuneaton Branch N.S.S.—Mr. T. F. Palmer delivered two greatly appreciated lectures here on Sunday last. Everyone present appeared to enjoy the addresses, and there was quite a good sale of literature. Our next lecture will be on Sunday, March 10, by Mr. Willis, of Birmingham.—A. T. Johnson, Hon. Sec.

Unconscious fun is often very happy. In the Admiralty Court recently a marine witness, taking up the card on which the oath is printed began loudly, "I swear by the Admiralty God."

Rita, the well-known novelist, has published a book, entitled *The Wrong End of Religion*, which her publishers describe as a "slashing attack on the hypocrisy of modern religion." Although the thunder is borrowed from Freethought writers, the book should flutter the dovecotes of orthodoxy.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. Cyril E. M. Joad, "The Prussian Theory of the State." Open Debate.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Debate. "That Modern Secularism is Useless as an Instrument of Social Reform." Affirmative, Mr. F. Vickers. Negative, Mr. P. S. Wilde.

OUTDOOR.

Hyde Park, 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Swasey, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. F. E. Willis, "Sacred Fetishes."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Thirty-sixth Anniversary of the Opening of the Secular Hall.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 23 Cable Street): 7, Mr. J. A. Hammond, "The World of Space."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Sanders, "Two Great Greeks and Philosophy."

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): Mr. C. Cohen, 3.30, "Why Men Believe in God"; 6.30, "Do the Dead Live?"

Southampton Branch N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Mr. T. F. Rayner, "The Life and Work of Charles Darwin."

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. J. L. Carr, "What Freethought Has Done For Me."

South Place Ethical Society,

South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

Sunday Morning Services.

March 3, at 11 o'clock—

Dr. F. H. HAYWARD.

"Shakespeare's 'King Lear' and the Meaning."

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Sociology and Religion.—The Editor	145
"A People's Soul."—J. T. Lloyd	146
Gerald Massey.—Mimnermus	148
The Last Day.—Andrew Millar	149
Richard Wagner.—Robert Arch	150
Acid Drops	151
Pilate.—G. H. Bosworth	152
To Correspondents	153
Sugar Plums	153
The Queen of Night.—T. F. Palmer	154
The Poet of Mortality.—H. George Farmer	155
Up for Judgment.—Arthur B. Moss	156
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	157
Notice of Meetings	158
Pamphlets	159
Books	160

Views and Opinions.

A Religious Revival.

It is generally agreed amongst religious writers that the last twenty-seven years of the eighteenth century, and the first twenty-five of the nineteenth, witnessed a great revival of the religious spirit in England. And there is much to justify the statement—always bearing in mind the compensating fact that it was a period during which popular Freethought also made a great advance. But limiting our survey to religious activities, we have to note that the Wesleyan revival was in full swing, and Evangelical Christianity was never so busy, nor, apparently so full of promise. That it was a period of great religious activity is undeniable. The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1802, the London Missionary Society in 1800, the Religious Tract Society in 1799, the Church Missionary Society in 1796, the Mission to the Jews in 1808, the Christian Knowledge Society in 1804. And putting on one side a number of smaller societies, we have to note that Parliament voted a million for building churches in 1813, and a further half-million in 1824. Finally, between 1801 and 1831 no less than 500 churches were built. If religious activity meant increased happiness and well being, the England of the first quarter of the nineteenth century should have been an ideal place.

* * *

Religion and the People.

Now, we would like our readers to pay special regard to the intense religious activity of these years, because it has a very direct bearing on what follows. For some time we have been intending to deal with *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*, by J. L. and Barbara Hammond.[1] As a study of one phase of English civilization, the importance of the book is beyond question. As a study of brutality under a gloss of morality and religion the book is profoundly interesting—even where it rouses moral nausea. It is a story of the practical enslavement of a whole class of the population, of the exploitation of young children and women in the interests of a "soulless" commercialism, and by a people who, all the time, professed the utmost concern for the religious condition of their serfs. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond lay but slight stress on the religious side of the picture, nor do they point out the way in which the Christian religion helped to perpetuate the horrors they describe. To do so would have been outside the scope of their purpose; but it is quite within ours. Indeed, our purpose in writing is to point to the conclusion that but for religion the things that Mr. and Mrs. Hammond depict would have been almost impossible of realization. And this not alone, because of the influence on those who suffered, but also because of the influence of religion on those who perpetuated the injustice. That provided the *moral* outlet essential to the occasion. And the moral we wish to emphasize was never more important than to-day.

[1] Longmans, Green & Co. 10s. 6d.

* * *

The English Factory System.

Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's book covers the period during which the manufacturing power of England was organized and consolidated. The Common Lands had been taken from the people; agriculture was discouraged or deliberately obstructed in order to drive the labouring classes into the towns and to furnish material for the factories. The factory system was established, huge fortunes were made, and the commercial prosperity of England went ahead by leaps and bounds. Everything that made for greater profit seemed allowable. Says our authors: "Immense fortunes were made in cotton, wool, iron, and coal, but on the workers in these industries there fell degradation and distress.....The general feature of the times was the rise of a large class of rich employers and the creation of a large and miserable proletariat." It is, perhaps, impossible for anyone to-day to realize the full horror of the English factory system or of the conditions of labour generally a hundred years ago. Women worked long hours in factories and in mines—in the latter places with chains belted to their waists, drawing trucks of coal from the face of the seam to the bottom of the shaft. Men were poorly paid, and there were rigorous laws against any attempt at combination to raise wages or secure any change in the conditions of labour. But worst and most revolting of all was the universality and the character of child labour. Workhouse children were purchased by employers, and remained practically at their mercy. In the Macclesfield mills children under five years of age were at work. In other mills the official age was six or seven. The various parishes apprenticed their unwanted children to mill-owners at the age of seven, remaining until they were twenty-one. They were kept working from twelve to fifteen hours per day, and thrashed for offences. Their bed often consisted of a dirty blanket to lie on, and another for covering. But it is cheering to know that, against charges of cruelty, it was retorted that the children were taught to read the Bible and the New Testament, and "every attention was paid to the strict observance of the Sabbath." In the mines, children of seven were employed—underground, be it re-

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membered; and older girls, "chained, belted, harnessed like dogs in a go-cart, saturated with wet, and more than half naked, crawling upon their hands and feet, and dragging their heavy loads behind them." Children were also employed to sweep chimneys—a practice unknown outside the British Isles. These were sent up narrow chimneys, brush in hand, and often straw lit behind them to encourage quickness of movement. Their flesh became broken, but in about six months hardened to the work. Some masters washed them once a week, others just left them alone. The boys were stunted in growth, blear-eyed from the soot, 'flapper-kneed' from climbing. Deaths were common. Yet in 1803, when a mild Bill was introduced into the House of Lords, regulating the trade, it was rejected by a House consisting of one Archbishop, five Bishops, three Dukes, five Earls, one Viscount, and ten Barons. During the existence of these complicated horrors, and the systematic slaughter of children for pure gain, the country was bristling with renewed religious activities, punishing Freethinkers for circulating Paine's writings, and fighting France *for the preservation of freedom and the security of civilization.*

* * *

How Religion Works.

Education during this period was at a low ebb. Churches were plentiful, and ignorance was general. In Oldham and Ashton, with a population of 105,000, there was not a single public school for poor children. As late as 1840, 40 per cent. of the men and 65 per cent. of the women could not write their own names. Where schools existed, the schcolmasters were often of the most ignorant type, "the refuse of other callings." England was, in the matter of education, behind the rest of the world. Said Dean Alford in 1839, "Switzerland is before us, Prussia is before us, France is before us." England alone left the education of the poor to charity schools and Sunday-schools. There was, however, method in the madness. It was said by one authority that education given to the poor—

> would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them.....It would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors.

But if education was scanty and oppression rife, at least religion was well looked after, and that atoned for much. Hannah Moore consoled the poor of one parish with the reflection that "in suffering by the scarcity you have..... the pleasure of knowing the advantage you have had over many villages in your having suffered no scarcity of religious instruction." To the women of Shipham, in 1840, she wrote that their sufferings had been "permitted by an all-wise and gracious Providence.....to show the poor how immediately dependent they are upon the rich, and to show both rich and poor that they are all dependent upon Himself." So also Wilberforce—keenly interested in the abolition of slavery, with the maintenance of which English manufacturing interests were not vitally connected—wrote, in his *Practical View of the System of Christianity*, that religion taught the poor to be diligent, humble, and patient, and advises them—

> that their more lowly path has been allotted them by the hand of God; that it is their part faithfully to discharge its duties and contentedly to bear its inconveniences.....Having food and raiment they should be content.....that all human distinctions will soon be done away with, and the true followers of Christ will all, as children of the same Father, be alike admitted to the possession of the same heavenly inheritance.

It was not without cause that the ruling classes of a hundred people years ago dreaded the growth of Freethought. They at least had grasped the lesson that nothing would so serve their purpose as a properly taught religion. It would be well if all reformers saw that truth with equal clearness to-day.

* * *

Pietistic Activities.

Finally, our survey of the period would be incomplete if it failed to notice the activity of the authorities against Freethought. This, of course, lies outside the scope of Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's work, but its importance is great nevertheless. The influence of Paine was great, and his writings were a source of terror to the authorities. Associations were formed for their discussion, and prosecutions were numerous. Paine himself was tried and condemned in his absence. Many people, in both England and Scotland, were imprisoned or transported under various charges. It was the period of the series of Carlile prosecutions. Carlile himself spent over nine years in prison for selling the *Age of Reason*. One of the cases connected with Paine, noted by the authors, is decidedly humorous. In 1819 a man was arrested for selling Paine's works. He was thrown into prison, and remained there until some "respectable gentleman" wrote the Home Office pointing out that a mistake had been made. The pamphlet was *against* Paine—not for him. It was a peculiarly vile production, composed by Mrs. Trimmer, of the Religious Tract Society, giving a lying and repulsive picture of Paine's life and death. We happen to have a copy of this pamphlet, and we can answer for its objectionable character. The man was, of course, released. But it was, probably, the only case in connection with Paine's writings that deserved severe treatment.

* * *

There is one other, and most important, aspect of this subject with which we hope to deal next week.

Chapman Cohen.

"A People's Soul."

The *Cambrian Daily Leader* for February 19 contained the report of a remarkable speech which the Rev. Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, had just delivered at the Walter Road Congregational Church, Swansea. It was an appeal, in "moving words," to the Nonconformists of South Wales to bestir themselves and prepare for the mighty changes which the War is sure to bring about. Dr. Selbie began his address by asserting that "the spiritual side of a nation's life was the most important." Clergymen seldom open their mouths without indulging in some vague expression of that kind. Usually, by the spiritual life is meant the religious exercises in church and chapel which professing Christians are supposed to go through with unbroken regularity. Such exercises are generally described as public worship, the neglect of which is one of the chief of our national sins. We must, however, do Principal Selbie the justice of chronicling the fact that, in his estimation, the spiritual quality of man means simply his "morale." He finds many instances of this out on the battlefields. "Men who were regarded as being of but little use in the world—mere wasters—face to face with the terrible conditions out there had made good." This is doubtless true enough, and is a source of genuine rejoicing, though we utterly fail to see how it shows "the immense power of the spiritual over the material." But what does our divine understand by the term "material" as opposed to spiritual? He contends that prior to the War "there had been a preponderance of the materialistic view of things in this

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country"; but he is careful not to supply us with a definition of what he calls the materialistic view of life. Newspaper correspondents, like all others, have their faults; but it is quite possible that some of them are as well versed in history as the Principal himself, though their interpretation of life may be different from his. He is certainly mistaken if he imagines that so-called Materialists regard the strength of empires as resting "on material force alone." We confidently challenge him to name one accredited Materialist who can legitimately be charged with such an error. He is reported to have said:—

> The history of the Babylonian, the Roman, the Greek, the Spanish Empires demonstrated that their downfall had taken place not when they were weak, but at the moment of their greatest material power, when they had reached the acme of their strength. Suddenly they had faltered, failed, and were destroyed—when the hearts of the people had become unsound, when they were sunk in materialism and sensuality.

We do not accuse Dr. Selbie of ignorance of history but we cannot close our eyes to the fact that he distorts it to serve his own purpose of discrediting what he falsely calls Materialism. The fall of dynasties is always preceded by a decline. They do not suddenly collapse when at the zenith of their power; and both the decline and the fall of the Roman Empire, for example, occurred after it had become Christian. Long before its end came it had been, intellectually, morally, and even physically, seriously on the down grade. In consequence of climatic conditions, and the inevitable falling off in the physical qualities of men and women in consequence of inferior men becoming fathers through the absence of the physically fittest on distant battlefields. The only rational conclusion, therefore, is that the Roman Empire fell, not when it had reached the acme of its power, but when it had undergone fatal deterioration in every respect. The historians trace that gradual degeneration through many generations.

What Principal Selbie means by the soul of a nation he does not tell us, nor does he attempt to define the term "vital principles"; but he is of opinion that a nation may lose its soul, whatever it may be. Etymologically, spirit, soul, or ghost signifies wind or breath. That is the primary sense of the words, while in the secondary sense they denote the life and disposition, or character, of individuals and nations. It is clear that Dr. Selbie does not employ the word "soul" in either of those senses. He means it by "reverence for the Unseen," "spiritual powers and faculties"; and he concludes that if the British people lost their soul, as thus defined, "then, however large the Navy or Army, they would perish, and nothing could stay their fall." To the Principal, evidently, the Unseen is only another name for God, and spiritual powers and faculties are the means of communion with Heaven for the cultivation and maintenance of which the churches exist. The pious divine explains his position fully in the following passage:—

> The churches existed to worship God, to keep the soul alive. Thus was their existence justified. They were doing as great and as good a work—yes, that night in thinking of God and the things of God—as if they were actually fighting at the front. They were fighting a greater enemy than Germany or Austria. They were fighting the internal enemy of the soul of man. So long as the world continued, that fight would have to go on. Germany might be conquered, but the Devil would be unconquered still, and they would have to fight for the soul of the people.

Beyond a doubt the soul of a people is their capacity for belief in and fellowship with God, without which they cannot prosper. Such is the contention of one of the most prominent leaders of the Free Churches They all seem to believe that it is thinking of God and the things of God that makes an individual or a nation great and powerful; but the fact that stares us in the face is that God has not succeeded in persuading individuals and nations to think of him and his things with sufficient energy and ardour to make them invincibly great. The Churches have a greater enemy than Germany thirsting for their blood, and that is godlessness; and it is to fight this foe that they exist. The curious thing is that the soul of a people resides alone in the professing Christians to be found among them, and that the Christians of every age have failed to communicate it to outsiders. It is a more astonishing fact still that Germany, despite her evangelicalism and the growing orthodoxy of her churches and universities, is said, with "good reason," to have lost her soul. What that "good reason" is we are not informed, though, reading between the lines, we infer that it is her alleged responsibility for the present War.

Apparently, the main difference between Germany and Great Britain is that the former has lost her soul, while the latter is only in danger of losing hers. In both countries the Church is the army of God, and in both its mission has been a signal failure. It is only natural for Dr. Selbie to think highly of the institution whose servant he is, and upon which he is dependent for his livelihood; but there is no getting away from the fact that this God's army is the most inefficient force in the world. No great world-movement is aware of its existence, or has been affected by it in the least. The Principal tacitly admits that this is true. He says:—

> He thought that one of the greatest things that had been impressed upon the mind by the circumstances of the War was that the churches were not ends in themselves, but means to an end. Jesus Christ came into the world not to found churches but to establish the kingdom of God. The Church was set up as a means to that kingdom. The Church was not a comfortable coterie of people, but it was here on earth as a living instrument in the hands of God.

That extract puts a most cogent argument into the hand of the critic of the Church. The claim made for the War is that, somehow or other, it has brought home to the Churches the great truth that they are but means to an end, namely, the establishment upon earth of the kingdom of heaven. Assuming that the War has made such an unlikely revelation, the only possible conclusion is that the Church has come deplorably short of answering the object of its existence. Even Principal Selbie has not the timerity to assert that the kingdom of God has been set up on earth. But the Church has been a failure, not as a human institution, but as "a living instrument in the hands of God," which is tantamount to saying that God himself has failed. Does the Principal not realize that this is the only natural import of his statement? Of course, he shifts the blame from God to the instrument, saying: "It is no use crying over spilt milk." That is true by whomsoever the milk is spilt. Dr. Selbie holds the Church responsible, and observes:—

> There was among Christian people to-day a real spirit of penitence because the Church had not been able to do more. But it was far more important to ask themselves what they could do rather than sit down regretting. Repentance was not remorse. Repentance was not the headache next morning. It was a change of mind, of attitude. It was a fresh start.

In reality, however, he who needs repentance is God, not man. God ought to repent in dust and ashes, and in his case repentance should be remorse, the headache next morning, for having created a being capable of com-

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mitting suicide, or endowed with a natural tendency towards that which is evil. He ought to repent, besides, for having chosen the Church as his instrument for remaking the world. It is his fault, and his alone, that what goes by the name of the kingdom of heaven is still a dreamed-of reality of the future. A well-known divine said not very long ago: "The wonder of wonders is that God has appointed us to do his work, when we know that he could have done it infinitely better without us." The truth is there's not a single scrap of evidence that there is a supernatural being in the business at all. Indeed, speaking of the child, Dr. Selbie says: "So long as there is necessity for a society such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, we should be modest about our Christianity." Surely, no remarks could be more opportune. Christianity has either woefully neglected or shamefully maltreated the child. It has always endeavoured to train it for heavenly rather than earthly citizenship, with the result that Christians regard themselves as strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, whose only treasure is in heaven, where their hearts should be also. What is needed is a system of education in which life here and now is the only thing that matters, and in which no supernatural dreams find a place.

J. T. LLOYD.

Gerald Massey.

The genius that can stand alone
As the minority of one,
Or with the faithful few be found
Working and waiting till the rest come round.
—*Gerald Massey.*

GERALD MASSEY, poet, ethnologist, and Egyptologist, had a very interesting career. To use Browning's expressive phrase, he was "ever a fighter." He fought every day of his long life, which was prolonged beyond the usual span, and his sword was in his good, right hand until the day of his death. Massey's early life is the grimmiest of comments on the "good, old days." The son of a bargeman, he was born in the grip of poverty. At an age when more fortunate children were at school, he was working in a mill for eleven hours daily at the weekly wage of one shilling. This was not the worst. He became a straw-plaiter, and for three years lived in the black shadow of starvation, often prostrated by illness. Writing of that awful, early life of his, he said afterwards, "I had no childhood." Think of it! The author of those beautiful and tender poems, "Babe Christabel" and "The Mother's Idol Broken," "had no childhood." It is a tragedy "too deep for tears."

In spite of it all, young Massey learned to read and write, and became familiar with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Brave, old Bunyan and "unabashed" Defoe are not bad schoolmasters for a quick, intelligent boy, for they wrote their books in two languages—in literature and in life. At fifteen years of age Massey came to London and became an errand-boy. In the great Metropolis books were procurable, and his literary appetite was voracious. He read everything he could lay his hands on; "going without meals to buy books, and without sleep to read them." What a picture of the past, the old days of storm and peril, when the soldiers of freedom arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. For Massey lived right through the heroic age of English liberty. It was during that stirring period that he laid the foundation of that encyclopædic knowledge which made him one of the noted critics and scholars of his time.

The revolutionary movements of 1848 greatly impressed Massey, and many of his verses are the direct outcome of this period of struggle. Republicanism was in the air, and he became a Republican. At twenty-one he was editing *The Spirit of Freedom*, a revolutionary publication, mainly written by himself. Then he contributed to Thomas Cooper's *Journal*, and other democratic papers. He became known, and numbered among his friends the warm-hearted Charles Kingsley, and Frederick Denison Maurice, a Christian minister, who is remembered for his denunciations of one of the chief dogmas of the religion he professed.

Massey's first book of verse was issued when he was but nineteen. Later came his *Voices of Freedom*, which showed a notable advance. Hepworth Dixon, of the *Athenæum*, was greatly attracted by the fiery and impassioned *Song of a Red Republican*, and recognized it as the work of a man who had something to say and could say it well. Among the admirers which Massey's early poems won for him were Landor, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Lytton. A still greater honour awaited him, for "George Eliot" made him her model for the hero of *Felix Holt*, which was like having his name written in gold on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

It was "Babe Christabel" which made Gerald Massey famous. With this he stormed the bastions of success at one leap. Lion-hearted Landor praised it, and the author was hailed as a rising star. The following lines give some idea of the poem:—

Babe Christabel was royally born!
For when the earth was flushed with flowers,
And drenched with beauty in sun showers,
She came through golden gates of morn.

The tenderness and grace of this poem are in direct contrast with the stirring music of his political songs, which recalls the effects of sonorous metal blowing martial sounds. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny roused the poet, and he never sang so finely as in his *War Waits*, a volume which is well worth reprinting. He was never so near being a great poet. Despite his limitations, Massey was a real singer, and his verses came straight from his heart, and are charged with passion. There is the true lyrical note, and he sang to a richer music in a clearer tongue than many of his contemporaries. One of his poems, "Scarlett's Three Hundred," indeed, challenges comparison with Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."

In the maturity of his powers, Gerald Massey deliberately put aside the laurel wreath, and devoted himself to the nobler work of the emancipation of his fellows. He turned away from verse writing and put all his energies to a scholarly and philosophic exposure of the greatest religious fraud of all the ages. His books, *The Book of Beginnings*, *The Natural Genesis*, *Ancient Egypt; the Light of the World*, have had to be reckoned with. For Massey shows that the holy mother and child—the one a virgin, the other a god—were worshipped in Egypt many centuries before the Christian era. It was there that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends, were manufactured. In a pregnant passage in *The Natural Genesis*, Massey says:—

> The writer has not only shown that the current theology is, but also how it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man and ignorantly mistaking these for divine revelations.

It was not an easy task that the poet-scholar had imposed upon himself. In the noble dedicatory verses to *The Natural Genesis* he shows, with rare pathos, the isolation of a scholar's life. He compares himself to a diver whose friends watch anxiously for his return:—

Year after year went by,
And watchers wondered when
The diver to their welcoming cry
Of joy, would rise again.

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And still rolled on Time's wave,
That shortened as it passed;
The ground is getting toward the grave
That I have reached at last.

Child after child would say—
"Ah! when his work is done,
Father will come with us and play"—
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.

A willing slave for years,
I strove to set men free;
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,
Be theirs the victory.

When George William Foote was in Holloway Gaol for "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt," Massey wrote to Dr. Aveling and, referring to Foote, said, "I fight the same battle as himself, although with a somewhat different weapon." Massey wished clearly to be reckoned as a fellow-soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity. Yet, at his death, the "glorious free press of England" concealed the fact that the scholar-poet was a Freethinker. One specially "Liberal" paper proudly claimed him as a "Christian Socialist." The plain truth is, that Massey spent half of a very lengthy life in showing the mythical nature of the Christian superstition. And he did wisely. The instinct of Massey's maturity, which led him to forsake poetry for Freethought, was a perfectly sound one. His poetry largely belongs to the past, but his scholarly criticism of Christianity has helped, materially, to hasten the dawn of Freedom.

Mimnermus.

The Last Day.

A Vision of Judgment.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away.

Whether I believed or disbelieved, I cannot quite remember, but I used to imagine it fearfully enough. The picture must have been early engraven on the mind, for I cannot recall a time when it did not appear, more or less vividly, far or near, in the vista of childish psychology. I can see it still when I choose. It was very grand in its way. The Lord of Hosts, like a great military commander, had made his headquarters at the end of a green and rocky valley. The valley is verdant, the dear old rocks are vivid still, because mundane and familiar, perhaps; all else is vague, but omnipresent—celestial messengers going and coming, fiery aerial chariots, seraphim with swords of flame, and, browsing somewhere, all the horned and hydra-headed menagerie of the Apocalypse; the angels and the vials of wrath, lit in the baleful glare of subterranean fires; all the quick and the dead from our bucolic neighbourhood, from hamlet and cemetery, the halt and the blind, hurrying to be damned! It was the last great assize, the ultimate court-martial. The Crown Prince was on his way, somewhere between Jupiter and the moon, as foretold in the line, "Lo, He comes, in clouds descending," but this time coming to condemn; militant at last, and mighty, as "So spake the Son, and into terror changed his countenance." The celestial Kaiser ought, also, to have been clothed in "fear and majesty," but was merely a vague, indefinable Presence. Poor devils—I mean of earth—on whom the rocks of calamity had been falling all their lives, were on their knees, calling to those dear old rocks to complete their destruction, and hide them from the awful gaze of "Deity offended." Had my dream been more realistic, and not merely idyllic and picturesque, what nameless myriads would have surrounded the throne! One could not have seen the play for the actors. As it was, it was merely a kind of Mauchline Holy Fair. I have often thought of Ingersoll standing there, smiling, candid, courageous, giving God a "red face," heaping coals of fire on the almighty head by telling him that he passed most of his life on earth strenuously defending the divine reputation; but who, according to the Code, would have been hurried off and directed hellward, according to the formula, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Poor Ingersoll! Poor Bradlaugh, Foote, and Cohen! Alas, poor me!.....

As a matter of fact, every day is the Last Day—the past for the pleasures of memory, the future for the pleasures of hope. The present moment is the life of man. So I thought as I sighed to-night, as I saw the day die out of the sky. "Be ye also ready, for at what hour ye know not the Son of man cometh." This is good counsel, but it should be "at what hour the Son of man *goeth*." It was the counsel of a secular sage that we should have all our affairs in order, as if we expected every day to be going out of the world. And the lugubrious Doctor Young, of the *Night Thoughts*, rather grandly advises:—

Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer,
Next day the fatal precedent will plead.

. . . . .

Procrastination is the thief of time,
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene!

The scene *before* concerned the sombre theologian. What he leaves *behind* is the concern of the good Freethinker. And that, if not so "vast," is of infinitely greater importance. All down the ages the imaginary has obscured the actual and clamant issues of life. The fiction has fettered the fact. A pale ghostly vampire and "palpably nugatory" supernatural has sucked the blood from an otherwise wholesome and happy natural. And the end is not yet. Contrary to report the Devil is not dead—at least the story of his demise has been greatly exaggerated. He is lurking still in ignorant and simple skulls, and has lodged there so long he has become one of the family. His landlord, indeed, is quite proud of him, and would defend him to the last gasp of his last day. Although a creature of lurid light, the Devil's guest chamber is always kept dark. To light the room is to lose the lodger. No one is more careful than the clergy to keep the shutters up. And no wonder, for so long as there are devils to exorcize the exorcist, will never be out of a job. And when the remuneration for this kind of work runs from £300 to £15,000 a year, only that bigoted consistency, which is the bugbear of little minds, could reasonably look for the last Devil till the Last Day.

Those winter sunsets are wonderful. Again, it is the last hour of the last day. The scene is simple but sublime. There is a great lofty wall of misty drab-grey cloud piled round the S.W. (seaward) horizon. The red sun passing behind peers for a moment in a crevice. In the pale yellow skies above a large "gold fish," or rather, crimson cloud is floating, with other "minnows" hovering near, all steeped in solemn, quiet, crimson, fire; all merged at length in the grey battlement of cloud; so the shadows fall, and the night wind croons its eerie monotone.

Andrew Millar.

It is easy to say that opinion cannot be coerced. But this is true only of the small minority of mankind who are in the habit of thinking for themselves; and, secondly, if it were true, it would only show that, in some cases, persecution is too late to be effectual.—*Sir F. Pollock.*

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Richard Wagner.

In writing for some sections of the public at the present time, it would, I suppose, be impossible without an apology, and difficult even with an apology, to devote an article to Wagner. For some people, it would appear, the guilt of the present German rulers extends, by some mysterious logic, to the whole German race, past as well as present; and a German musician, though he died as long ago as 1883, is in some way responsible for the crimes of the Prussian war-lords a generation after his death—on the same principle, perhaps, as the infant born yesterday is held by Christian theologians to be a partaker in the mythical peccadillo of Adam and Eve. I shall pay the readers of the *Freethinker* the compliment of refusing to offer any such apology. I take for granted that those who read this are Rationalists; that they hold, as I do, that a criminal action brands the doer, not the children or ancestors of the doer; and that they are as willing to recognize the genius and appreciate the masterpieces of Richard Wagner as if this present deadly conflict were not raging between his nation and ours. For my part, it will be one of my bitterest reproaches against the authors of this War that, thanks to them, we in England are likely to be debarred for many years to come from hearing and enjoying the greatest of those masterpieces.

Richard Wagner was born in Saxony in 1813, and in his early life developed two enthusiasms, one untiring and permanent, for the art of music, the other unstable and soon spent, for revolutionary politics. On the latter I touch here on account of its natural interest to us as Freethinkers, and of the influence it had on Wagner's work. In 1843 Wagner became musical conductor to the court at Dresden, and during his tenure of that office wrote and composed *Tannhauser* and *Lohengrin*. 1848 was "the year of revolutions." In 1849 there was an abortive revolution in Dresden, in which Wagner took part, and for which he had to fly into exile. In this exile he wrote the libretto of his greatest work, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, in which the influence of his revolutionary enthusiasm is clearly visible. That enthusiasm, however, did not long survive disappointment, and in 1854 Wagner became a convert to the pessimist philosophy of Schopenhauer. The next ten years were a period of wandering and failure, during which Wagner wrote the words of *Tristan and Isolde* and *The Master Singers*, and composed the music of the former, but could not get it performed. In 1864 the eccentric king of Bavaria extended his patronage to the composer, who was thereby enabled to produce *Tristan*, finish *The Master Singers* and *The Ring*, and end his life in the sunshine of royal favour. As might be expected, the effect on Wagner's genius was decidedly reactionary. His later music, that of the last part of *The Ring* and of *Parsifal*, is as superb as his earlier; but we miss in *Parsifal* (as Nietzsche missed in it) the defiant, revolutionary Freethought that inspired *The Ring*, and we regret that the revolutionist of 1849 should have ended by wallowing in morbid mysticism for the edification of the Catholic court of Munich.

It is tempting to draw a comparison between Wagner in the world of music and Swinburne in the world of poetry. Both had something of the same greatness and the same infirmity. Both were daring innovators in the technique of their respective arts, and with wondrous results; both lead themselves to weak imitation and to parody. Both first became known as fearless singers of liberty and revolution; both exhausted their enthusiasm in middle life, and ended up as reactionaries.

Wagner's most popular work in England, though by no means his greatest, has, undoubtedly, been *Tannhauser*. For most music-lovers, I suppose, this opera has served as their introduction to his work. I shall always look back on my first hearing its gorgeous overture as a decisive turning-point in my musical taste, which, in one day, revealed to me something greater than I had ever before known. It is a commonplace to sum up the theme of *Tannhauser* as the theme of "sacred and profane love." Yes; but with what a difference! Wagner does not preach or moralize (it was hardly in his character); he simply states both sides. And in what a wonder-language he states them! No one can say that he does not give the flesh its due; and yet he brings out the spirit triumphant. What listener does not feel a thrill when, in the overture, after the severe theme of the pilgrims' chorus has been stated and worked up, one weird chord translates us, unwarned, into the forbidden realm of Venus? How the music whirls us on through one mazy theme after another, till the whole orchestra peals out Tannhauser's triumphant praise of the goddess! We are reminded that Swinburne made his name by similar audacity:—

> What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
> For creeds that refuse and restrain?
> Come down and redeem us from virtue,
> Our Lady of Pain.

From this climax Wagner leads us back with a genius only equalled by that with which he led us up to it. I confess I have never liked the so-called "Paris" version of the overture, which carries us straight into the first scene of the opera without solving the antithesis. Wagner's first conception was better. I prefer to hear the slow notes of the pilgrims' chorus gradually making themselves heard through the bacchanalia, and persevering till they emerge victorious, supported, but not drowned, by "the pulses of life, that throb and leap for joy in this song of salvation."

Tannhauser is an excellent introduction to Wagner; but he does not know Wagner whose studies end there. I must pass over *The Master Singers*, that wonderful mosaic of melody, which I am afraid it will be long, long before we are able to hear again on British soil. The same, I suppose, applies to *The Ring*. *The Ring*, a music-drama consisting of four parts—"The Rhine Gold," "The Valkyrie," "Siegfried," and "The Twilight of the Gods"—is the work in which Wagner gave to the world his best message, the message of Freethought and emancipation of the individual. Nothing could be further than this from the Moloch of Prussianism which has since claimed the worship of his countrymen, of which some ridiculously see in him a precursor. He casts his iconoclastic thesis into the mould of old northern mythology—the same mythology which William Morris presents to us in his noble poem of "Sigurd the Volsung." Wagner's drama tells how the supreme god Wotan, to stave off his inevitable overthrow, built him a mighty castle, and was constrained to pay the builders of it with the accursed ring, which the evil dwarf Alberich had stolen from the daughters of the Rhine in his lust of world-dominion. It tells how the god went in guilty fear lest the dwarf should win again the ring and master him thereby; and how he sought to save himself by raising up a hero, Siegfried, to whom fear was unknown; and how the hero not only gained the fatal ring, but shivered the spear of Wotan, who had raised him up. And it tells how Siegfried in his turn, mazed by a treacherous draught given him by bad friends, would not give up the ring to the Rhine maidens; and how its curse rested on him, and he was murdered by his friends. And it tells how the ring was in the end restored to the Rhine, and how the castle of the gods, and they that dwelt in it, and the old world of oppression

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which they ruled, were burnt with fire and passed away. You can read this allegory as you like: I know how I read it.

And the music! Never again, perhaps, shall we have a chance to sit, packed in the vilely uncomfortable gallery at Covent Garden, to enjoy delights which the royal box itself could not make more delightful; to wait breathless before the first bar of "The Rhine Gold," and hear the long, deep note growing out of the silence, and becoming the "nature motive" out of which that endless network of themes, which sustains the drama, is to take shape. But if we can no longer enjoy the whole on the stage, we can at least listen to priceless parts of it in the concert-hall. There is the excerpt called "The Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla," which has a sinister magnificence. Onward move the gods into their castle to the glorious music of the "Valhalla motive." Up from the distant river comes the Rhine maidens' lament, silencing for a moment the pomp of godhead. Then the procession passes on over the rainbow bridge, to the blare of trumpets and the roll of drums, like the jackboot of authority trampling upon humanity. There is, too, the piece called "Wotan's Farewell and Fire-Magic," taken from that part where the god condemns his own daughter for disobeying his unjust command, to sleep on a mountain ringed round with flame till a fearless hero shall wake her. And "fire-magic" it is! The flames flicker, leap, and blaze on the orchestra, for any novice to hear. There are few such wonderful things in music. There is, above all, the incomparable "Closing Scene" of *The Twilight of the Gods*, when the world's great wrong is righted, and the gods perish in the avenging flames. Here again, for the last time, we hear the great "Valhalla motive," breaking out in one key after another, in a sort of dying agony, through the leap of the flames and the glad song of the daughters of the Rhine, until the turmoil subsides and peace reigns. Wagner's conception is identical with that of Swinburne in his "Hertha":—

> Lo, winged with world's wonders,
> With miracles shod,
> With the fires of his thunders
> For raiment and rod,
> God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the terror of God.
>
> For his twilight has come on him,
> His anguish is here;
> And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
> Grown gray from his fear;
> And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year.
>
> 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.

Robert Arch.

Talent forms itself in the silence of the study; character in the stream of the great world.—*Goethe.*

Suspension of judgment is as imperatively required of us by science, as faith in the unintelligible was demanded by the Catholic Church.—*John Addington Symonds.*

We are emerging from an age of commercialism, but there are sure signs that we are moving towards an age of humanity. The Victorians may have imagined that the world was a very pleasant place—at any rate, for the well-to-do. We are learning that it is not. There is room for improvement. And improvement will not come by thinking less about the Paradise that awaits the saints and more of the earth that was made for man.—*R. B. Ince, "Globe."*

Acid Drops.

A manifesto on the War has been issued by, what the *Daily News* styles, "Church leaders," and the document supports the idea of the League of Nations. It is, however, of interest to note that the signatures to the manifesto include, among others, the Archbishop of Canterbury, four bishops, a member of the Society of Jesus, a number of Free Churchmen, and Messrs. Arthur Henderson and George Lansbury. The document mentions, respectfully, the Pope's Appeal to the Powers, and the action of the Convocation of Canterbury. But what we should like to know is how the two Labour leaders got into such company. A democracy that remains Christian is a democracy that will always be getting there and yet never arrives.

Elim Welsh Congregational Church, Cundare, has discharged its minister, says the *Aberdare Leader*, for preaching that war and preparations for war are irreconcilable with the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ. When the Germans invoke Jesus to justify war they are accused of blasphemy. When a British parson says Jesus is against war he gets the "sack." Which proves how fitted Christianity is for man under all conditions.

Clergymen pretend that they are engaged in work that is on a higher plane than ordinary business, but there are exceptions. A parson advertises in a daily paper that he supplies "Commercial training for one shilling weekly." He will require a large number of pupils before his salary approaches that of the Bishop of London, to say nothing of that of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lord Hugh Cecil declares that "Christianity presupposes the brotherhood of man." Heigho! In the Christian scheme the bad brothers outnumber the good ones.

Miss Helena Normanton, of the Women's Freedom League, pleads for the wearing of brighter colours in clothes, and a return to older forms of costume. Perhaps the lady admires the highly coloured blankets worn by the twelve disciples—in pictures.

"There is no getting away from the fact that soldiers are very superstitious," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Of course they are, otherwise this would not be a Christian country.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll says that we know our loved ones much better when they are dead than we did while they were living amongst us. He also maintains that our fellowship with the dead is purer and nobler and much more intimate than with the living. He does not mention his authority for such a statement; but, if there is any truth in it, will he be good enough to inform us why believers in personal immortality mourn for their dead much more hopelessly than unbelievers? Is it not a fact that Sir William bases his teaching upon mere belief, not upon knowledge, and that belief invariably breaks down when confronted by the grim realities of Nature?

Sir William is a sentimentalist, and not a calm, cautious reasoner. He tells mourners that Christ will comfort them if they love and trust him; but, as a matter of simple fact, Christ does nothing of the kind. We admit that there are times when the belief in Christ does minister consolation to those who are contemplating bereavement as a possibility; but when it becomes an actuality the belief collapses, and then those who have it are much worse off than those who never possessed it. It is a characteristic of Christianity that it is of absolutely no avail in the great crises of life. It can no more do away with mourning than it can prevent or put an end to a War.

"The result of Chief Constable Bain's campaign to cleanse the streets of Norwich from certain features have had, to say the least, some remarkable results. One 'bag' included a doctor, a grey-headed military officer, and the conductor of

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a picture palace orchestra. Then complaint was made by a Cathedral dignitary of impropriety within the Cathedral precincts. The Chief Constable took up the challenge, and the sequel was forthcoming in the Police Court on Thursday of this week, when, strangely enough, almost the first man to be dealt with by the police was ——, the sub-sacrist of the Cathedral, and a well-known Y.M.C.A. worker."—*Norwich Mercury*, February 16.

According to *Truth*, the Russian Church is immensely wealthy, and the convent Churches are full of splendid tombs and rich shrines, lavishly adorned with gold, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. No wonder the Patriarch of Russia has cursed the Bolshevists because they have deprived the priesthood of its property and privileges.

Dr. William S. Bruce, the well-known traveller and explorer, advocates the use of whale flesh as an article of diet, and says that whales are canned in America. What a change from the time when a business-like whale "canned" the prophet Jonah?

What noses the clergy have for nastiness! The Bishop of London raised a discussion on prostitution at the House of Convocation, and at a meeting in London to consider the question of Army morals, the speakers included Dr. Orchard and Miss Maude Royden, the assistant minister at the City Temple.

A religious contemporary complains that few people are converted after they are thirty years of age, and calls it a "saddening fact." It also notes that twelve, sixteen, and twenty are the fruitful ages for conversion, and professes inability to explain the phenomenon. We think we can explain it in a sentence. It is simply the exploitation of adolescence.

The Life of Christ is to appear on the film. The Bishop of London, Cardinal Bourne, and F. B. Meyer are among those who guarantee its "reverential treatment"; so the pious may go to the "pictures" with safety. But by a greasy hypocrisy that seems inseparable from English Christianity, the title of the film is "Christus." Why not Jesus Christ? Perhaps it is thought that English Christianity wouldn't stand it. But the device is *so* English! It is like the English Christian letting himself go on the Continent under the pretence of conducting a moral investigation, or some of our clergy wading neck deep in filth and persuading themselves that they are animated by a desire to improve public morality.

Writing in the *Daily News*, the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell quotes the bitter saying: "I forgive him as a Christian, which means that I do not forgive him at all."

Professor Scott Lang, of St. Andrew's University, speaking before the Perth Presbytery, said that: "In the whole Church the average contribution per member for the year was a halfpenny per Sunday, and even that was an overestimate." The inference is that the work of the Church is of small interest even to believers.

At Newport Pagnell, the Revs. W. Rice and W. L. Eaton were each fined £3 for infringements of the motoring order. Apparently religion does not always make for good citizenship.

This month, in the presence of the Pope, the decree of the beatification of Oliver Plunkett, a former Archbishop of Armagh, will be read. In these strenuous days is it not like children playing with dolls in a nursery?

Prebendary A. W. T. Perowne says that one proof of the failure of the Church is that the men in the Army don't understand what the Church stands for. We don't think that is quite correct. The trouble—to the Church—is that the men are beginning to understand what it stands for. They don't believe in what it says it stands for. But that is quite a different thing.

Dean Inge advises all whom it concerns that it is quite right to pray, but we have no right to expect that our prayers will be answered. Therefore "we must not expect that the prayers which we offer for dear ones in danger and for the restoration of peace would at once be answered." The plain English of which is that prayers may be offered, but answers will not be given. That is precisely our own counsel. Only we wonder how people will pray, knowing that they might as well try to ward off an air-raid by playing a concertina.

Erasmus once said that the Bible was a nose of wax, which could be twisted any way that suited. The *Church Times* realizes this, and has been girding at pious folk who quote Biblical texts against war and monarchy, and upset the religion of simple men. There is little doubt of the simplicity of religious persons, but Freethinkers will be amused at the spectacle of the engineer being "hoist with his own petard."

A newspaper paragraph had the attractive headline, "Bishop and a Tank." It did not relate to a deed of heroism, for it recorded that the Bishop of Peterborough was to speak from a tank in the quiet surroundings of the cathedral town.

The Salvation Army's bold advertisements in the press of its "Self-Denial Week" show that this organization is getting respectable, and can now command large sums of money for purely advertising purposes. The results of Salvation Army work are immensely exaggerated. Salvationists have all to be teetotalers. What effect has that on the national drink-bill? Salvationists have all to be non-smokers. What effect has that upon the tobacco trade? The Army boasts that it takes religion into the slums. And the slums are no better for it. The Salvation Army's motto is "Blood and Fire"; the blood of Christ and the fire of hell. This is plain Bible teaching; this is Christianity.

"E. A. F.," in the *Daily Mail*, raises a protest against schoolboys being allowed to spend their money on food, but being asked to "disgorge" for church bazaars and missionary work. The protest seems to apply to adults no less than to children. If economy is really a vital need for the country, it would be only the proper thing to withdraw contributions from church and missionary work, the latter of which is certainly the most useless service to which one can put money.

Mr. T. Vivian Rees, addressing a Conference of Sunday-school officers, said that "The pettiness and stupidity one came across at times in Sunday-schools are tragic, criminal and devilish. Some of the schools were slaughter-houses for human souls." But the slaughter is inseparable from the system. Their purpose is to prepare the "lambs" for shearing by the time they become fully-grown sheep.

Pilate.

A Sonnet-Problem for Christians.

Dear Christian friends who love your enemies
More than the tongue of man can ever tell,
And loving thus much, sentence those to hell
Whose faith from yours by hairbreadths disagrees,
Whilst lately sitting 'midst your devotees
I chanced to speak of Pilate, and there fell
From someone's lips—your looks approved him well—
The one word "Coward!" Now I think I seize
Your meaning; but suppose awhile that he
Had liberated Christ because he showed
No fault, and all the horror of that cross
Set up for sinners on sad Calvary
Had never been, nor had his blood outflowed
For all your sins. Would that be gain or loss?

G. H. Bosworth.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; March 31, Blaengarw; April 7, Glasgow; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

E. F. BROWNE.—The matter is common knowledge with all who know anything about pre-revolutionary Russia. But we give you the following from *The Russian Jews*, by L. Errera, published by David Nutt: "The right of residence in every city of Russia is granted to prostitutes who are provided with a yellow card for this purpose. This imfamous passport has more than once been solicited by respectable Jewesses, desirous of being enabled to penetrate into certain great cities in which they are not permitted to dwell.....A young girl came to Moscow to learn shorthand. She demanded and obtained the yellow card; but after a time the police expelled her, because they discovered after watching her, that she refrained from following her assumed trade" (pp. 27-8).

C. F. BUDGE.—We cannot say whether it is true or not. Should like confirmation.

H. M. DABALL.—We do not confine the question of God to the deity taught by Jesus. Our survey includes all religions, but we are unable to detect substantial differences between the gods of the leading faiths.

PTE. W. WALDEN.—We are sending a parcel of literature, free, to the soldier's address given. Thanks for your offer to provide a copy of the *Freethinker* weekly in the reading-room. We hope it will be accepted.

J. G. HOWARTH.—Literature is being sent. Thanks.

WE inadvertently last week gave the publishers of Mr. Clodd's book on Spiritualism, *The Question*, as Methuen. The book is published by Grant Richards.

R. W. BLAKELEY.—Probably some injustice is done to Professor Alexander by the compression of his argument. It is, however, a pity that people so play with the word "God," which is bound to mislead, because it has a fairly fixed connotation in the general mind.

G. PROCTOR.—Ivor Tucker's *Evidence for the Supernatural* and Edward Clodd's *The Question* would probably give you what you want.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—G. S., 2s. 6d.

J. G. BUCKLE.—Thanks for copy of letter, which we have read with interest and appreciation.

J. EFFEL.—Thanks for portraits. We hope their future will realize all that their faces promise. Please do as you suggest.

O. A. PENSIONER.—We do not know anything of "a well-known Atheist lecturer" named Musgrave Reade. A person of that name was, we believe, a member of the Manchester Branch many years ago, and he or his friends appear to have been exploiting his connection with the Society. A well-known Atheist lecturer is pure imagination.

MERANDER.—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.

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 to thank many correspondents who have written concerning "Our 'Round Up'" in last week's issue. These communications prove that what we ask for is being done, and with success. Meanwhile, we may note that paper gets scarcer and dearer month by month. Even the paper we printed on last week, and of which we hold about another four weeks' supply, represents a twenty-five per cent. increase on last year's prices. The new Paper Order also cuts down the supply of imported paper-making material to half that of last year, and as the War seems to be settling down to a permanent institution, the outlook is not very cheering. All we can say is that we shall avoid making any change so long as it is possible to do so. How long this will be must depend upon circumstances.

The following communications have reached us regarding our notes of three weeks ago on compulsory religious service in the Army. One comes from the Army and the other from the Navy. We take the Navy first. It is written from one of our chief naval bases:—

> I was very pleased to read your very pointed article in the *Freethinker* on Compulsory Army Church Parade. Your remarks apply equally to the Navy There is more profane language over this order for Sunday Church than over any other order we may get. It is altogether inconsistent is this forced religion. A very big church has now been added to the Naval Base, and by compulsory means it is over-packed for the morning service. An evening service is also held, to which all are welcome. On Sunday, February 4, I happened to pass whilst all was in motion. The congregation consisted of eight sea scouts (boys) and four naval ratings. Comment is needless. Church is looked upon by the "Command" really, I think, only as a habit, and not for the good of men who have to attend, but as something in numbers for "Acting Chaplain, R.N." to show in his weekly report. It is the compulsory business we do not like. We have to sleep, drink, eat, and do everything by numbers, but the sooner the authorities get it into their heads that we do not think by numbers then this Church Parade will stop.

And this from the Army; from a soldier home from the Front, wounded:—

> It may interest or amuse you to be informed that I sent my *Freethinker*, with the splendid article "Religion and the Army," to the Colonel of my present Battalion. Of course, I did not give my name. But I think your article gives vent to a great grievance soldiers suffer in the Army, irrespective of their opinion on religion, either for or against. The majority of the soldiers hate—I prefer the word "hate"—going to Church Service; and if the Christian religion is true, I have no hesitation in saying that the Church Service is the cause of more men being damned in hell for ever than it saves, by compelling men to go against their will. There is more cursing and swearing by men getting ready for Church Parade than any parade of the week. It is the most unpopular parade of the week.....You will have, and deserve, great thanks if you can force those in authority to make Church Parade optional. The men only go because they are forced to go.....When we came forward to assist the country in her hour of need, we did not sacrifice our right of opinion; and the Army Council should understand that men's opinions are not issued out like so many tons of bully beef or tins of plum and apple jam. The sooner Church Parades are abolished, there will be less crime in the Army; for it is the cause of much petty crime. Let the Army Council give no Church Parade one month's trial, and they will have overwhelming evidence that the Church Parade is the most unpopular thing in the Army.

The testimony from both branches of the Service as to the bad language generated by Church Parade is striking. And it is very evident that the compulsory attendance at church is felt as a real injustice by many thousands of the men in both the Army and the Navy. The men know that it is not essential to their doing their duty as soldiers and sailors; they naturally resent being *ordered* to prayers; and we hope that the Army Council will follow the example of our American Ally, and make the Church Parade quite voluntary, even if it does not imitate the French, and abolish it altogether.

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The following, from Pte. W. Walden, is also of interest :—

> I am writing to thank you for forwarding the Army Council Instruction No. 179, *re* Religion in the Army. When I showed it to the S.-M., he stated that he was not aware till then that anyone could join the Army without professing a religion. I am pleased to state that he has since rectified the error dealing with me. I feel certain that if men did not display so much timidity in reference to religion when joining the Colours, that the lot of "Tommy Atkins" in connection with Church Parade would not be so unpleasant as it is.

With the latter sentiment we quite agree. Anyway, we are glad to have been of use in this particular case, as we have been in many others.

Mr. Harry Snell is lecturing for the Birmingham Branch at the Repertory Theatre, Sunday, March 10, at 7 p.m.—"Religion from Martin Luther to Sir Oliver Lodge—and After." It is a few years since Mr. Snell lectured for the Branch, and he is sure of a hearty welcome from his old friends. Those who have not heard him should make a special effort to do so.

We are asked to announce that Mr. F. E. Willis lectures at Nuneaton, in The Palace, Queen's Road, to-day (March 10), at 6.30, on "What is the Use of Prayer?" We hope there will be a good muster of both Freethinkers and Christians.

The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. is holding a Social Evening—whist drive, concert, and dance, on Saturday, March 16, at 7 o'clock, in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick. Tickets are 1s. 6d. each, and can be obtained of the Secretary, Mr. H. Black, 446, Great Cheetham Street, East, Higher Broughton. We hope the meeting will be a success.

Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., is an outspoken advocate of Republicanism, and is opening a debate on that subject before the North-West London Branch to-day (March 10), at 7.30. There ought to be a good audience and an interesting discussion.

The Queen of Night.

Our planet's pale attendant, the moon, is a spectacle of fascinating interest at any time to the student of Nature, and the ruler of the night has, from the earliest ages, attracted the attention of man. The constant waxing and waning of the lunar orb probably impressed primitive peoples to an even greater degree than the comparatively changeless sun. And now, again, at least in latitudes subject to uncanny visitations from the air, particularly on moonlit nights, an unusually large amount of interest attaches itself to our silvery satellite. In reality, one of the smallest celestial objects visible to the unaided eye, our moon, owing to its proximity to the earth, seems an orb of considerable dimensions, and appears equal in diameter to the mighty sun itself, and this deceptiveness is increased by the fact that our nightly companion confers upon us a far greater amount of light than all the planets and stars combined, the lord of day alone excepted. The telescope reveals innumerable heavenly objects, many of which are immeasurably smaller than the moon, but these lie quite beyond the range of the naked eye.

The lunar diameter is 2,160 miles, and is therefore slightly more than one-fourth of that of our globe. Its mean distance is about 240,000 miles, but this varies considerably; so that at perigee, when the moon lies nearest to the earth, its distance is reduced to 221,600 miles; while, when our satellite is at apogee, that part of its orbit most remote from the earth, its distance extends to 253,000 miles. Thus we see that the path pursued by the moon, in her monthly revolution round the earth, cannot be a true circle, while even the form of our satellite's orbit is variable. In consequence of the varying attractions of the earth and sun, the moon's elliptical orbit becomes a little more or a little less eccentric. These fluctuations are responsible for the fact that the moon appears appreciably larger at one time than it does at another.

The disc of the full moon contains 7,300,000 square miles, and is therefore slightly larger than the continent of South America. One aspect only of our satellite is presented to us. No mortal has ever viewed the other surface of the moon. There are numerous conspicuous features on the moon's face, which have been noticed from the earliest historical times, and whenever the lunar orb is visible, these identical markings appear. One reservation only need be made, and this is that the moon's surface is sometimes slightly tilted, with the result that the lunar landscape, near the edge, varies somewhat. There is every reason for the belief that the unseen surface of the moon is a mere variant of her visible disc. In any case, of the 7,300,000 square miles of surface open to observation, about 2,900,000 comprise those mottled areas which were long regarded as oceans, while the remaining 4,400,000 represent a rough and torn territory environed by the apparent remains of once energetic volcanoes, whose enormous craters exceed anything of the kind existing on our planet. So immense are several of the lunar volcanoes, that it is estimated that a single explosion of one of these titanic mountains would have sufficed, on our earth, to shake it to its very core.

It seems strange that while the sun and planets all revolve on their axes, and present every feature of their surfaces to us, that the moon should turn one face only to the earth. Many have contended that the moon possesses no axial rotation whatever, but this belief is entirely erroneous. Our satellite unquestionably revolves on its axis, but its period of rotation is equal to that of its revolution about the earth. Newcomb, Serviss, and others have cogently illustrated this curious phenomenon. Another most convincing illustration is supplied by Ball in his *Starry Realms*. That able expositor imagines a horse galloping round a circular course with a human spectator standing at the centre. The running animal, as he careers round the course, will necessarily present one side of his body only to the observer, while the other side of the animal will remain hidden from sight. So far this is what happens to the earth-dweller as the moon journeys through the sky. Now, it is self-evident that when the horse has travelled the complete circuit, it has not only completed a revolution round the course, but it has also rotated. The animal in making the circuit must have moved successively towards every point in the horizon, because in the course of his journey he is compelled to travel north, south, east, and west in order to complete the circuit. As Ball states :—

> It is clearly impossible that the horse can have faced north, south, east, and west, without performing a movement of rotation. Unless he rotated he would necessarily be always journeying towards the same point of the compass. Suppose that, at the moment when he was facing due north his right side being turned towards the spectator in the middle, we bring him to the opposite side of the course, and again place him facing due north. It is clear that the left side of the animal will now be towards the spectator. In such a case it is plain that the movement has not been at all like that of the moon, the characteristic feature of which is that the same face is always directed towards the earth.

It is, therefore, perfectly certain that if our satellite did not turn on its axis in the course of its monthly journey, or lunation, as it is termed, then every part of its surface would appear in succession, although only at

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periods of full moon would an entire hemisphere be illumined by the sun. At the time of old and new moon the side presented to our planet would, in the absence of rotation, prove exactly the opposite to that displayed at full moon, while during the last quarter, the lunar region facing our earth would be the reverse of that presented to the earth at first quarter.

This striking coincidence between the period of the moon's axial rotation and its revolution round our globe has been traced to definite causes. As we have seen, the moon's surface displays a dead world of barren rocks and stones. But the extinct lunar volcanoes were once active, and in that remote age our desolate satellite was the theatre of great internal heat and energy. The further we peer back in time, we picture the moon growing hotter and hotter, until we reach a period when it was partly, or even entirely, molten. Its rugged scenery sufficiently indicates that the moon was once the seat of titanic volcanic upheavals greatly exceeding any so far known to have occurred on the earth.

To-day the moon exercises powerful tidal influences on our planet's waters. In early ages, before the moon became a burnt-out cinder, oceans rolled over its surface. Then, the earth, a much larger body than the moon, generated tides on the lunar seas which immensely surpassed those now raised by our satellite on the earth. Even in the absence of water, our planet's gravitational powers would exercise an enormous pull on any liquid or viscuous substances on the moon. When the moon was still a molten globe, the earth's influence would be exerted over every portion of its mass. The same forces which originally gave birth to the moon when it was separated from its earth-mother and thrust off into space are responsible for our satellite's inability to show us her hidden face. Both of these phenomena are traceable to tidal friction. The giant tides raised on the unsolidified moon by the earth's attraction acted on the rotating orb like brakes on a wheel, and at last they lessened its rotation until its period coincided with the moon's monthly revolution.

As the centuries stole away, the moon gradually radiated its heat into surrounding space, and evolved from a molten into a solid state, on its surface, at least. At a later stage of its history its oceans appeared, and life may have arisen; but if so, it has had its day, and ceased to be. The moon's exterior seems quite dead; and if heat be absent, no liquid remains, even in the orb's interior. Some astronomers surmise that the earth no longer exercises tidal control over the moon. But the adjustment established by past tidal authority persists, and this truth is most clearly exhibited in the changeless face with which our sad satellite looks down on the inhabitants of the earth.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

The Poet of Mortality.

It is in the sonnet that Marston's genius is supposed to show itself most unmistakably. These sonnets of his, at their best, have qualities which, in the main, would justify a critic in his placement of them extremely high in the sonnet-literature of the later Victorian period—perhaps, even, in ranking them superior to those of any other contemporary poet, after the generous and intensely artistic series by the author of *The House of Life*.—*William Sharp*.

Whatever we barbarian Britons are compelled to cede to other nations as our peers in the fine arts, in *belles-lettres*, and in poetry, certainly, we can surely claim precedence. Still, it is a curious anomaly, that we are, as a nation, less appreciative of poetry than nations of lesser literary repute. At any rate, the number of our so-called "minor poets" who have been relegated to the top shelf of the book-case, is considerable. Yet, in glancing over the names of some of these, the thought constantly recurs to me, that had some of these "minor poets" been cradled in any other land but Albion, they would probably have been heralded among its literary glories.

Among the moderns, perhaps, the "best neglected" of the "minor poets" is Philip Bourke Marston (1850-87), yet no less masters than Rossetti and W. Scott Bell placed him in the first rank of lyric poets. Indeed, Rossetti said of Marston's *Garden Secrets* that it was not too much to say that they were "worthy of Shakespeare in his subtlest lyrical moods." I remember praising Marston to G. W. Foote on one occasion, and with youthful enthusiasm, I spoke of him as the first of modern lyricists and sonneteers. G. W. Foote, who, by the way, knew the "blind poet" (he met him in company with James Thomson, B.V., at the literary *salons* of a certain well known author) did not agree with so sweeping an estimate, and said that Marston's work, *as a whole*, would not stand this criterion, but he admitted that probably his best work, taken by itself, would perhaps stand favourable comparison with any of our best modern poets. I mention this especially, as Foote's opinion in a matter of this sort is of the highest importance, although it falls short of the estimate of William Sharp. I do not think that many will deny this to Marston, for surely those remarkable sonnets in *All in All*, such as "Not Thou but I," the gorgeous imagery of *Garden Secrets*, say, for instance, "The Rose and the Wind," as well as a host of truly exquisite lyrics—"Come, Buy," "Love has turned his face away," etc., are without equal.

One of the main points urged against Marston is that his limitation of "forms" is bound to tell against him. True, Marston rarely deviates from the sonnet or lyric, yet where he does, such as in that remarkable poem, "A Christmas Vigil," written in his nineteenth year, we see that he was equal to it. Yet, even so, I fail to understand why we should suspend judgment merely because we do not know what Marston could do in certain "forms." Surely it is sufficient for us to judge him by what he did use. Why the small *genre* painter, or the song-writer, such as Jan Steen or Hugo Wolf, should not be admissible for comparison with artists of larger "forms," such as Rubens and Richard Strauss, passes my comprehension. It does not matter to us what the artist presents, or what he selects to present it in. It is *how* he presents his art that is, or should be, the sole criterion.

William Sharp, in his sympathetic and appreciative memoir of Marston, is replete with all sort of moral and philosophic "conditioning" with regard to the poet's art-work. He assures us that nowhere does Marston manifest any depth of vision into the life of nature or of man, nor any genuine knowledge of the great motors and complex issues of human nature in general. Although, personally, I do not admit of this criterion in any art or literary judgment, I am "in arms" against Sharp in this case, because, in point of fact, he seems to be strangely inaccurate. Why, Marston's particular themes—Love, external nature, the travail and uncertainty of life, prove the very opposite. Take, for instance, his love themes. None but a poet with the deepest vision of life could have penned such realism as Marston. The love that is brought into rhapsody by him is not the love ordinarily dwelt upon by poets, but a strong, sexual, natural, human thing, naked and unadorned. His many arraignments of Providence, and his indictments against the philosophy of "All 's right with the world," again reveal to us that Marston most

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certainly had a "depth of vision into the life of nature." This is especially noticeable in his treatment of Christians and religion in general.

Sharp tells us that Marston belonged to no sect in "matters of religion," but leaves the question there as though we may understand that the poet was merely a Freethinker in regard to sects. That is not so, as we know from his poems, as well as from other sources, that Marston repudiated Christianity and was an Atheist. In spite of Sharp's strictures concerning Marston's "knowledge," the poet was sufficiently logical to see, for instance, the falacy of Pantheism in deifying the *actual* as an escape from the *ideal* of the conventicle. In his remarkable sonnet, entitled "Atheist to Pantheist," he openly boasts his Atheism (it can mean nothing else), and denies that it is possible to distinguish Pantheism from Atheism:—

> .....Absorbed in all pervading God,
> You think to live, conscious, yet knowing naught
> Of all the past with pain and joyance fraught,
> An Atom, where the atoms onward plod.
> What you call God, I Nature name, and hence,
> Am Atheist; but where the difference?

Although the life of the "blind poet" was an extremely sad one, yet the religion which promised rest and consolation to the "weary and heavy laden" found no response in the breast of Marston. In that finely sustained dramatic poem, "A Christmas Vigil," he openly inveighs his scorn where he makes the wanton confess herself:—

> Too blind perchance it may be to discern
> God's mighty mercy, and the boundless love
> That all paid, praying preachers tell us of.

And as for the man with whom her shame began, she admitted that both were to blame, although

> He was the snare in which my soul was caught,
> . . . . .
> Yet God, not *he*, my wrath of soul shall bear,
> God set the snare!
> God made him lustful, and God made me fair.

Orthodoxy seemed almost a theme for merriment with Marston. His ballad, "Caught in the Nets," is a story which the poet found in Sir Richard Baker's *Chronicles*, about a merman which some fisherman caught, and although "oftentimes brought to church, never showed any signs of adoration." This part, in Marston's versification, is the merman's story:—

> I heard them say it was the time to pray,
> And one man cast a chain my neck about,
> And with a mighty grasp he dragged me out,
> Right out into the sunlight and the wind,
> And some men walked before, and some behind.
> So on we wended, till we reached a hall,
> Where all around upon their knees did fall,
> And made together a most dismal noise.
> Then one cried to them, in a louder voice,
> Whereat more wail upon the air they poured,
> Then rose. Next in their midst a monster roared,
> Whereat they yelled; yea, all they yelled as one,
> So that I thought by fear they were undone;
> And much I marvelled that they kept their ground,
> For still that monster made the dreadest sound;
> Then ceased he, and they ceased, and one man rose
> And shouted to them, and with many blows
> Did beat himself, and long and long he screamed,
> And like some fearful dream that I had dreamed
> It seemed to me, and full of dread I was,
> Not knowing well what next might come to pass.

H. George Farmer.

(*To be concluded.*)

Commenting on the religiosity of the Northcliffe press, the *Daily News* asks, satirically, "Is Lord Northcliffe taking holy orders?" Cynical folk imagine that his lordship is taking all he can get.

Up for Judgment.

Towards the end of last summer I went with Uncle Joe and Aunt Jane to the local cemetery to witness the burial of a young soldier who had given his life in the service of his country. It was a beautiful day, and the flowers round many of the graves looked lovely and fresh; the fragrance from them being very pleasant and exhilarating. The young soldier had fought in several important engagements in France, and had been seriously wounded; but when he recovered from his wounds, he was sent back to France, and fought in further engagements until, at last, he was gassed, and then he was sent home, where he developed lung trouble, from which he ultimately succumbed.

Besides the large crowd of spectators, there was a small contingent of officers and men of the regiment to which the dead soldier belonged, and these came to pay the last tribute of respect and admiration to the gallant young fellow who had given his life for his fellows, and to fire a volley over his grave. The scene at the graveside was most impressive and touching—many of the spectators being moved to tears.

After the ceremony, Uncle Joe, Aunt Jane, and I walked through the cemetery and looked at many of the massive monuments erected to the memory of important parishioners in what is called "the consecrated ground," and then we went and looked at many of the small tablets erected over the graves of what are called the "common interments."

While we were gazing at these I could not help remarking to Uncle Joe that, even in death, class distinctions were made, and the wealthy had massive marble monuments, while the poor had only small tablets—most of them wooden—and these were often trampled into the earth during the wet weather, so that many were unable to find the spot where their dear departed friends had been interred.

Uncle Joe who, although a Conservative and a Churchman, was very democratic in many of his views, could not help acknowledging that he did not like these class distinctions, and that it appeared to him these great marble monuments were erected more for the gratification of the living than for the benefit of the dead.

Then we began to discuss many of the inscriptions and verses on the tombstones and monuments, and I noted that most of the dear departed were buried in "a certain hope of a resurrection," and that some of them had gone straight into the arms of Jesus. I noted, further, that most of the verses suggested that the dead had either gone to heaven or awaited the great day when they would be called from their long rest to their heavenly abode above the skies, and none of them even hinted at the possibility of their going to the other place down below.

"Yes," said Uncle Joe, "that is the best of the Christian religion—there is hope for all. The repentant sinner can always find salvation, even in the last hour; but the final judgment rests with our Heavenly Father."

"Then do you really believe in the resurrection of the body, Uncle Joe?"

"Most certainly I do. Does not the Church Service say, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting'? Yes, I believe it. But I do not believe that we shall rise with the same body we had on the earth. We shall have a celestial body, not a terrestrial one."

"What is a celestial body?" I asked.

Aunt Jane smiled, but said nothing; she felt instinctively that Uncle Joe was getting out of his depth.

"A celestial body?" said Uncle Joe, with something

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in his voice approaching indignation; "how can you ask me such a question?"

"Well, I thought you knew something about it, since you say that you believe in it."

"No; it is what we are taught to believe as Christians, and I see no reason to doubt it. We cannot rise with the same body; we know that. We know that our body turns to dust. Besides, look at the thousands of bodies that are cremated nowadays. Well, those people could not rise again with the same bodies—that stands to reason," said Uncle Joe, with great vigour of expression, "therefore they must be celestial bodies that rise again; and that is what I believe, and that's what the bulk of Christians believe also."

"Indeed! Oh, very well. And do you believe we all come up for judgment on the last day?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Well, how can it be the last day if the glory or the condemnation that is to follow are to last for ever and ever?"

"Why, the last day on this earth, of course," said Uncle Joe, with an air of confidence, glancing at Aunt Jane to see how far his remarks would meet with her approval.

But Aunt Jane only looked puzzled and sad. The questions were rather calculated to unsettle her belief than otherwise.

"Oh, the last day on this earth, eh? So we all leave the earth together, some to go up above and the remainder down below. And then the earth will be destitute of all the people, and so I suppose it will go to smash or become engulfed in the sun, or something of that sort?"

"I don't know," said Uncle Joe, quietly.

"And have we all to be judged on one day, or shall we have a fair trial, and hear the evidence of our guilt on all the charges that are brought up against us?"

"I certainly think that God would give us a fair trial," said Uncle Joe, "the justice of the case would at least demand as much as that."

"God the Father will preside, I suppose?"

"Yes, I think so."

"With God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost on the bench?"

"Yes."

"Then the whole affair would be converted into a great assizes?"

"As Tom Hood says:—

> "Then turning round his head again,
> He saw before his eyes
> A great judge and a little judge,
> The judges of a-size."

"Now, my dear boy, please do not joke on so serious a subject," said Uncle Joe, warmly.

Aunt Jane smiled again. She had a good sense of humour.

"Oh, very well; only I can't help laughing—the idea is so ludicrous," I replied.

"Fancy, millions of human beings coming up for trial—all the millions of people who have lived in all the ages—not only all the Christians, all the Jews, all the Mohammedans, all the Bhuddists, all the black races."

"Stop!" said Uncle Joe, "I said nothing about black souls—I mean the souls of the blacks. That's a question I shall have to submit to our vicar; indeed, I think it is a matter that might be put to the Archbishop himself."

At that moment the church bell began to toll, and we knew that the body of another poor soul was to have the beautiful burial service of the Church of England read over it previous to being consigned to its last resting-place—the grave, or more properly speaking, to mother earth—from which we all spring, and to which we all return.

Arthur B. Moss.

The Blank Wall.

IX.

The question of the sanity of man is one with which few minds are troubled. Perhaps the question is, in itself, a little mad! On the other hand, how is it possible for those clear brains so much alive to the fact of life as to be perpetually at war with the extraordinarily stupid conventions of the human race, to avoid for any length of time the problem of the sanity of man? Almost every manifestation of civilization is so deliberately sordid and ugly as to create a feeling of revulsion. The tone of popular thought, if it can legitimately be termed thought, is on a plane of obvious decadence and insanity. Vacuous newspapers, puerile novels, vapid and dull plays, cant, pornography, hypocrisy, and ignorance everywhere. The seeker after truth and beauty, dignity of purpose, and the enlightenment of the human species generally, discovers practically no vital response to his exertions. He is pushed outside the feverish stream of current "life," and more and more is driven inwards to live his dream unseen, unheard, neglected and labelled "Crank."

Where, then, the pertinent question arises, is to be found sanity, or at least a desire for its establishment on earth? A people possessed of one tenth the sanity of the reformer or revolutionary would not tolerate the existing conditions of life for twenty-four hours. A sudden lightning stroke of sanity would cause the people to realize that the precious gift of life was being thwarted in a thousand sinister ways; that an existence which might be made a radiant journey of delight and decency was being converted into a monstrous nightmare far worse in many respects than death itself. With a universal War in full swing we may well wonder whether the seeker after Truth and Life, is not, after all, a mere curiosity. The sacrifices of to-day may not count at all in the future; the dreams of to-day may become nothing more than a glorious and haunting memory to the select few. May we not, in all seriousness, be merely repeating such experiences as were the lot and destiny of those who would be with us to-day, but who are now something less even than memories? Despair, however, will not prevent us from handing on the torch.....A time may come.....who knows?

Arthur F. Thorn.

Mr. Stiggins-Chadband at the end of an hour finds he has joined the "movie" in mistake for the margarine queue.



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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

LONDON SOCIETY, *Morality based on Laws of Nature* (West Central Hall, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, The Baron de Bethune, "Our Destiny." Lecture in French. Discussion invited.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Is the Present Time opportune for the Study of the Republican Idea?" Affirmative, Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Spiritualism—Is It a Delusion?"

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK. 11 30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Swasey, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Religion from Martin Luther to Sir Oliver Lodge—and After."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars Hall, 120 Ingram Street): 12 noon, A Meeting of the Branch.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mrs. B. A. Bayfield, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

NUNEATON, GEORGE ELIOT BRANCH (The Palace, Queen's Road): 6.30, Mr. F. E. Willis, "What is the Use of Prayer?"

SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. W. W. E. Hart, "Citizenship."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, "Religion and Liberty"; 7, "The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Morality."

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and the Social Sense.—The Editor	161
The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd	162
"The Glorious Free Press."—Mimnermus	164
Theosophy in Belfast.—J. Effel	165
Letters to the Editor—Clergy and Raid Shelters, 167; *Inter Alia*	167
Acid Drops	167
To Correspondents	169
Sugar Plums	169
The Queen of Night.—T. F. Palmer	170
The Poet of Mortality.—H. George Farmer	171
Charlatans.—A. F. Reeman	172
Society News	174
N. S. S. Executive Report	174
Obituary	174
Notice of Meetings	174

Views and Opinions.

Religion and the Social Sense.

In judging the evils current in any state of society, there is always a tendency to consider the class that profits from their existence as deliberately and consciously perpetuating them. This view, however, involves a totally false estimate of the quality of the social forces and of human nature. Conscious villainy is not a powerful factor in human affairs. The number who can plainly say, "Evil, be thou my good," is never more than a very small minority. Paradoxical as it may sound, deliberate and conscious villainy implies a degree of *moral* courage possessed by few. Man's nature is so socialized that he must needs, in the vast majority of instances, find some moral or social justification for all he does. We have seen, in the case of the present War, that every nation engaged claims to have a moral or social justification for its conduct. Nor is this a piece of deliberate hypocrisy; it is rather an evidence of the truth that man's socialized human nature, while it may be misdirected, cannot be denied. And the same holds good of classes within the State. A social justification must be found—some outlet must be found, so to speak—for moral energy. And it is the peculiar function of religion, in all modern societies, that it provides an outlet for moral energies and aspirations, and thus perpetuates social evils that would otherwise stand self-condemned.

* * *

The Narcotic of Faith.

Last week, in dealing with Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's *The Town Labourer*, we pointed out the period covered by that work was characterized by (1) the development of the factory system, which evolved not alone the enslavement of a whole class, but the employment of young children and women under conditions to which the world offers no parallel; (2) an outburst of religious zeal, as shown by the lavish erection of churches and the creation of numerous organizations for the evangelizing of the world; and (3) a burst of anti-freethinking prosecution and persecution The connection between these phases is closer than appears at first sight. Indeed, our point is that number two was in a sense inevitable to number one, while number three was the necessary result of a movement of opinion that tended to bring men and women face to face with facts. In such a state of affairs, religion serves as an outlet for moral feeling that is checked in other directions. It gives a justification for existing institutions and conditions by an appeal to a supra-moral sanction. It provides a mental drug for those at the bottom, and a moral narcotic for those at the top. As Mr. and Mrs. Hammond say:—

> The resignation of the upper-class world to the torture of children.....the fresh hope of a decent or civilized life on this side of the grave for the majority of people in the new towns, are not to be attributed solely to the atmosphere of capitalists and landlords. .....We must take into account the way in which men and women capable of self-devotion and sympathy were brought through the associations of religion and inspiration of the evangelical Revival to regard the world around them.

* * *

Freethought and Progress.

First of all, we have to note the influence of the French Revolution. Monarchical and oligarchic England was thoroughly afraid of that movement. It did what it could to crush it abroad. It did what it could to limit its influence at home. And that influence came to England with the added odium of involving an attack on the Church.

> At the time when half Europe was intoxicated and the other half terrified by the new magic of the word citizen, the English nation was in the hands of men who regarded the idea of citizenship as a challenge to their religion and their civilization; who deliberately sought to make the inequalities of life the basis of the State, and to emphasize the position of the workpeople as a subject class.

The fear of this governing class was intensified by the fact that so much of the work of reform was actually associated with men of pronounced freethinking opinions. One notes the following among the names given by Mr. and Mrs. Hammond as men who agitated for reform: Paine, Robert Owen, Hardy, Thelwall, Place, Cobbett, Bamford, Prentice, Detrossier, Doherty, Hetherington, Carlile, Lovett, and Godwin. There are many others who are not mentioned by our authors, and who might be well named. But these names were enough to rouse the religious bias, and if one were to wipe out the work of these men from the social history of the century, English history would read very differently to-day.

* * *

How Religion Works.

To the governing class, Christianity came as the most useful of instruments for its purpose. In this sense evangelical religion was even more useful than the Established Church, since it exerted more influence over the working class. Wilberforce, keen to seek the freedom of the slave, supported with all his might the savage Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800,

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which had so baleful an effect on the lives of the working classes. When, during the debates on the suspension of the Habæus Corpus, Burdett pointed to the number of persons thrown into prison without trial, kept in solitary confinement, and forbidden communication with the outside world, and asked Wilberforce what a Christian was to think of those who not only did not visit the prisoner themselves, but would not allow others to visit him? Wilberforce replied that "religion had taught him to value the blessings the country enjoyed and to hand them down to posterity unimpaired." It is well said that "For such minds Christianity was not a standard by which to judge the institutions of society, but a reason for accepting them." Philanthropy was, of course, not wanting. That was one of the teachings of current religion. The rich must be kind to the poor; the poor must be grateful and respectful to the rich. The evil was reciprocal. There is only one thing more demoralizing to the average character than that of having people dependent upon one for the necessaries of life, and that is the effect of such conditions on the dependents themselves. "The poor ye have always with you," said Jesus, and the poor, overworked, and under-fed, badly housed, and uneducated, were told to be content, to be grateful for the mercies shown them, and to look forward for reward to the world to come.

* * *

The Cant of Dissent.

Writing in 1824, Cobbett said of the Methodists:—

> The bitterest foes in England have been, and are, the Methodists.....The friends of freedom have found fault, and justly found fault with the main body of the established clergy.....but, hostile to freedom as the established clergy have been, their hostility has been nothing in point of virulence compared with that of these ruffian sectaries.....Books upon books they write. Tracts upon tracts. Villainous sermons upon villainous sermons they preach. Rail they do like Cropper and Bott Smith, against the West Indian share-holders; but not a word do you ever hear from them against the share-holders in Lancashire or Ireland. On the contrary, they are continually telling the people here that they ought to thank the Lord for the blessings they enjoy; that they ought to thank the Lord, not for a bellyful and a warm back, but for that abundant grace of which they are the bearers, and for which they charge them only one penny per week.

With this sweeping condemnation of the most evangelical form of Christianity, and on behalf of which Methodists of to-day make such extravagant claims, Mr. and Mrs. Hammond do not substantially disagree. They point out that the general view of the leaders of the working-class concerning the Methodist revival does not differ from Cobbett's. In a careful analysis of the relation of the Methodist Church to working-class betterment, the authors say:—

> If we look into the life and teaching of this new religion, we can see that the whole spirit of its mission was unfavourable to the Democratic Movement and the growth of the Trade Union spirit. The Methodist movement was a call not for citizens, but for saints; not for the vigorous, still less for the violent redress of injustice, but for the ecstatic vision.....In so far as this religion touched on the affairs of this world it tended to reflect the spirit of its first missionary. It taught patience where the Trade Unions taught impatience. The Trade Union movement taught that men and women should use their power to destroy the supremacy of wealth in a world made by man; the Methodist that they should learn resignation amid the painful chaos of a world so made, for good reasons of his own, by God.....It set up a rival to the ideal of civic freedom. It diverted energy from the class struggle at a time when wise energy was scarce, and money when money was still scarcer. It would be extremely interesting to know what money was spent on religion by a class that was thereby diverting its resources from a war for independence.....The teaching of Methodism was unfavourable to working-class movements; its leaders were hostile, and its ideals, perhaps, increasingly hostile.

* * *

The Social Function of Religion.

The moral pointed by Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's book is, to my mind, clear. It is not merely that the resources of the people, mental, moral, and financial were, as the authors point out, diverted in a wrong direction, not merely that religion acted as a drug so far as they were concerned, but also that it served to reconcile the governing classes to the injustice and misery around them. Human nature may not be as noble as many of us would wish to see it, but it is not so vile that whole classes of men and women can consciously put aside the tendencies of their moral nature sufficiently to embark on a course of deliberate wrong-doing. Some outlet for their moral and social energies must be found, and it has always been the function of religion to provide this ethical safety valve. And that gives us the historic reason why religion has in all ages been found in close alliance with all forms of social wrong—slavery, serfdom, the enslavement of a class, and the subjection of women. Religion blinds people to the vital social issues. It excuses social wrong by an appeal to a "Providential order," it soothes the social sense by schemes of religious philanthropy, and thus perpetuates evils worse than those it professes to remove. It is not because religion deliberately teaches wrong-doing that it stands as the historic enemy of genuine social progress, but because it stands in the way of that wide-eyed, open-minded acceptance of vital facts which can alone make progress certain and profitable.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Newest Apologetic.

VI.

WE have learned from history that the achievements of Christianity are largely the creation of the theological imagination. Holding its record face to face with its claims no other conclusion is honestly possible than that it has been a gigantic failure. Not only it has not emancipated woman, but has rather put her in a position of undignified and humiliating subjection to man. Indeed, some divines, such as the Dean of Manchester, deliberately repudiate St. Paul's teaching on this subject. Christianity permitted slavery to exist for many centuries without uttering a single word in condemnation thereof, and when emancipation was effected it was in spite of the bitter opposition of the Church. It is a notorious fact that Christianity, not only has not abolished war, but has been directly responsible for many of the most devastating wars the world has ever seen. Neither can any one maintain that it has put an end to cruel, blood-thirsty sports, such as fox and deer hunting in our own country. These are counts against the popular religion of which it is impossible to acquit it. We have also seen that it has discouraged and set its face resolutely against the advance of secular learning, and was for many ages the sworn enemy of science. And yet, despite all these well-attested and generally-acknowledged facts, Christian apologists have the temerity to speak of the achievements of Christianity. Some of them go the length of alleging that it has redeemed the world, wildly glorying in what they call the mighty miracles of Divine Grace. The Rev. J. K. Mozley, B.D., whose ingenious little book, *The Achievements of Christianity*, we have

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reviewed in these columns, does not hesitate to characterize as perverse those who deny "a real nexus of cause and effect" between the Christian Faith and social reforms, ignoring the undeniable fact of the Church's angry resistance to nearly every one of such reforms. The third chapter in his work, entitled "Christianity and the Arts," deserves special attention, not because of its merits, but on account of its specious but unconvincing argument. We are in full accord with the thesis that "great indeed is the happiness which comes through the æsthetic side of life," but cannot possibly approve of the further assertion that "incomparably poorer would humanity be apart from the contributions to this side of life made under the inspiration of the Gospel." However, Mr. Mozley makes wonderful, even fatal admissions, thereby hopelessly removing the ground from under his own feet:—

> History does show very wide separations between art and Christianity at certain periods. The Fathers of the Church in the early centuries were more alive to the falseness and the frequent impurity of the religion represented in the great poetic works of the Greek and Roman writers than to the beauty of the poems and the grand ideals which often inspired the poets. The Puritan attitude to art was not all that we have been accustomed to suppose (Milton and Bunyan were at once great Puritans and great artists), but Puritanism was suspicious, and was also responsible for the destruction of a great deal of material beauty which, whatever might be thought of the religious uses to which it had been put, was very precious artistically. The attitude of Christians, Catholics as well as Puritans, towards the dramatic art and its exponents has, at times, been savagely hostile. And even to-day one could easily find Christian people who looked on the artistic temperament as something hardly compatible with true and deep religion (pp. 69, 70).

We hold that such has been the attitude of Christianity to art in all ages of its history, and that, from its very nature, no other attitude was possible to it. With much of what Mr. Mozley says about art, as such, we are in happy agreement; our only point of difference from him being the relation of the Christian Gospel to works of art. What does Christianity aim to accomplish in the world? If we take the New Testament as our guide, there is no escape from the conclusion that Christ came into the world to provide a way for guilty sinners to flee from the wrath to come. By nature we are all doomed to spend eternity in the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. Jesus was born that he might save his people from their sins and restore them to the favour of Heaven. Faith in his finished work secures eternal life, and eternal life consists in the knowledge of God. The redeemed of the Lord are treated as subjects of the kingdom of God, which is described as not of this world, either in origin or in nature, and its subjects are spoken of as citizens, not of earth, but of heaven. Now, it naturally follows that the world is a place, not to dwell in, but to escape from; not to love as a home, but to be despised as a prison. Christians are obliged to remain *in* the world for a little while, but are solemnly warned against being *of* it. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," is an apostolic injunction. Art, on the contrary, is at once of earthly origin and nature, and deals exclusively with earthly phenomena. Even so-called Christian art is subject to all the limitations which Nature imposes, and to other restrictions of a purely religious character. When Mr. Mozley says that "the kind of world, the outlook upon existence which art desires, and which is necessary for its finest inspiration and achievement, is bound up with the Christian interpretation," he gives expression to an untruth. It is well known that Greek art, which was not bound up with the Christian interpretation, has never been excelled, and probably never will be. It would be absurd to expect our author to think and speak well of Materialism; but we are surprised to find so capable a man allowing himself to deliberately misrepresent it. Though he lacks the audacity to affirm that "a universally accepted mechanical or naturalistic explanation of the world would be the ruin of great art," yet he is convinced that "it would most severely restrict it, and confine it within far narrower limits than its genius demands." He grants that if such an interpretation were accepted as ultimate truth, art would have to bow before it, but the loss would be unspeakably great.

> Materialism would explain all things, including the human spirit, in terms of matter and force; it would look on every sort of human activity as the necessary effect of causes purely physical; for any free action of the spirit it leaves no place at all. Idealism, mystery, and hope are all cut short in its presence. Not into mystery but into nothingness do all things vanish. Let us not think that the danger from Materialism has departed, because in recent years it has, as a philosophy, found it more and more difficult to hold its ground. Materialism, in some form or other, will always be the creed of the multitudes, when they have lost grip of the great beliefs in God, Freedom, and Immortality (pp. 71, 72).

That is a miserable caricature of Materialism. Mr. Mozley did not take the trouble to ascertain what the materialistic creed really is, nor does he mention his authority for his grossly inaccurate summary of it. Professor Tyndall was a scientific Materialist, and yet he had his idealisms, his dreams, his love of art, and his hope for the future of humanity. Shelley was an Atheist, and yet no poet of his age ever surpassed him as a devotee of the highest species of æstheticism. He was a passionate lover of beauty, and his poetry kindles the love of beauty in all who read it with appreciation. The same thing is true of Keats, Swinburne, and Meredith. Materialists do not believe that all things vanish into nothingness, their great, central conviction being that matter neither comes into existence nor goes out of existence, but is perpetually changing its forms. Mr. Mozley expresses the opinion that the beauty studied and admired by art is not "simply the beauty of line, colour, and sound, but the beauty which is through these made visible but not created," but will the reverend gentleman be good enough to tell us what this so-called higher beauty is, and where it is to be found apart from that of line, colour, and sound? It is admittedly invisible, but how does anybody know that it exists, or that it is other than the beauty of line, colour, and sound? It is true that we read in the Bible of the beauty of holiness, but everybody is aware that in such a connection beauty is merely a metaphor. Mr. Mozley says:—

> Under the magic touch of the great artists, the painters, the architects, the poets, and the musicians, the beauty which runs through Christianity, though not on its surface, has been brought to the light, so that men have come to see that the great Christian doctrines of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection are æsthetically as well as morally moving. And Christianity has provided the artist, not only with material of unparalleled richness upon which he may work, but with an inspiration capable of drawing out his finest powers. From the Gospel the artist has gained a vision in the light of which the world can be beautified as well as strengthened, and that redemption of which it tells leaves no faculty of man outside its quickening power (p. 73).

We ask how the great Christian doctrines of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection can be rendered æsthetically as well as morally moving? They cannot even be shown to be true, much less æsthetically

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and morally moving. They are cardinal articles in the Christian Creed, but their beauty is as difficult to discover as their truth. Whether true or false, neither the Incarnation nor the Resurrection possesses any moral qualities, while the theory of the Atonement brings us face to face with the quintessence of immorality; but not one of the three can be said to be æsthetically pleasing. As works of art, Raphael's famous picture of the Madonna and Child and Perugino's Crucifixion are truly beautiful; but their beauty is not marred in the least by the belief that the supernatural elements woven into and around them are wholly mythical. The Madonna is simply a beautiful woman, an affectionate mother, wrapping her child up in her radiant aura. The Crucifixion is, likewise, a wholly human incident, and the picture itself is an entirely human product, not even suggesting any supernatural connotation except to those who believe in it. The same thing is true of Handel's *Messiah*, whose music is nothing more than a scientific arrangement and combination of sounds, conveying no ideas whatever except those which the hearers succeed in appropriating. Thousands of people thoroughly enjoy and are powerfully moved by the *Messiah*, to whom the Christian religion is anything but true. It is the music alone that charms them.

It is perfectly true that many Christians are ardent lovers and enthusiastic patrons of the arts, but not because they are Christians, and it is equally true that not a few artists have been and are devout believers; but Christianity, as expounded in the New Testament and the Creeds, is by no means an æsthetic religion. In reality, between the Christian and the artist a great gulf is fixed, which cannot be annihilated except at the cost of reconstructing Christianity itself, which is a task upon which several eminent divines are now engaged. Art is much older than Christianity, and destined to survive it. Greek sculpture, music, and poetry have never been surpassed, and, as some aver, remain unequalled to this day; and it is an unquestioned fact that the gradual decay of Christian belief is unaccompanied by any corresponding decline of the arts. We are convinced, moreover, that the passing of supernaturalism will result in the emancipation and glorification of all high art.

J. T. Lloyd.

"The Glorious Free Press."

The Free Press, by Hilaire Belloc. Allen & Unwin. 1918.

Indefatigable, if not profound, Mr. Hilaire Belloc has written a book on the free press, and the volume appears at a time when newspapers are less free than at any other recent period of their history. The first master of the art of advertisement in this country is Mr. George Bernard Shaw. The second is Mr. Belloc. This is not an expression of reproach, but one of admiration. He has survived four years as a cocksure military critic, and now he has turned his guns on the pressmen. The papers are full of him and his dexterous criticism and camouflage.

Mr. Belloc sets out to lash the English press, and his most telling criticism is that the power of the editors and the writers has been constantly diminishing of late years, and the power of the commercially-minded proprietors constantly increasing. He might have added that all have become the slaves of the advertisement manager.

Journalists can neither do justice to themselves, nor serve the public honestly, in a press dominated by advertisers and vested interests. In spite of their rivalry, the British newspapers are of one mind in suppressing advanced thought, which is understood to be fatal to fat dividends. The conspiracy of silence against Freethought is wonderful. The papers devote columns to the most brutal murder cases, and report verbatim all the salacious details of divorce and police-court cases. In the summer, when space is plentiful, there is always the sea-serpent or the big gooseberry. In the midst of a world-war room is found for circumstantial accounts of "angels" on the battle-fields, or of the miraculous happenings to stone statues of the Madonna. Let there be no mistake on this point. The writers of this trash do not all believe it. It is not entirely due to fanaticism or ignorance, but is simply done to promote huge circulations. It is, in the last analysis, largely a matter of business. Journalists know better than that Freethinkers are weak, foolish, and ill conditioned persons, but they wish to curry favour with the many-headed orthodox. The imbecilities of the Bishop of London, and other clergymen, are reported weekly in the newspapers, but the leaders of Freethought seldom have a line devoted to their work.

The result is, that readers of newspapers are kept in blissful ignorance of the intellectual ferment that goes on outside the very narrow limits of the "respectable" press; that is, the press which is only a money-making concern. Mr. Belloc sees this clearly enough with regard to Socialism, but he has little to say about Freethought. There is plenty of room for a serious criticism of the English press, but it must be undertaken by someone with more independence than Mr. Belloc, who prefers the days when news was spread, not by the press, but by word of mouth. The latter he describes as "the natural system," which is an astonishing preference. With all their suppressions and exaggerations, newspapers are better methods of communication than reliance upon the garbled conversations of ignorant and illiterate people. As for the press, Mr. Belloc holds it in high-sniffing contempt. Journalists serve proprietors of newspapers, individuals, or syndicates. They may be ever so ignorant, ever so shallow, and ever so disreputable; it is enough if they can write in a taking way, and flatter the prejudices and passions of their readers. They are also irresponsible, and after they have fomented enmities, flattered vested interests, and written "puffs" for advertisers, no one can bring them to book. Personally unknown, merged in the identity of a journal, they are nothing to the world.

Newspapers are commercial speculations. The "glorious free press" is one of the greatest impositions of the age. It exists to pervert and corrupt the public mind, as far as possible, in favour of certain interests which are never openly stated. It is the obedient, humble servant of the advertisers. The only really free press in England consists of a few journals founded and maintained for the promotion and defence of principles. They have relatively small circulations, they derive only a very little of their revenue from advertisements, and that they continue to live at all is a tribute to the animating power of conviction, and the talents of their editors. Journals of this kind have many difficulties of publication. They are starved by the neglect of advertisers, and they are subjected to a boycott which prevents them finding their way to more than a fraction of their potential purchasers. They are perpetually between the proverbial devil and the deep sea, and their existence is a miracle more marvellous than any related in the Gospels.

As an example of the difficulties of conducting advanced periodicals, it is no secret that over nine thousand pounds was spent on *Justice* during twenty years, and it fell on evil days at last. The arresting personality of Mr. Hyndman could not make the paper a commercial success. The *Clarion* has had a much larger circulation

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than *Justice*, but even Mr. Robert Blatchford's deserved popularity could not make his paper pay without subsidies from his readers. And if two such men cannot make such papers a commercial success, how is the thing to be done at all?

Freethought in this country is represented in the popular press by the *Freethinker*. And a wider circulation for this journal is the best antidote to the conspiracy of silence and misrepresentation of the commercial press. If our readers do a little missionary work, and do it regularly, the boycott will soon be a thing of the past. A thousand new readers have been obtained through the editor's appeal. The process can be continued indefinitely, and contribute towards the final triumph of, what George Meredith called, "the best of causes."

Mimnermus.

Theosophy in Belfast.

Judging by advertisements of meetings and courses of lectures during the past year, Belfast Theosophists have been displaying considerable activity. It is about a quarter of a century since I dabbled in re-incarnation, soul transmigration, and kindred mysteries, and so, being caught in the rain one Sunday evening, I wandered into a hall where a lecture on Theosophy was being delivered.

The title was "Body, Soul, and Spirit," and the speaker was a Miss Isabelle Pagan from Edinburgh. There was a good audience, and as it was evident that the majority were believers in the Blavatsky doctrines, it may be worth while to review some of the ideas of the lecturer, and to put them to the test of common sense—I will not say reason.

As Theosophy can only make an appeal to those who have had some education, I was genuinely interested in the psychology of the movement. After hearing this one lecture by an earnest and cultured lady, and having noted the demeanour of the audience, I have solved the problem. These people are believers, they believe this, that, or the next thing for the simple reason that they were brought up to believe. What it is they believe, however fantastic or idiotic is of no account; the basic fact is that they believe, that they *possess faith*, which is equivalent to saying that they subordinate reason. Oh, yes, they may have had doubts, doubts as to some article of the creed in which they were reared, doubts about the Bible, about the teachings of Jesus, but they have always given *the will to believe* precedence over *the desire to know*.

I cannot labour this point too much (although it is nothing new to Freethinkers) for it explains completely why many educated men and women, gifted with fine intelligence in secular affairs, subscribe to speculative doctrines so ridiculous that a child of a Rationalist could confute them with logic. Positivism was described as Catholicism without Christ, and Theosophy is Christianity plus camouflage. In a final analysis all religions are the same, the first principle being that man can achieve greater knowledge and wisdom by faith than by the exercise of the reason.

Now, we know where we are with Catholicism. The faithful have to accept without question, and it is sinful even to entertain a doubt. But Theosophy affects to make an appeal to reason; when, however, we look into it, we find that nearly everything has to be taken on trust. In her lecture, Miss Pagan early showed that she had always been a believer, and the easy way she glided over man's survival of bodily death, his three-fold nature, his numerous bodies (likened to so many waistcoats) re-incarnation, psychometry, astrology, ether, and the aura, and the way the audience accepted it all, fairly took my breath away. Her ideas about the physical body were platitudinous, and some of them silly. The opinions of unmarried persons about the care of children are invariably foolish. I see nothing funny in the story of the man who thought his children ought to be sponged before kissing him! Preference for Swedish gymnastics over German drill is, of course, to be commended—we are not at war with Sweden. Small talk about literature for children, with just a touch of the blood-curdling element recommended, shows clearly the taint of early religious "pithing," for who, in the name of goodness, would ever be curdled about ghosts or bogey men unless fear had been inculcated in them from infancy?

The lady's lack of logic, and her ignorance of the problems of free-will, heredity, and environment which are inextricably bound up with man's every action, was clearly manifested by such phrases as "doing a thing against his will," "self-sacrifice," "the force that compels a man to perform an unpleasant duty, when it would have been much easier to have refrained," etc.

When it came to mind training I sat up and took notice. It appears we do not spend enough time in contemplation and meditation. If we cultivate our "intuitive faculties" there is scarcely any limit to the possibilities of knowledge opened up to us by this means. We were told how some fortunate students of the occult could foretell that they were to receive letters, and even to be certain of the contents, and how certain children of California possessed marvellous intuition and could differentiate between sealed packets of salt, sugar, rice, etc. A wonderful instance of this intuitively acquired positive knowledge was given. An engineer had put up some elaborate machinery. A friend of his—a brother engineer—told the inventor that he would require to take his work to pieces as there was a flaw in a small but important wheel that would completely upset the working. Now, "as he could not possibly have seen the part" which he alleged was faulty, the inventor testily asked why his friend thought there was something wrong. "I do not *think*, I *know*," was the reply of the spiritualistic engineer. The machine was, at great cost, taken to pieces, and, lo, there was a mighty flaw, and intuition again triumphed!

At question time I asked for a clear definition of intuition, and requested further particulars respecting the talented juveniles of California. The reply to this latter query completely bears out what I maintained earlier, that, at all hazards, these people want to believe in hanky panky. California is a long way off, and yet Miss Pagan never questions the honesty of the proceedings. "Yes," she said, naively, "the child just concentrates, and holds the envelope to his brow, so."

"They could smell it," I interjected.

"They don't smell with their foreheads, and there is no difference in odour between sugar and salt," retorted the lecturer, and the audience tittered at my folly. Now, it is strange argument for Theosophists, who know that savage man retains many senses that civilization has dulled or robbed us of, that it would be impossible for an acute nose to discriminate between two substances held within an inch or two. Besides, an envelope is translucent, and, placed near the forehead, might be seen through. But as I indicated in the framing of my question, the children are in California, and doubtless, if there are Theosophists out there, they will tell wonderful tales of the occult exploits of Belfast nippers. Miss Pagan assured me that it would take her till midnight to give all the authenticated instances of knowledge gained by other than the ordinary channels known to

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experience. It was common practice, she said, for men to use intuitively acquired knowledge in their business; there was a growing number possessing the faculty to a wonderful extent, and it could be cultivated by anyone.

It is profoundly pathetic in these terrible times to listen to such nonsense, and to reflect, that while there is so much to be done for poor suffering humanity, that thousands of earnest people take this "philosophy" as having a serious bearing on the affairs of life. Far from it being true that there are hundreds of instances where intuition has accurately foretold events, *there has never been a solitary instance* that would convince a committee of reasonable persons with powers to investigate, while the frauds, and quacks, and charlatans, from the founder of Theosophy down to the meanest medium, have been innumerable. It has been well said that the proper investigators of "psychic phenomena" are the detective, the conjurer, and the pathologist. I have some knowledge of showmen and of "fakes," and there is not a "black-art" worker in the kingdom who couldn't make an impromptu thought-reading show, assisted by a strange boy, that would equal the revealed exploits of the Californian prodigies. I challenge Miss Pagan or anyone else to demonstrate before me and a committee some similar manifestations by children, and I will wager any sum of money that I will give a reasonable explanation of the occurrences, and then show exactly the same tricks by my own children.

As to the story of the machinery, was not the second man also an engineer? Now, had be been a baker, it might have been considered wonderful; but the whole yarn is just as vague as tracts of the Atheist Shoemaker type. Names, dates, and details are wanting; and if it is common practice to use knowledge acquired by intuition, why are technical schools not superseded by contemplation colleges, and why does not telepathy render the telephone obsolete?

Now, if I were lecturing on Theosophy—which heaven forbid!—I could find more convincing illustrations of intuition than those employed at this lecture; but evidently any old thing will do with those disposed to religion. If I said to my wife, "I have an intuition that the Edinburgh tramcars will break down to-morrow," she would only laugh at me, for she belongs to Leith, and knows that the prehistoric tanks of Princes Street break down *every* day; there is nothing very wonderful in a business man having a "feeling" or an instinct or an intuition—or the complete trinity of the emotions—that he would receive letters by the morning; but then I am a sceptic, and would not be surprised if I were told that some of the letters would begin "Dear Sir" and end up "Yours truly," or maybe "Yours faithfully," have the previous day's date on them, and some to be typewritten.

It is so easy to prophesy things that are always happening, and yet so perverted is the religious mind that a natural explanation will be rejected for one that savours of the mysterious. Take Miss Pagan's story of the "intuitional warning" given to the young man, which compelled him to look into a shop window, and so save his life, for lower down the street a chimney fell, and would have killed him. "It was a thing utterly foreign to his nature to look at a window," we were told, and nobody laughed. I feel rather ashamed of noticing such imbecility. It is the old religious explanation that always satisfies the religious mind. The man who was saved received a "warning"; for him who was killed, "his hour had struck." God is a winner both ways, and is justified whatever happens. Had the youth felt that some force would suddenly lift him up to the chimney, and if that happened, it might be worth looking into.

Of course, our old trusting friend, Sir Oliver Lodge, was spoken of with deep reverence, and St. Paul was frequently quoted, to my surprise, for I do not think that deceased author approved of lady lecturers. Children should be taught to emulate "great men" (who are the judges?) regardless of the fact that, despite the foolish utterance of a poet, their lives have seldom anything sublime about them; and reverence for religion is, of course, imperative.

All this is the usual hocus-pocus of Christianity; but it is surprising that Theosophists can even go one better in idiocy than orthodox believers. Telling us that God will be pleased or he will be angry is presumptuous; but I simply cannot keep my face straight when I have to listen to a solemn rigmarole about "what the Angel Gabriel would do at half-past twelve," the spiritual exaltation of repeating rhythmically, "Alfred Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson," like his bally brook; and when a supposedly educated woman hailing from the noble city of Edinburgh asks me to see a deeper meaning, a longing or a yearning, in the absurd gyrations of a dancing Dervish, and to be respectful about the silly creature, I can only retire from the investigation, and make way for the pathologist.

J. EFFEL.

Correspondence.

CLERGY AND RAID SHELTERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of March 3 there appears, under the heading "Acid Drops," certain remarks concerning something that took place recently at an air-raid shelter in West Ham which need some correction, as they are far from a truthful account of what happened. The clergyman concerned did not "impose himself upon the gathering," as is asserted; he had been asked by several who are in the habit of frequenting this shelter to come and help them with songs and hymns. On the evening in question, when he first arrived at the school, he asked the gentleman who at other times had used the piano to play for them, as he had done the previous evening (Sunday); this he did for part of the evening. While the people were assembling, songs were sung, and then, at the request of some of the children, the well-known children's hymn, "There's a friend for little children," was sung, during the singing of which some objection was raised, and five or six men and lads started the song, "What's the use of worrying?"

In order to show the spirit of charity towards the few who differed, the hymn was stopped, and the lady at the piano struck up the same popular air, in which many joined. After some more songs, the hymns were resumed without further interruption, and as a climax, towards the end, practically all present joined heartily in the hymn, "Crown Him Lord of all." No interference with anyone's rights took place, and we should like to ask if Christians who make use of Council property have not the same right as so-called Freethinkers?

BY ONE WHO WAS PRESENT.

[We based the paragraph on information supplied by a correspondent whose accuracy we had no reason to question. It does seem that an attempt at religious propaganda of a kind was made, and that was the central point in the paragraph questioned.—EDITOR.]

INTER ALIA.

SIR,—The actual occasion of this letter is concerning the reference of "Mimnermus" to G. L. Mackenzie, in the *Freethinker* for March 3. G. W. Foote, in his preface to Mackenzie's book, specially notes "Miracle" and "The Salvationist's Prayer." We were most entertained by the rather long poem, "Jurisprudent Jehovah," in which occurs:—

THE TEMPLE OF THE TRINITY.

'Tis thus: Believe that I and Christ and Ghost are one in three;
That I, as Christ, was nailed to death, to bribe the Ghost and me;

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That I, as Christ, began to be, yet always was, my son:
That each, yet none, is I, and I am each, and all are one!

These statements—strange to those who ne'er for godly knowledge thirst—
Are simple when you know them; but you've got to know them first.

Alas, poor Yorick! MENANDER.

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London is another sufferer by the War. In addition to Fulham Palace being used as a Red Cross Hospital, presently, he has given up half of London House, and has put all his spare cash into War Loans. This is very distressing, but he may, perhaps, find some consolation in the reflection that Fulham Palace and London House are given to him rent free, and money allowed for keeping them up, so that there may be a little gain in a curtailment of expenses without a diminution of income. And investing all one has at five per cent., gilt-edged security, has certain compensating features also. Nature is full of compensation, as Emerson pointed out. But, we suppose, Bishop Ingram doesn't bother much about Emerson.

The Bishop asked his audience to think of Russia. Well, some of his audience might think of the Russia the Bishop praised for its nobility and religion—the Russia of the Czar, with its pogroms, and police spies, and Siberia, and ignorance, and suppression of nearly all that made life worth living. And the better informed of his audience might know that the new Russia—in spite of its military collapse, and the disadvantage of that to the Allies—has created thousands of Peasant Councils, provided a large number of new schools and hospitals, established 40,000 new Co-operative Societies, and arranged for 5,000 new schools to be opened. However great may be the military disaster of the revolution, the intellectual ferment continues, and the seeds of a social regeneration are sown. But one cannot expect the Bishop of London to attach great value to these things.

The Bishop of Birmingham has been throwing bouquets at Cardinal Bourne, and says that "I would accept nine-tenths of the programme of the Cardinal in regard to social life in the future." If the dogmas of the Church are true, "the social life in the future" will be too hot to be pleasant for quite a number of people.

Reuter's agency states that the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem has arrived safely in that city. You can always trust that the Church Militant will mingle discretion with its valour.

The clergy maintain that the War was sent by a benevolent deity to punish a naughty world for its sins. A London magistrate declares that, since the War, immorality has increased one hundred per cent.

The Sheffield Catholic Association has passed a resolution pledging support to their bishops in their opposition to the New Education Bill, and also protesting against the proposed legislation for cheaper divorce. Evidently divorce is a luxury that should only be allowed to people with long purses. In our opinion where divorce is advisable there is very much more reason for it in the case of poor people than wealthy ones. The former has few opportunities of getting free from the inconvenience of an undesirable union.

No one need be alarmed at the talked-of invasion of Siberia by the Japanese. The *Daily Mail* publishes a letter from a correspondent pointing out that this is in fulfilment of prophecy, and is part of the "unfolding of a great purpose." So it is all part of God's plan in the War, the Russian revolution, and the advance of the Japanese Army. And we suppose Germany must be brought in somehow.

Dr. Fort Newton, despite his vaunted love of freedom, cannot be even just to those who do not share his faith. In a sermon preached in the Cathedral of Glasgow, and published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for March 6, he speaks of "the bitter tragedy of Atheism," and says "there is no keener pain than a loss of the sense of the reality of God." The reverend gentleman is either hopelessly prejudiced or profoundly ignorant, or both, when he so utterly misrepresents the nature and the effect of Atheism. Convinced Atheists are the happiest people in the world. The loss of the sense of the reality of God is to them an unspeakable relief. What they have lost is belief in a myth, but what they have gained is a new and heart-lifting conception of Nature, and their own relation thereto.

Dr. Fort Newton makes a quotation from Nietzsche, which, taken out of its context, conveys an entirely false impression. The preacher overlooks the fact that the great Pole is speaking sarcastically when he so pathetically describes the imaginary sorrows of the unbeliever. No one can honestly read *Thus Spake Zarathustra* without perceiving what a real advantage it is to be an Atheist. It was a saint, to whom the love of God was all in all, who tried to prevent the good man from carrying his glad tidings to the masses. After his interview with him Zarathustra pitied him, and excused him by saying: "He has not heard that God is dead." In reality the Atheist has lost nothing: he has simply been delivered from bondage to a superstition, and his heart overflows with joy. There are thousands of such people within a few miles of the City Temple, though the pastor pretends to be unaware of their existence.

Dr. Fort Newton tells us that Nietzsche had the courage "to face the raw horror that lies at the end of the logic of denial," which is the opposite of true. Nietzsche did not lament the loss of "his right to pray," for he did not believe in prayer; and in his *Human, All Too Human*, he almost goes out of his way to expatiate on the absurdity of praying. Since he was convinced of the non-existence of God, how could he regret his inability to pray? As it generally does come, Atheism came to him as a deliverance, and he often actually revelled in it.

Once more, Dr. Fort Newton does not understand what Atheism is. He takes it for granted that to an Atheist purity is a delusion, justice a fiction, and hope a dream, an error for which there is absolutely no excuse. Besides, the reverend gentleman does not *know* that "God is there," however firmly he may believe that he is. He often denounces dogmatism in the most scathing terms; and yet in this sermon he comes before us as one of the most bare-faced dogmatists in Christendom.

A correspondent of the *Star* (March 6) has unearthed the following advertisement from the "Personal Column" of the London *Times*:—

> For sale, the advowson of Aveton Gifford Rectory, near Kingsbridge, Devon. Net yearly value £690 (about); population about 700. The parish is pleasantly situated near a river and a short distance from the railway and the sea. The church is in beautiful state of repair. The rectory, which is a handsome Elizabethan residence, standing high in nice grounds, is in perfect order; good outbuildings. Present incumbent aged 67; no curate is required.

And yet parsons are never tired of talking about the "spiritual" side of their calling.

Following the death of Lance-corporal Evans, which was noted in these columns, and whose exemption by the Tribunal was refused, chiefly on account of his freethinking opinions, a lively correspondence has been going on in the Wood Green *Sentinel*. The Freethought side is being well upheld, and we congratulate the editor in permitting both sides to express an opinion. A Mr. A. W. Elliott figures prominently in this correspondence, and his measure may be gauged by his statement that Bradlaugh could not stand the fire of his cross-examination, and that "Foote deliberately lied in my presence." The editor curtly remarks that Mr.

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Elliott appears to be eaten up with self-conceit and to have a passion for self-advertisement.

The controversy seems to turn on the decision of the Tribunal that Lance-corporal Evans could not have had a conscientious objection to military service, since he was an Atheist. Hence the decision of the Tribunal to send a young man into the Army whose physique unfitted him for the life. We have noted many cases in which Tribunals have decided that to have a "conscience" one must be religious, and the the decision of the mental calibre of many who have been entrusted by the Military Service Act with the ordering of men's lives. It is bad enough that such ignorant bigots should be in a position of authority, but to place them in *such* a position is a public outrage.

We wonder what the Minister for Education thinks of the following questions that were given to a class of children in the Sonning (Berks) Boys' School:—

> (1) Write out the answers in the Church Catechism to the following questions:—(a) Which be they? (b) What meanest thou by the word sacrament?
>
> (2) Who spoke the following words to whom, when, and where?
>
> (a) "Do not lie unto thy handmaid."
>
> (b) "What said those men and from whence come they unto thee?"
>
> (c) "Lord, open to us."
>
> (d) "Put up thy sword again into his place."
>
> (e) "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him."
>
> (f) "I will hear thee when thy accusers are also come."
>
> (3) What are the first words that Our Lord is recorded to have spoken after he rose from the dead?
>
> (4) Write shortly what you know of Abana, Rabshakeh, Darius, Shushan, Caiaphas, Arimathea, Demetrius, and Euroclydon.
>
> (5) On what days are proper prefaces appointed to be said? What is said or sung immediately after such prefaces?

To call this kind of thing education is ridiculous. To claim that it has any influence in forming character is downright knavery.

None too soon some of our judges are making a stand against the idea that a certain amount of licence must be given to a man who has served in the War. And, naturally, when the Bishop of London speaks of all soldiers as "saints," and any statement that soldiers are as other men, subject to the same influences, and animated by the same passions, is treated as an insult to the Army, it is not surprising if some think that a civil offence, if committed by a soldier should be winked. In justice to the soldiers themselves it should be said that they are the last to take this view. It belongs to empty-headed civilians. A soldier feels himself one with the rest of the people, and desires to be judged by the same standards. And, on the whole, we think more of the soldiers in this War than of the bulk of civilians.

All the same, we welcome Justice Darling's remark in a recent case that—

> the judges of the King's Bench Division had noticed a growing practice in the courts of the country of allowing soldiers who had committed crimes to go practically unpunished, and it was well that it should be plainly stated that this practice of treating a soldier who had done service differently to civilians when charged with similar crimes had tended to place judges in a very difficult position when sentences came up for revision. Certain people held the view that good military service could be set off against civil crime, and that a man who was a good soldier could commit murder or any other crime and go practically free. If that view was to prevail it would mean that a mention in despatches for a Military Medal would be a licence to commit crime. It was the considered opinion of this Court that there must be an end to the view that soldiers could commit crime with impunity. The Court could not allow that good military service entitled a man to commit crime with anything approaching impunity, and each case must be judged on its merits.

Special circumstances may arise in the case of a soldier that do not obtain with civilians, but Justice Darling's ruling strikes us as sound and timely.

While we are on this topic we commend to those civilians who are so enamoured of militarism as to wish for some measure of Conscription, after the War, the following words of General Sir William Robertson, late Chief of Staff:—

> People at home might be asked to submit to still further sacrifices before the War could be brought to such a conclusion as would prevent a recurrence of the horrors, the miseries, and the loss of valuable lives that we had witnessed during the last three and a half years—until we could remove the disgrace to civilization so-called which we saw existing before this War began—he meant the waste of labour and the waste of life in nations maintaining great armies for the purpose of destroying each other.

That, as we have often said, is an end worth fighting for. The state of preparing for war by maintaining large armies in times of "peace" is only one degree less hateful and injurious than actual warfare. And, again, it is a soldier who points to this truth. Countries that need armies to watch each other can no more be properly called civilized than a street can be said to be honest when each house demands the special attention of a policeman to prevent robbery.

Mr. Asquith, in his speech at the Holborn Restaurant, quoted the words of Voltaire: "The wise should have preferences, but no exclusions." It is pleasant to find the great French Freethinker a source of inspiration.

The time's out of joint; but so, apparently, are the seasons. The first cuckoo has appeared at Folkestone, and has been followed by the first butterfly at Leigh-on-Sea. It almost looks as if poor old Providence is getting old. At any rate, it shows great carelessness.

Bearing in mind the way in which the Government has scattered tons of printed paper about, it is cheering to know that a more economical spirit is prevailing. Asked by Lord Ribblesdale for a return showing the number of people appointed by the Government, the reply was that it could not be done, as paper was short. We are glad to see an economical use of paper, even only though it only involves the use of a few hundred sheets.

The Bishop of London, Rev. F. B. Meyer, and Father Bernard Vaughan were all speaking from the same platform the other day. It was a touching picture of Christian brotherhood, the only thing to make the cynic smile was that they were together to impress upon people the importance of attending Church on Sunday. Professional interest brought them together, as professional interest often drives them apart.

The *Sunday Chronicle* reports a secret wireless installation in Bethel House, the headquarters of the International Bible Students' Association. Bethel House was founded by the late Pastor Russell, and the outfit was presumably to be used for communicating with the enemy.

Lady Glenconner has been telling some amusing stories concerning children. One of the best is that of a child seeing a parson mounting the pulpit steps, and asking, "Is he Jesus?" "No." "Then is he Punch?"

Lord Rhondda says he is proud that his father was a grocer. Why should he not be? It is said that "god" was a carpenter.

The Archbishop of York is at the front—at Washington—where he has dined with President Wilson.

"Who was the first man to fly?" asks a contemporary. According to the Bible, Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire, and the hero of the Gospels went up "on his own."

A daily paper had a leading article, "Wide-Awake Rip Van Winkles." What an admirable description of the clergy!

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; March 31, Pontycymmer; April 7, Glasgow; April 14, Liverpool; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—G. F. Dixon, £1; S. Clowes, 2s. 6d.; Ernest, 10s.; C. B., 2s.

C. Diggory.—Parcel of literature for distribution is being sent. Hope it will be found useful.

A. Atherton.—The article is very striking, as you say, appearing in a Church magazine. We hope its readers will draw the correct conclusions as regard their own faith.

E. Russell.—Thanks. Papers are being sent.

W. Lamb.—We are obliged for your congratulations. If our friends could only secure us paper with as much ease as they seem able to get readers, we should sleep easier. The problem ahead seems how to print without paper.

H. Austin.—We are continuing the subject in this week's "Views," as you will see. It is quite possible the articles would serve a useful purpose if republished; but the cost of printing now is very great, and that gives us pause.

T. Fowler.—It is a question of using what one can get. Paper is now costing at least thirty per cent. above last year's prices, and is still rising.

G. Thompson.—Our objection to the practice in question is general—moral, physical, and social. We do not care to measure the importance of each. Much would depend on the circumstances in each case.

F. Smith.—The present plan of datting "A.D." was adopted in the latter half of the sixth century. Glad you found the parcel of literature so useful.

S. Clowes.—We quite appreciate your concern, and also suggestions, which we will bear in mind. As you say, the financial burden of conducting a paper under present conditions grows steadily greater; but we are cheered by the knowledge that we can rely upon the loyalty of our readers. No editor could ask for a better band of readers than we have.

Benevolent Fund N. S. S.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Ilford, 2s. 6d.; Glasgow Branch, 15s.; Newcastle Branch, 10s.; "Ernest," 2s. 6d.

General Fund N. S. S.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Newcastle Branch, 10s.; H. V. Templeman, 12s. 6d.

J. Hudson.—We took the item from a newspaper cutting sent us, but sorry we did not keep it for reference.

W. Repton.—Sorry you were unable to call. Should have been pleased to see you before you leave England, and to have wished you a safe return in person. However, you have our good wishes under all circumstances.

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. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 17) Mr. Cohen pays his second visit to Southampton. He will lecture, morning at 11, evening at 7, in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road. Judging from his last experience, the hall should be well filled on both occasions.

On March 31, Easter Sunday, Mr. Cohen has arranged for a lecturing visit to Pontycymmer, S. Wales (not Blaengawr as stated last week). Big meetings are expected, and it is hoped to form a new Branch of the N.S.S. there. Other meetings would have been arranged for Aberdare and Pontypridd, but halls were not available or suitable. Anyway, Freethought is going ahead in South Wales, and we are looking forward to much greater activity in the immediate future.

We continue to receive many letters from soldiers acknowledging the parcels of literature we have been sending, and "testifying" to the good its circulation is doing. In dug-out and hut the pamphlets and papers form the topic of keen discussions, and many have placed before them Freethought views which otherwise they might never have heard. The literature, in brief, is doing exactly what it was intended to do. It is making many converts, and they will come back from the War with their religious beliefs quite cleared away.

Ever since the War started we have been sending out from the *Freethinker* office in this way as part of a deliberate plan of campaign. The soldiers in our armies have come from everywhere, and when the War ends will return to everywhere. Those who have become acquainted with Freethought during the campaign will, in many cases, become so many active missionaries for our cause, and we expect to see the fruits of our policy in the very near future. It was for this reason that we would have liked to have sent out a hundred times as much as has been sent. But we have done all we could within the limit of our resources, and perhaps more than our financial means justified. Still we are quite satisfied with the result so far. And there is something that appeals to us in using this war of nations as a means for carrying on a war on behalf of human reason and intellectual freedom.

Mr. Lloyd lectures at the Tillery Institute, Abertillery today (March 17). The afternoon meeting is at 3, and the evening at 6.30. It is almost superfluous to hope for good meetings. Mr. Lloyd is too well appreciated in this district for them to be otherwise than good.

The Swansea Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged for the lectures to be delivered by the Rev. W. H. Walker, late of Manchester. The lectures will be at the Docker's Hall—afternoon at 3—on "Free Thought and Free Belief"; evening at 7 on "Evolution and Revolution." The questions and discussion should prove interesting.

Those who require a clear and unambiguous statement of the case for Birth Control would do well to read "Population and Birth Control," the Presidential address of Dr. C. K. Millard, Medical Officer of Health for Leicester. The case is clearly and temperately stated, and it is unencumbered by the many side issues and irrelevances so often present in such discussions. The publishers are Messrs. Thornley and Son, Leicester, and the price one shilling.

By the will of the late S. M. Peacock, of South Shields, the Secular Society, Limited, benefits by one tenth of the residue of his estate, which has a gross value of £7,668 18s. 6d.

The price of papers continue to go up, and their size to go down. The *Times* has advanced still another penny, the *Telegraph* has doubled its price, and *John Bull*, in addition to issuing fewer pages, is now two pence. Where it will end no man knoweth.

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The Queen of Night.

II.

(*Continued from p. 155.*)

Although the moon is a very minute body in comparison with the sun, the lunar orb's proximity to our planet enables it to play a predominant part in generating the ocean tides. Solar tides there are, but the moon's tide-producing powers far exceed those of the sun. At times, the sun and moon act together, while on other occasions they pull in different directions. During the periods of full moon and new moon, the solar and lunar orbs pull together, because then they are either on opposite sides of the earth, or both on the same side. On such occasions as these, we experience the highest tides at all our sea ports. Conversely, when our satellite is in its first or last quarter, its position, as seen from our globe, is at a right angle with a line drawn to the solar orb. The sun then raises tides in one direction, while the moon raises them in another direction. As the outcome of this phenomenon, the earth's tides are then at their lowest.

Apart from all ordinary interest, a complete knowledge of these details is of supreme importance to mariners, for many invaluable harbours are rendered available for the navigation of large vessels at seasons of high tide only. The Nautical Almanac publishes the tables which accurately predict the times and heights of the tides for the principal seaports of the world. Not merely does the moon serve to adorn the heavens at night, but it also makes serviceable to man such waters insufficiently deep for the passage of ships, save at those times when the tides run high. Moreover, tidal activities are instrumental in scouring river courses, thus preventing the detrimental accumulation of mud and other materials swept down by the streams as they travel towards the sea.

Gravitational attraction varies with the distance of the attracting body. The distance from our earth's centre to that of our satellite is about 239,000 miles. But as our planet's diameter is nearly 8,000 miles, the surface of the ocean, when it presents its bosom to the moon, must be 4,000 miles nearer to that orb than the earth's centre. The force of the lunar attraction is therefore greater at our globe's surface than at its centre. Were the entire earth solid, no appreciable effect would arise from this difference in the moon's attractive powers. But as the earth's oceans are liquid, and therefore mobile, they succumb to the lunar attraction, and are drawn towards the moon. Thus are generated the tides on those areas of the earth's surface which face the moon.

We may now turn to the tide which rises simultaneously on that part of our globe's surface which is turned away from the moon. If the surface of our planet which is facing the moon is 4,000 miles nearer to it than the centre, then the opposite side of the earth is 4,000 miles further from the moon than our globe's centre. Consequently, the lunar attraction must be less. Thus the body of the earth is more powerfully attracted by the moon than is the water on the opposite side of the earth. Therefore, the earth tends to recede from the waters at that point, and another tidal protuberance arises. It is to be noted that while the water of the ocean possesses a certain amount of freedom in its responses to these attractive differences, the solid globe itself can only respond as a whole, and, mathematically considered, the land areas act as if their combined mass were concentrated at the earth's centre. The axial rotation of the earth being much more rapid than the motion of the moon, the tides are never directly beneath the moon, or exactly opposite to it, but run in vast waves round our globe. The tides developed by the gravitational influences of the sun are about two-fifths as high as those evolved by the moon. As Serviss states: "They are sometimes superposed upon the lunar tides—at New and Full Moon—and sometimes they are situated at right angles to the lunar tides—at First and Last Quarters."

The earth's attendant becomes partially eclipsed when it passes partially within our planet's shadow, and totally eclipsed when it enters fully within the shadow cast by the opaque earth. The face of the moon at moments of obscuration is hidden as if by a veil. The orb of night is usually seen as a coppery circle when completely eclipsed. Only on very special occasions does our satellite become entirely invisible, and this invisibility is attributable to dense masses of cloud suspended in the terrestrial atmosphere. Now, if our planet were not encircled by a shell of air, the moon would always vanish from view when eclipsed. Our earth's atmosphere, however, so refracts or bends the sun's rays around the earth's edges that some of these rays are thrown into the centre of the shadow to the distance of the moon. These refracted rays are responsible for the coppery hue which our satellite usually assumes when eclipsed. But when, as happens on rare occasions, those parts of the earth's atmosphere which embrace the earth along the edge visible from our satellite are filled with clouds, the air is prevented from transmitting the bent light rays, with the result that a "dark eclipse" occurs.

A lunar eclipse is a very minor affair to the astronomer when compared with an eclipse of the sun. Still, it possesses numerous points of interest, and may be utilized as a test of the accuracy of astronomical calculations concerning the motions of other celestial orbs.

Were the moon an inhabited world, then, to the Lunarians endowed with visual organs such as ours, the earth would appear several times larger than the sun. To them, did these beings exist, the solar orb would undergo eclipse when the moon is eclipsed to us. To the moon-dweller the earth would occupy the same position which the lunar orb occupies to the earth just prior to its appearance in the western sky in the evening at the time of new moon. At the moment of total eclipse the sun to the Lunarian would be completely blotted from view. And our imaginary man on the moon would, owing to the absence of a lunar atmosphere, see the starry host shining in a jet black sky, even in the full blaze of day. The normal splendour of the stars would scarcely be intensified by an eclipse, although it is very probable that the solar corona would glow more brightly when viewed by the lunar watcher of the skies when it appeared projecting into space from the sides of the apparently giant earth.

The moon's monthly revolution round our globe is conveniently determined by the time that elapses between the lunar orb's successive conjugations with the same star. During this interval the moon has accomplished its journey right round the earth and returned to its point of departure. This constitutes the moon's sidereal revolution, and it occupies an average period of twenty-seven days, seven hours and a half. Another method of measuring the moon's orbital journey relates to its changes from new to full moon, and from full moon through the orb's gradual waning to the period of its reappearance as a faint sickle in the evening sky. The complete cycle of changes from one full moon to the next, or from one new moon to another, embraces an average period of about twenty-nine and a half days. This is termed the lunar synodic revolution, and forms the ordinary lunar month. It is subject to variation, however, to the extent of thirteen hours. The synodic

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revolution is more than a couple of days longer than the sidereal revolution. This disparity is due to the circumstance that the constant advance of the earth as it travels round the sun makes our luminary appear to travel eastward among the stars, and before the moon's monthly phases which "depend upon her position with regard to the sun, can recommence, she must overtake the sun."

The moon's increase and decline from the moment of new moon when its thin crescent with its convex curve faces the departing sun at eve; through its complete cycle of waxing and waning, its changes are due to the fact that the lunar hemisphere illuminated by the sun's beams is sometimes turned from us, directed slightly towards us, or presented to full view. The full moon rises in the oriental heavens as the sun sinks in the west, and, consequently, we see her full face lit up by the light of the lord of day. At last quarter the moon has waned to half a circle. Like the new moon, the waning moon is crescent shaped, but the convexity of its bow now faces the rising sun, and the silvery crescent swims in the morning sky and adds to the glory of the dawn.

The solar orb illuminates that surface only of the moon which is directed towards it. At new moon our satellite is situated between the earth and the sun, and its bright side is turned from us, but as the moon moves in her orbit then more and more of her illuminated hemisphere becomes visible. This steadily increases from a sickle to a half circle, and progressively to full moon. Her maximum thus reached the queen of night moves gradually back to new moon, and more and more of her bright surface is turned from us. The lunar orb rises later every night, until just prior to its rebirth, the moon is reduced to a delicate crescent which is then so faint that it is visible only at early dawn.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

The Poet of Mortality.

II.

(Concluded from p. 156.)

But banter was rare with Marston, and his questionings were invariably serious. The doctrine of Christianity oppressed him. That is the complaint of his "Estranged":—

> .....Take me, dear,
> Outside of these sad faces; let me stand
> Once more within life's shallows, and there hear
> Light laughter of the surf upon the beach,
> For here the very sea is without speech,
> So still it is, and far away from land:
> I want life's little joys; this atmosphere
> Oppresses me: I cannot breathe in it.

Yet "life's shallows," no more than Christianity, could not assuage his wounded soul. Escapement from the misery which dogs the footsteps of every human being, he found only in philosophy, such as we hear in the sad, soft music of "Foredoomed":—

> No star upon thy course sheds any ray;
> Though thy bark bear for years the wind and foam,
> To no sweet haven shall it ever come.
> The night shall see thee drifting, and the day
> Behold thee as the night: thou shalt not pray,
> Nor utter any cry, but, cold and dumb,
> Watch the waves pass, and glad ships sailing home
> Shall hail thee upon thy tractless way.
> The salt wave shall taste bitter to thy lip:
> Weary, yea, unto death, thy soul shall be
> Of winds, and the interminable sea,
> That does not bring thee nearer any goal,
> But sweeps through changeless gloom the fated ship
> To its remote, inevitable shoal.

"Thou shalt not pray!" says Marston. Like Omar Khayyam, he knew the folly of petitioning that "inverted bowl we call the sky."

> I, even I,.....
> Who give thee bitter songs, as men give prayer
> To high and unknown gods, whom no prayers move.
> —*Love's Selfishness.*

That is a recurring theme with Marston:—

> I spurned it with my foot as God spurns prayer.
> —*A Christmas Vigil.*

> Then, as a man who, being near to die,
> Knowing men cannot save him, turns his face,
> And calls on God, in his extremity,
> To lengthen yet a little while his days,
> And, calling, feels withal he calls in vain. —*A Dream.*

> .....prayers are useless, and all tears are vain.
> —*Lifeless Life.*

> Praying, perchance, ofttimes for strength from Heaven!
> But no strength came..... —*Estranged.*

The idea of a life after death was also repudiated by Marston. In poem after poem he questions what comes after the day when man goes down to,—

> .....that realm unknowable and vast,
> Which hides the whole world's dead in its recesses,
> Where iron night on every sleeper presses.
> —*Man's Days.*

In that exquisite sonnet, "Dead," he says:—

> Dead, my beloved,.....
> .. ...let me bring
> My soul to comprehend it. Gone away!
> Asleep, to wake no more on any day?
> Nay, not asleep, awake, and wandering
> Through lands of bloom in a continuous Spring!
> I seek for light, yet find no certain ray;
> But this I know, again we shall not meet.

Yet he realized that those "lands of bloom" were but "vain dreams":—

> .....Oh, vain my soul!
> Put by these dreams, take up thy lead and go;
> Each lot, however bitter, hath its goal.
> Thy goal is death, not life, and when life ends
> The night that hides thy love, on thee descends.
> —*Vain Dreams.*

And why did he put by these "dreams":—

> Because no man who lives can surely tell
> What thing comes after death.....
> —*Divine Possibility.*

But more convincing still is his pleading in a fine poem entitled "In Grief," where the whole gamut of the *pros* and *cons* for the argument of immortality is stated at length:—

> And shall we meet with lips that yearn to kiss,
> Meet soul to soul as face to face on earth?
> And shall there be an end to death and dearth,
> Yea, shall there be a harvest time of bliss,
> And shall we stand together side by side,
> Never again to sorrow or divide?
> And shall at length our hearts be satisfied
> Full of wonder at the second birth?
>
> Shall this life past be as a dream outdreamed,
> The ghastly fancy of a fevered brain?
> Shall we at all remember the old pain,
> So great it past all human bearing seemed?
> If angels tell us of that mournful time,
> Will it then sound but as an empty rhyme
> Made by a boy in some forgotten clime?
> Ah, shall we say we have not lived in vain?
>
> Shall we stand up before the face of God,
> Stand up and sing a loud, glad song of praise,
> And bless him for the sorrow of our days,
> And kiss with pure cold lips the burning rod
> Wherewith he hath so stricken us that we
> Might come at length within his home to be,
> Laid in the light of his divinity,
> First blinded by the glory of his face?

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Oh, strange and unseen land whereto we come,
Are thy shores shores of day or shores of night?
As near we draw shall we indeed see light,
And shall we hear, through lessening wind and foam,
The voice of her we love come from the land,
And, looking shorewards, shall we see her stand
Girt round with glory on a peaceful strand,
Smiling to see our dark skiff heave in sight?

I cannot know; there is no man who knows;
We are and we are not, and that is all
The knowledge which to any may befall:
We know not life's beginning nor life's close,
'Twixt dawn and twilight shine the sunny hours
Wherein some hands plucked thorns and some hands flowers,
'Twixt light and shade are shed the sudden showers;
Yet night shall cover earth as with a pall.

Alas, poor song, all singing is in vain,
What thing more sad is left for thee to say?
Oh, weary time of life and weary way,
Can dead souls rise or gone joys come again?
Now by the hand of sorrow we are led,
Though sweet things come, they come as joys born dead;
Let us arise, go hence, for all is said,
And we must abide the breaking of the day.

Marston seems to have been absolutely dominated by this theme of mortality, and of the untenability of the idea of the persistence of consciousness after death:—

And so it comforts me, yea, not in vain,
To think of thy eternity of sleep.
—*Not Thou But I.*

.....when I am gone, gone far away
To that dim Land where shines no light of day.
—*Worth Remembrance.*

We part at Fate's inexorable command,
We part to meet no day. —*At Parting.*

But by her very grave,
Whereon the earth we heap.
Knowing no thing can save—
That this *is* death, not sleep—
We stand, but do not rave,
Too numb at heart to weep.
—*At Hope's Grave.*

But long, long years to weep in,
And comprehend the whole,
Great grief that desolates the soul,
And eternity to sleep in. —*After.*

When Marston says, we know not life's beginning nor life's close, it reminds me very much of Carlyle's words, "What went before and what will follow me, I regard as two impenetrable curtains." Death, Marston conceived in the most materialistic vein:—

.....when I am dead,
When all whereby men knew me turns to dust;
When deaf, and dumb, and sightless, I am thrust
Into dank darkness, where the worms are fed
By Death's gaunt hand, that breeds in my cold bed.
—*Wedded Memories.*

Go down, my songs, now to the land unknown,
The starless kingdom that hath Death for king.
About the silent porches close and cling.
Through breezeless air, where bird hath never flown,
Or waste, gray fields, wherein no flower hath blown,
Hills from whose barren bosom wells no spring,
Let your tones rise, and die in echoing. —*Preludes.*

Indeed, it was to that "fell sergeant Death," as the Master said, that this "poet of mortality" looked for deliverance. Even his philosophy failed in the long run to satisfy him. Nothing, save complete annihilation, would bring him to the haven of rest. The poignant yearning for Nirvana haunts us on every page:—

.....I, through tortuous paths no light makes plain,
Having less even than the blind man's faith,
With outspread hands, grope my dark way to Death.
—*The Dark Way.*

No "life everlasting" did Marston desire after death. The very memory of "the old pain" would kill the joy of that. He simply wanted, "before the end of all," to—

Lie down with thankfulness to know, ere long,
All things that ever were I shall forget. —*A Wish.*

But remembrance,—

Nay, God—if any God there be—
Grant me in Death, release from Memory.
—*My Land.*

Yet with all his foreboding gloom, Marston was a Secularist in his final view of things:—

Cease not! nor strive to solve Death's mystery,
For she may hear you, though no voice replies.
—*Preludes.*

Dead feet have rest, but living feet must climb
The steep, round which the eternal darkness is.
—*Not Death, But Life.*

Readers of this journal, who are possibly among the greatest admirers of James Thomson ("B.V.") will recall that it was at the house of Marston the author of the *City of Dreadful Night* called two days before his death, after the terrible three or four weeks which his biographers have told us of. "Alone with the dying poet, and unable from his blindness to assist him, poor Marston passed through a period of terrible distress." It was not until the arrival of William Sharp that it was known that Thomson was dying, and he was removed to University Hospital. The circumstances of poor Thomson's death affected Marston deeply, and it would appear that the lines in his sonnet, *Haunted Rooms*, have a direct connection with the great poet of pessimism:—

Must this not be that one then dwelling here,
Where one man and his sorrows dwelt so long,
Shall feel the pressure of a ghostly throng,
And shall upon some desolate midnight hear
A sound more sad than is the pine-tree's song,
And thrill with great, inexplicable fear?

Both Marston and Thomson had been cursed by Fate with an affliction, the one blindness and the other melancholia. It was no wonder, therefore, that they should arraign the so-called divine scheme of things, and kick at the fetters which "all paid, paying preachers" say are sent to "try us." It is an infamous lie, and Marston was bold enough to say so. Yet the puritans of art and literature have waxed indignant at this "didacticism"! No one desires, of course, that art or poetry should become, as Ingersoll says, a *colporteur*; but at the same time, art and poetry should portray the "night side of nature," as Thomson would say, as well as the "day side." All in this world is not beautiful, and all in life is not good; and to choose the beautiful and good, and hold them up before us as "a mirror of life," is to lie by implication. Let us not forget, therefore, that one of the few poets who have told us the *truth* is Philip Bourke Marston.[1]

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Charlatans.

VERY few men are so in love with the truth that they are willing to part from all their false ideals for it. The child clings to the pretty fable of Santa Claus; he does not wish to be undeceived. If a man gives utterance to some new truth loud enough for many to hear, they ostracize him and leave him to starve, if they do not even imprison or crucify him. But if a man preaches some antiquated falsehood they listen to him eagerly, and if he is very clever in playing on their ignorance they crown him, give him plenty of money, and follow him as if he were a god. Thus,

[1] The Walter Scott Co. publish a good selection of Marston's poems, under the title of *Song Tide*, in their "Canterbury Poets" Series, price 1s.

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the *Freethinker* has been for many years setting forth the plain truth about religious superstition, yet has gained comparatively few adherents, and it is absolutely certain that no man has ever made a fortune by reform work.

But Billy Sunday, the American religious buffoon, draws the largest audiences in the United States, and has made over one million dollars by methods and language that would disgrace an East-end costermonger. Hence it is that the world to-day is ruled by Charlatans. Webster defines a Charlatan as one who makes unwarrantable pretensions; so that the Kaiser is, perhaps, the finest specimen of the numerous breed now extant, his war lords ably assisting him in his game of gulling the German workers. In order to play this game, euphemistically described as empire-building, armaments of all kinds are necessary, and these are very expensive. The Kaiser and his war lords cannot pay for them because they produce no wealth, so the workers must pay. But how can they be induced to do anything so much against their own interest; how can they be made to deprive themselves, their wives, and children, of clothing, food, education, and shelter, merely to enable their rulers to play this expensive game? Certainly not by force, for the rulers are a mere handful, among millions of workers. By deception, then, "We will have these workers give us all we want," say these rulers, "and give it willingly, with swelling emotion, with loud cheers. We will invent a fiction called 'Fatherland.'" We will say:—

> It is not we who want your money—it is our common Fatherland. The honour of Fatherland calls for sacrifices. What are wives, children, limbs or life itself compared with Fatherland? It is your duty, *our* duty, to lay everything on the altar of Fatherland. Ask your clergy, those worthy men, servants of God, the God of Battles. They will truly tell you so. You believe in the living God, of course you do, you are not vile Atheists! Perish the thought! Very well, God commands you to love and obey your Kaiser and to fight, suffer and die for your Fatherland."

And by this fiction the workers are deceived, notwithstanding the plain fact that not one in ten thousand of them owns enough of his Fatherland to make a decent grave, and the further fact that he can enjoy more liberty and earn quite as good wages under the British or American flag as under his own. They pour their hard-earned wages into the coffers of the Kaiser and his war lords, and lay down their lives to assist them in their schemes of empire-building which cannot possibly be of any benefit to the workers. Their rulers have power, wealth and honour, while they have poverty, ignominy, a fiction, and a flag. What was the origin of royalty in every land? A thousand peasants bent their backs; on these were fifty priests in league with ten nobles; on these was the king. How was this preposterous pyramid reared? The king dazzled the peasants by his shining armour and flashing sword, for they loved to be thus dazzled. He made a bargain with the priests: "If you will teach the people that God wants me to rule over them I will tax them to support you."

He also bargained with the nobles and money-lenders: "If you will fight for me, and provide me with soldiers, and give me plenty of money, I will give you the exclusive ownership of all the land and banking facilities, whereby you will become the owners of slaves without the trouble and expense of looking after them."

He made no bargain with the peasants and shopkeepers; he merely dazzled them. On Coronation Day he appeared in all the panoply of war; the bishop poured some oil on him, and the priests bowed down to him as the Lord's anointed; the nobles surrounded him with their banners and spears and swords, and shouted, "Long live the King!"

What could the poor peasants and shopkeepers do but add their voices to the triumphal chorus, and get ready to surrender their money and their lives whenever the King called on them? And, indeed, at this day, if you were to suggest to a German populace that their Kaiser is nothing but a clever charlatan, they would promptly arrest you as a spy and shoot you.

There is an old gentleman in Rome who says that he is the Vicar of God, and, in order to prove it, he wears a crown three times as high as an ordinary king, and robes more splendid than any revue actress, and lives in a palace large enough to shelter a thousand evicted workers and their families. If he were really God's Vicar, he would prove it by saying and doing something extraordinarily useful. Does any sensible man believe that God would have to dress up his Vicar like Punchinello in order to make people believe in him? Certainly not. But if some charlatan wished to play on the superstitious weakness of the people, he would do just what the Pope does—put on a crown, dress up like an actress, live in a huge palace, and graciously allow the children of God to kiss his largest toe. If he preached and practised the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, he would not have power enough to save from jail a poor woman who stole a loaf of bread. But because he is a charlatan, he stands in with emperors and other charlatans, and millions of people would die in his defence.

And what the Pope does on a large scale, the lesser representatives of God do on a small scale. Consider the real meaning of the peculiar costumes of the clergy and choristers, the images and lights, the incense and solemn music, the stained glass windows and pointed spires of the churches: are not all these things appeals to the superstitious feelings of the people?

Why do the higher clergy wear aprons and gaiters, and little strings on their top hats, and the common or garden curate appear always in a vest that buttons at the back, with a look on his face which we poor sinners never seem to have? Every man should be free to wear any kind of clothes he likes; but why should the clergy assume their peculiar garb if not to produce a certain aspect of sanctity?

Thus we see that in politics, religion, and, indeed, in many another profession, the men who are at the top are charlatans because the great majority of people have an aversion for the plain truth. Most people will always believe what they want to believe, and I never knew anybody to believe in the existence of ghosts who did not long for a life after death, and was anxious to find any kind of evidence in support of it.

And it does not necessarily follow that charlatans are any worse than other people; for if there is any blame in the matter, it should rather be laid on the people who are silly enough to be easily taken in. For my part, I blame nobody, for the simple reason that things are as they are because with our present development they cannot possibly be otherwise, and many very distinguished charlatans believe in themselves quite as firmly as the rest of the public. Such men rule the world to-day because the world likes to be ruled, and they may well argue that if they do not rule it, somebody else will; and is not that argument as good as many another?

Anyway, we are not justified in condemning charlatans unless we are quite sure that we ourselves always act and speak the plain truth. Few of us, unfortunately, are now in a position to do so, because we are caught in the widespread net of industrial slavery. And we are thus caught because we are too ignorant to long for, and too cowardly to achieve, freedom. A. F. Reeman.

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Society News.

Although the same difficulties in procuring halls obtain in Newcastle as in London, we have a cheery letter from Mr. J. G. Bartram, the local secretary, who reports that the judicious distribution of literature has resulted in several new members. Dormant Branches please note. Southampton Branch reports an increase of membership, and a buckling on of armour for Mr. Cohen's visit to-day (March 17). The sale of the *Freethinker* is increasing rapidly, which is the best of all signs. The new Branch at Goldthorpe, in spite of the local autocrats, is rapidly widening its circle of friends, and is also looking forward to the President's visit on April 21, when a further accession of members may be expected.—E. M. Vance, Gen. Sec.

North London Branch, N.S.S.—Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., President of the New Republican League, had been booked for nearly three months, but without giving any reason, failed to keep his engagement last Sunday. Mr. Eagar generously threw himself into the breach, and the interest of the discussion was greatly enhanced by the points raised by Miss Nina Boyle. This Sunday the disputants are Mr. W. O. Baker and Mr. A. Eagar, the subject being "Is There a God?"—H. V. Lane, Hon. Sec.

Nuneaton Branch, N.S.S.—A successful meeting addressed by Mr. Willis of Birmingham is reported, and the future prospects of the Branch are very cheering. Please note the literature Secretary is a lady, Miss Lily Vernon, who is doing her little bit in the war against superstition.

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on March 7.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Brandes, Braddock, Eagar, Gorniot, Leat, Palmer, Samuels, Spence, Thurlow, Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Birmingham, Goldthorpe, Newcastle, Nuneaton, South London, Southampton, South Shields, Swansea, and the Parent Society; nineteen in all.

The Secretary reported the conclusion of a successful course of lectures at the West Central Hall, which, unfortunately, would not be obtainable again.

Arrangements for outdoor meetings were discussed, and, in view of the absence of so many speakers commandeered by the Government, the matter was left in the hands of the Secretary for the present.

On the motion of the South London Branch, it was resolved to contribute a sum of five guineas to the fund now being raised for the presentation of a portrait of Charles Bradlaugh, founder of the National Secular Society, painted by the Hon. J. Collier, to the National Portrait Gallery.

Owing to the prevailing conditions, the meeting was adjourned till Easter Tuesday, April 2.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

On Wednesday, March 6, Freethought lost a staunch and estimable friend by the death of Mr. Charles Jortan, of Blackbourton, Clanfield, Oxon. Our friend, who was sixty years of age, though heavily handicapped from birth by a physical infirmity, and a great sufferer, devoted his life to the study and dissemination of Freethought principles, and was a constant reader of the *Freethinker*. The immediate cause of his death was sudden heart failure, brought about by grief at the return of his son to the Front. The unavoidably short notice, bad train service, and other untoward circumstances made it impossible to arrange for the Secular Burial Service Mr. Jortan had desired, and an earnest and devoted comrade was laid to rest, silently, on Saturday, March 9, in the presence of his sorrowing and devoted wife and family, to whom his fellow-members send their heartfelt sympathy.—E. M. Vance, *Gen. Sec.*

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, "Is there a God? If so, He must have revealed Himself to a living infallible Authority." Negative, Mr. A. Eagar. Affirmative, Mr. W. O. Baker.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. P. S. Wilde, Lantern Lecture.

Outdoor.

Hyde Park. 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.30, Messrs. Swasey, Dales, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Abertillery (Tillery Institute): 3 and 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) 6.30, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Religion and Liberty."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. Farrington, "Nietzsche."

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Professor G. C. Moore Smith, "Learning to Talk." (A Study by a Danish Observer.)

Southampton Branch N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 11, "Morality Without God" 7, "Why Men Believe in God."

South Place Ethical Society,

South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

Sunday Morning Services.

March 17, at 11 o'clock—

C. DELISLE BURNS, M.A.

"The Democratic Ideal."

March 24, at 11 o'clock—

JOSEPH McCABE.

"The Conscription of Wealth."

WANTED.—*The New Moral World*, by Robert Owen, and other Works by the same author. Works by Richard Carlile and "Isis." Also *Freethinker's Text-Book*. Good prices given.—X., *Freethinker* Office.

HARRY BOULTER, Practical Tailor, has removed from Old Premises to 5 BRUNSWICK PLACE (Junction of East Road and City Road, N. 1; near Dawson's). All Freethinkers welcome. Moderate Prices.

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IS there anybody, in or near London, with unfurnished rooms to let, who would like to have the daily company of two dogs, if their owners, two business women, took the unfurnished rooms? If so, please write to "Advertiser," 40 Cavendish Gardens, S.W. 4.

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READERS of the *Freethinker* and sympathisers with its cause will always be welcome to call on or correspond with the following;—

Names for the above list are requested, and will be published from time to time free of charge.

Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—*i.e.*, South African Information Department.

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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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"Has Germany a Conscience?"

By J. C. THOMAS, B.Sc. (Keridon).

Author of *Darkness, Dawn, and Day, etc.*

Price One Penny.

It is not the object of this pamphlet to seek either a negative or a positive answer to this daily query during the first year of the War, but to indicate its utter irrelevance, by pointing out the purely mythical function ascribed in popular belief to the ethical emotion usually denoted as "conscience."

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Buddhism and War.—The Editor	177
Flogging a Dead Horse!—J. T. Lloyd	178
An Atheist Singer.—Mimnermus	179
Ecce Domine!—G. H. Bosworth	180
The Queen of Night.—T. F. Palmer	181
Militarism, The Church, and the Education Bill.—"P."	182
Acid Drops	183
Concerning the "Freethinker."—Chapman Cohen	185
To Correspondents	185
Sugar Plums	186
Tales of Our Times.—A. E. Maddock	186
New Testament Legends for Young Readers.—F. J. Gould	187
The Sabbath Breakers.—Andrew Millar	188
Letter to the Editor—Army Church Parades	189
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	190
Society News	190

Views and Opinions.

Buddhism and War.

In that most delightful of books, *The Soul of a People*, Mr. Fielding Hall describes the astonishment of English officers when the British forces invaded Burma. The country was seething with strife, soldiers were everywhere, and yet the Buddhist monks were going about their business as usual, "preaching of peace, not war, of kindness, not hatred, of pity, not revenge." English officers looked and scoffed. If Buddhism had preached hatred to the invaders, had organized and fought, then Christian soldiers would have understood its value. As it did neither of these things they looked on it as not worth noticing. The reason for all this, as Mr. Hall explains, is that Buddhism is not an accommodating creed. It says "Thou shalt not kill," and it means it. If the Burman fought, he did so because the call of his country came to him, and he felt it his duty to obey. But he was under no delusion. His priests told him that the unchangeable law—not of their making, but of nature—was that killing brought its inevitable consequence, and the law was the same for all. The priests said, "There is not one law for you and another for the foreigner; there is not one law for to-day and another for to-morrow." "Buddhism is the unalterable law of righteousness, and cannot ally itself with evil." And the result of this inflexible ethic is, says Mr. Hall, that Buddhism "has never bent to popular opinion, never made itself a tool in the hands of worldly passion..... No ravished country has ever borne witness to the prowess of the followers of the Buddha; no murdered men have poured out their blood on their hearthstones, killed in his name; no ruined women have cursed his name to high heaven. He and his faith are clean of the stain of blood." Buddhists, says Mr. Hall, have fought, "but they have never fought in the name of their faith. They have never been able to prostitute its teachings to their own wants."

* * *

Mr. Lloyd George and the Churches.

That is a magnificent testimony to the ethical quality of Buddhism, and by one who knows Buddhists intimately. And my mind recurred to the picture on reading Mr. Lloyd George's speech before the Free Church Council on March 13. Mr. George's avowed purpose was to gain the sympathy and help of the Churches—he even asked "reverently" for their prayers. The request may have been motived by policy or piety, and if the latter it would be only the latest of this quick-change artist's plans for winning the War. Still, one is fain to hope that the British case is not so desperate as to stand in dire need of prayer, which is always a bad indication. For men never pray for what they may secure by their own exertion. "God help me" is as sure an indication of helplessness as "God only knows" is of ignorance. But having come to the Churches for their prayers, the Prime Minister had to talk the language of piety. The War was to be kept a "Holy War," which we may remind Mr. Lloyd George is the German name for *their* war, and we were to keep it so until "God wills that it shall come to an end." So the duration of the War is dependent upon God's will. Its length is dependent upon him; and the responsibility for all the misery and slaughter is his. God is working out his plan, and the Free Church Council, and Mr. Lloyd George, and Lord Northcliffe, and Mr. Bottomley and the Kaiser are all instruments in his hands.

* * *

The Churches and the War.

Mr. Lloyd George told his hearers that the Free Churches had "nobly discharged" their obligations, and added that the Churches are "one and indivisible in this War." This is not quite the fact, as some clergymen have been turned out of their pulpits, not, be it noted, because they opposed the War, but because they held that the pulpit was not the place from which to preach war—but it is as near the truth as one may expect a politician to get. On that line the Churches have everywhere—even in Germany—"nobly discharged their obligations." For they have been as united in Germany as here, and, not only in this War, but in *all* wars. Can anyone recall a war in any part of Christendom in which the Churches of the nations engaged have not been substantially united? It is, indeed, part of the case against the Churches that whenever the nations have been on the verge of war, or engaged in war, the Churches have—to reverse Mr. Hall's statement of the Buddhists—preached not peace but war, not kindness but hatred, not pity but revenge. All their talk of love and brotherhood has been, to use Mr. George's own metaphor, "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." They have been powerful to arouse passion, and absolutely powerless or careless to allay that fear and passion upon which the War lives.

* * *

How the Churches Make for Peace!

Mr. Lloyd George said the Churches must see to it that "war shall henceforth be treated as a crime punishable by the law of nations." Every sensible and every humane person will agree with that. War, as war, should be pilloried in the civilized world as the greatest of crimes, the greater because it is so largely impersonal

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in origin and conduct. But contrast that with all we have heard from the Churches about war since 1914. Has the talk of men, such as the Bishop of London and Mr. R. J. Campbell, concerning the "spiritual uplift" of war, the "moral cleansing" it has given the nations, etc., done anything to make the people realize that war is a crime? The people are realizing it, soldiers are realizing it, but we have no reason to thank the clergy of any denomination for this result. If war is ever to be treated as a crime, it must be realized as a crime—a crime on the part of those who initiate it, a source of demoralization with even those who are forced into it. War and militarism cannot have one effect in Germany and another here. To those who read human nature aright, Germany is to Europe as the drunken helot was to the Spartan—a picture of what other people may become if subjected to the same discipline, and to the play of the same ideals. And when to the Church's praise of war, we add their shameful silence concerning the exploitation of the public as disclosed in the recent reports, to say nothing of exploitation in other directions, the case against the Churches is pretty well complete. The Prime Minister said: "There is less hunger in this land than there was when the first cannon-shot was fired. There is no privation." We believe that to be substantially correct. But what are we to make of a society which can only provide enough food for its members when engaged in war, and leaves hundreds of thousands on the verge of starvation while at peace? Does anyone need a more complete demonstration of the inefficiency or evil of Christian influence than that? * * *

The Crime of Christianity.

We do not blame the Churches for having failed to prevent this War. The indictment of the Churches, properly drawn, goes deeper and is much wider than that. The real crime of the Churches is that, having exerted so great an influence, the European War should be looked upon as a matter of course, and even hailed as a seed-plot of human virtue. Suppose the Christian Church in all ages had said, as the Buddhist teachers said, "War is evil, war is a crime. You may be forced into war in self-defence; you may be so placed between the claims of country and the teachings of morality that to hearken to one means to ignore the other, or it may be that the claims of country is so imperative that one must needs make war and take the consequences. Still, the consequences are there. Brutality and demoralization follow war as inevitably as night follows day, and nothing can break the principle of causation in the moral any more than in the physical world." Suppose the Christian Church had kept to this teaching generation after generation; suppose the Christian clergy had said further, "We do not say you must not defend your country, or that armies must not be raised; we only insist that the raising of armies and the blessing of war is not our work as priests. It is our task to uphold the claims of a common morality and a common humanity even in the midst of war." Had these things been done generation after generation, and century after century, does anyone doubt but that the general feeling about war would be very different to what it is? Christians might still have waged war, and our judgments on the justification of particular wars would still have displayed wide variations; but in that case we could have said, as Mr. Hall does of the Buddhists, Christians have fought, but they have never fought in the name of their faith; they have ever been able to prostitute the teachings of Christianity to their own wants. The standing indictment against Christianity, is that it has during the whole of its history done nothing to discourage war and much to encourage it. To reverse Mr. Hall's statement of Buddhism, ravished countries have borne witness to the prowess of Christ; murdered men have poured out their blood on their hearthstones in the name of Christ; ruined women have cursed his name to High Heaven; tortures and outrages innumerable have been inflicted under the shadow of the cross, spoliation and wrong have flourished under its rule. The Christian convert is washed in the blood of Jesus; and that, truly, is a fitting symbol for a religion that has so often bathed in blood the countries of the world.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Flogging a Dead Horse?

SOME years ago, when the present writer had just delivered a lecture against the truth of orthodox Christianity, he was solemnly assured by a prominent representative of what is sometimes called progressive theology that the doctrines attacked had been abandoned by the Christian Church, and that Freethinkers generally were guilty of the absurdity of flogging a dead horse. As a matter of fact, the old orthodoxy still holds the field throughout Christendom. All departures from it endure only for a night and pass away, while the standard Creeds stay on throughout the ages. Comparatively liberal-minded clergymen often declare that Calvinism is dead; but those who go about with open eyes and ears know that, though slightly modified, it is alive to-day in many parts of the Western world. There are thousands of churches in our own land from whose pulpits it is being sedulously preached every Sunday. In a Welsh parish with which the writer is intimately familiar all the people, with one exception, attend church or chapel, and fully one half of them are Calvinists. They profess to be and are known as such. It is true that many of them do not know what Calvinism really stands for, their ignorance even of theology being profound; but multitudes superstitiously glory in it as the most logical system under the sun. To these Calvinism is absolutely true, and unbelievers in it are eternally damned. As to its logicality, there is not the shadow of a doubt. It is founded upon the invincible sovereignty of God. Paul calls God the Potter, and ourselves the clay upon which he works; and naturally the Potter has a perfect right to do whatever he likes with his own clay. Such is the logical defence of the doctrines of election and reprobation, of calling many and choosing a few. In the district already mentioned there is not one unbeliever, as even the gentleman who never darkens church or chapel door prides himself upon not being an Agnostic. All are believers; but what do they believe? A service recently attended will provide an adequate answer, so far as the Calvinists are concerned. The clergyman has been well trained in theology, and it was evident that his knowledge of his subject, from the theoretical point of view, was everything that could be desired. Indeed, it was as a technical theologian that he conducted the whole service; and although there was in himself a show of emotion, yet, judging by appearance, he signally failed to beget a corresponding feeling in the congregation. In point of fact, the service was an experience to endure, not to enjoy; the only item in the programme that was thoroughly alive being the singing, which from every point of view was a complete success.

To be entirely frank it must be admitted that the most conspicuous characteristic of the performance was its perfunctoriness. The prayer, which was long, was itself a discourse formerly addressed to the Deity, but clearly intended for those who heard it. Had there been a God listening to it, he would have been highly amused by the

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strange portrait of himself which it contained, though he might have had some difficulty in recognizing himself in it. Repeatedly was he told, "Thou art this," "Thou art like that," "Thou canst do this miracle," or "Thou art prepared to show thyself thus." He was further informed that, apart from his beloved Son, even he could accomplish nothing. Mankind could be saved only by being washed in the blood of the Lamb. The text of the sermon was John xiv., 27, and its subject, "Christ's Gift of Peace to the World." For half an hour the preacher expounded the chapter in which the text occurred. Exegetically no fault could have been found with this piece of work, but it showed the utter aloofness from life of the perfunctory preacher. To him there was no incongruity in the statements that God is known only in Christ, that salvation is impossible except through faith in the crucified, and that eternal perdition awaits all unbelievers in the next world. "I am the way," said Jesus. "Yes," added the preacher; "and there is no other way; not even God can do anything for a lost sinner unless he approaches him by that one road." Prayer is always answered if it is offered up within the circle of Christ's name. In that name there is irresistible magic, and God readily grants everything asked for in accordance therewith. Here the preacher wholly ignored the facts of every day life.

After rambling about in that fashion, he at last stumbled against his text which, for twenty minutes, he reiterated dozens of times in slightly different words, without giving utterance to a single illuminating idea. Orthodox to the very core he was throughout, but not once did he exhibit the least sign that he understood or could solve one of life's puzzling problems. "This is a time of stress and storm," he said many times; "and nothing can restore harmonious calm but Christ's peace in the soul." To him the War meant nothing but the nations' sin come to an awful head; but, at any moment, God could sit upon this devastating flood and exclaim, "Peace, be still," and instantly there would be an end to the horrors of the battlefield; but it never occurred to him to inquire why, in that case, the brutal bloodshed is allowed to continue year after year. According to him, the Devil is responsible for the War, to whom the Kaiser, like Judas Iscariot, has sold himself. This is the Devil's own day, which makes him the happiest of all God's creatures; but the curious thing is that the Kaiser never mentions his real master, but is perpetually giving thanks to God for so constantly acting as the avowed ally of the German nation. One wonders whether the preacher verily believes that God can stop the War whenever he wishes, and whether, if he does, he is not sorely perplexed by the fact that the conflict is permitted to go on unchecked.

Sometimes the clergy declare, in the most dogmatic style, that there are no Atheists in the world, or that, at heart, all are believers in God; but the more we come in contact with Church and Chapel life, or the more carefully we study public worship as it is generally conducted, the more we wonder whether there are any genuine, whole-hearted believers in the land. Is it not a fact that the generality of people simply take it for granted that they believe? Browning's type of Christian experiences the greatest conceivable difficulty in believing, to whom, in fact, it is the hardest thing to be a follower of Christ; but Browning, in most of his dramatic pieces, deals with exceptional cases. To him, as an Agnostic, it was incredible that any thoughtful person should find it easy to believe in the Christian religion. But to those who possess any close acquaintance with ordinary human beings, there is nothing more patent than the fact that religion means but little to them, or, rather, means everything in a vague, nebulous, and ineffectual sense. There are times when they are emotionally moved, when their apathy melts away, and religious ecstasy mounts the throne and reigns supreme for an hour or so. For the time being they are in the seventh heaven of delight, actually beside themselves with songfulness of heart. Such a state of elation or mental intoxication is generally induced in response to the impassioned appeals of gifted and well-trained pulpit orators, of whom the preacher we heard is not one; but it never lasts for more than a couple of hours, when they relapse into the normal state of indifference and lukewarmness. All the beliefs are always present in their minds, but, as a rule, in a quiescent, dormant, condition, although capable, any moment, of being quickened into a leaping, all-consuming flame of emotional life under the spell of an accomplished master of assemblies, of whom there seems to be a superabundance in the Principality of Wales. The Welsh are pre-eminently a poetical, emotional, people, and the majority of their preachers are skilful players upon the vibrant keys of their hearts. This explains the multiplicity of preaching meetings throughout the Principality, preaching being fully as popular there as racing is in England. The people are constitutionally in need of occasional sprees of some sort, and this is the species which most of them like best. This also explains why so many intellectual young Welshmen lose their faith under the influence of education at the various university colleges. At present what Wales needs above all else is, not a religious revival, of which she has had far too many for her good, but an intellectual awakening. Already, especially in South Wales, the new day of intellectual emancipation is at dawn, with the result that a few here and there, even in the North, are slowly rising out of the sleep of centuries into newness of mental life; and it is these brave, sturdy men and women who are destined to become the Saviours of the fair land of song. No wonder that so many clergymen are up in arms against what they describe as the anti-religious influence over thoughtful young people exerted by the university colleges. As yet Welsh Freethinkers are few in numbers, but they are sowing the seed, and there shall be a plentiful harvest in due time They are casting the leaven into the meal, and, 'ere long, the whole lump will have undergone a complete transmutation.

Yes, the horse we are flogging is still alive, but its death-knell has been sounded, and its decease is at this moment an absolute certainty. For many long ages Scotland was the slave of superstition, but to-day Caledonia has its face towards freedom. Wales is still in bondage, but the bracing wind of liberty is beginning to blow upon her mountains, and even now the day of her release is to be seen laboriously climbing over the horizon.

J. T. Lloyd.

An Atheist Singer.

Poems and Ballads. 2 vols.; "Atalanta in Calydon"; "Songs before Sunrise"; "Tristram of Lyonesse." By Algernon Charles Swinburne. (Heinemann, 3s. 6d., net).

The publication of these handsomely bound and well-printed volumes arouses mixed feelings. Had they been issued years ago at the same modest prices they would have helped to widen the reputation of a very great poet during his lifetime. As it is they will but increase the wreaths upon his tomb. For, by virtue of his splendid lyrical gifts, Algernon Charles Swinburne's best work remains amongst the brightest gems of English literature so rich in glorious genius and transcendent talent. Tennyson has told us that, when Byron died, it was as

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though the firmament had lost a mighty star, in whose vanishing the world was left to chaos and night. Swinburne was more to us than Byron, for he had been a living glory of our state for half a century, and the star of his genius had wheeled so long and with such majesty that we had grown inured to his presence, and looked upon him as essential to the aspect of our heaven. So continuous was his influence that the intellectual life of our time runs in a channel largely of his making, and to ends that but for him had been shaped far other than they are.

A striking instance of the provincialism of the average English reader was the comparative unpopularity of Swinburne. Popularity, of course, may mean nothing or everything. It may be that of *The Rosary*, or of *The Messiah*, of *East Lynne*, or of *Don Quixote*. It may be absolutely damning, or the one incontestable proof of supreme merit. The tests are universality and endurance, for only noble work shall win and keep a lasting position. The best appeals in the long run to all, like *Hamlet*, though not in equal degree. Against clerical cliques, against furious opposition, by dint of sheer merit, Swinburne won his lasting place in art.

The greatest bar to Swinburne's popularity was that he sang Atheism, and made a clean sweep of supernaturalism. Shelley himself never sang with greater passion than Swinburne when he was arraigning Priestcraft at the Bar of Humanity. Just listen :—

Who gives a star and takes a sun away :
  Who shapes the soul, and makes her a barren wife
To the earthly body and grievous growth of clay ;
  Who turns the large limbs to a little flame,
And binds the great sea with a little sand ;
  Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame ;
Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand ;
  Who, seeing the light and shadow for the same,
Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,
Smites without sword, and scourges without rod,——
The supreme evil, God.

In another poem he sings :—

I that saw where ye trod
  The dim paths of the night
Set the shadow called God
  In your skies to give light ;
  But the morning of manhood is risen, and
    the shadowless soul is in sight.

The "Hymn to Proserpine" represents a Pagan poet singing after the proclamation in Rome of Christianity, and Swinburne uses, ironically, the phrase ascribed, falsely, to the dying Julian the Apostate: "Thou hast conquered, Galilean" :—

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean ; the world has grown gray with thy breath.
We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fulness of death.

. . . . .

O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks and rods!
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.

He is equally outspoken in his "Lines Before a Crucifix" :—

No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
Is this their carrion crucified.

Note the relentless questioning in the following lines addressed to Christ :—

The nineteenth wave of the ages rolls
  Now deathward since thy death and birth ;
Hast thou fed full men's starved-out souls ?
  Hast thou brought Freedom upon earth ?
Or are there less oppressions done
In this wild world under the sun ?

Swinburne dips his pen in flame in his "Song in Time of Order" :—

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.

What fearful derision is expressed in the "Hymn of Man" :—

O Thou the Lord God of our tyrants, they call thee, their God, by thy name.
By thy name that in hell-fire was written, and burned at the point of thy sword,
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.

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 friends of men,
  Merciful gods, compassionate,
And these shall answer you again,
  Will ye beat always at the gate,
  Ye fools of fate ?

For fifty years Swinburne expressed Freethought ideas in his poetry, and his consistency is proved from the publication of "Atalanta in Calydon," the work of his young manhood, to the august utterances of his later years. No one can doubt for an instant his passionate sincerity. Hear the lyrical cry which burst from him in his "Mater Triumphalis," one of the noblest and most profound poems in the English language :—

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion
  Full of thy life, sonorous with thy breath ;
The grave 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 shalt cherish
  The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine.

Shelley has told us that great poets are tried by a jury of their peers. Hear what George Meredith says of Swinburne : "Song was his natural voice. He was the greatest of our lyrical poets—of the world's, I should say, considering what a language he had to wield." What a tribute ! And we gratefully remember that the greatest poet of our time was an avowed Freethinker, and that his genius was 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.

Ecce Domine!

Oh thou who did'st in Israel's mind instil
  "Thou shalt not kill,"
Oh thou who did'st devise for Abel slain
  The brand of Cain,

Behold thine own son's dying agony
  At thy decree ;
Behold foredoomed Iscariot's shameful death
  Willed by thy breath !

G. H. BOSWORTH.

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The Queen of Night.

III.

(*Continued from p. 171.*)

The tides on a tide-disturbed planet tend to modify the motions of the planet in such a manner that the tides cease to ebb and flow. As a result of this, constant high tide would be experienced in some places, and permanent low tide would be established elsewhere. When a globe revolves too slowly, the tidal influences urge the body round, and thus effect this end. If, however, a globe rotates with excessive rapidity, then the tide operates as a brake, and reduces the speed of rotation until the requisite adjustment is reached. Our planet is at present revolving too quickly to permit the high tides to remain at permanent stations, with the consequence that the tides exert themselves in slowing down the rotation. But the earth is a body so large, and the tides raised by a small orb like the moon so insignificant, that their influences in retarding the rapidity of the earth's rotation are barely appreciable. Yet, if these powers are small, they indubitably exist, and there is no escape from the conclusion that their accumulating influences are slowly but surely decreasing the velocity of the earth's rotation.

From this it follows that the length of the terrestrial day is increasing. But so slow is this extension that in 1,000 years the difference amounts to a mere fraction of a second. Yet slight differences such as this accumulate in the course of ages, for the changes invariably proceed in one direction. In this respect they differ from the periodic departures which characterize various other phenomena. With these, an advance is succeeded by a retreat, until the original conditions are restored. But the expansion of the earth's day is constant. All that is essential to enable our day to double, or even treble, its present length, is the passage of sufficient time.

At least a hundred million years are demanded by biologists for the evolution of life on our earth; while the geologists require as many, or even more, for the deposition of the sedimentary strata. Throughout this prolonged period the tides have been labouring in their task of diminishing our planet's speed. If, therefore, in coming ages the day is destined to attain a far greater length than it now enjoys, so, in the grey past, the rapidity of our globe's rotation must have been materially greater than at present.

In the lapse of ages, fractions of seconds mount up to seconds; these expand to minutes, and minutes roll into hours. Æons ago, our planet spun round in twenty hours; at a period even more remote, we can imagine a time when its axial rotation was accomplished in the reduced space of ten hours. Peering still further back into the recesses of the past, we may picture a period long predating the dawn of life, or even the formation of the most ancient rocks, when the earth was revolving in a day of five hours, or less. Thus we learn that an uninterrupted tidal drag, persisting throughout geological, or even pre-geological epochs, has enormously lessened our planet's rotational speed, while distending the day from one of four or five hours' duration to that of its present length of twenty-four hours.

The orb of night has served to raise the earth's tides and to diminish its rotational rate. But in its turn the terrene sphere has reacted on the moon. The earth's surface is extensively covered with water, and the presence of this fluid mass permits the moon to steadily recede from the earth. Were the earth solid throughout, its influence on the moon would be greater than it is. Calculations based on the experiences of a few centuries would reveal no material change in the distance of the moon. Precise relations between the path pursued by the moon and tidal influences are difficult to determine. Perturbations in the lunar orbit are very complicated, and these alone render any definite determinations extremely onerous.

But when we approach the problem from an astrophysical standpoint, certain conclusions become imperative. There can be no question that the earth's powers of reaction have, in the course of the ages which have elapsed since the genesis of the moon, constrained our satellite to travel in its contemporary orbit. And as we journey back in time, the nearer and nearer the moon is seen to approach her earth-mother. Much as we see the day decline as we travel backwards, so does the moon's distance from the earth diminish, until we reach a period when the two bodies were in contact. Far different must our planet and its satellite then have been to what they now are. The combined mass of the earth-moon system was then in a state of incandescence, while at a still earlier stage it must have been in a gaseous condition. Even after their separation into two distinct bodies, the nascent earth and moon were spinning round each other, the period of the evolving moon's rotation being determined by the time occupied by the revolution of the larger object, which subsequently became the earth. After the two bodies had established a complete separation, they continued to be attracted one by the other as if they were united by the firmest bonds. The very rapid rotation which characterized these bodies would account for this. Just as a grindstone, when driven with immense velocity, will fly into fragments, so did the earth and moon part company when centrifugal overcame centripetal force.

No further disruption seems likely in the case of the earth. Its present rotational speed is well within the limits of safety. The equatorial bulging of our globe, however, is the result of the adjustment of the form of our sphere to the requirements necessitated by its revolution. It is thought that the earth could revolve on its axis in twelve instead of twenty-four hours before reaching the critical stage at which disruption would occur. But were the earth's day reduced to a few hours only then the tension evolved by the excessively rapid rotation would speedily rupture our planet.

In the dim and distant past this state of tension arose, and the moon was duly delivered by her earth-mother. In this parting of parent and offspring the tidal power of the sun participated. The glowing mass of our planet cast away a large fragment, and the particles of this fragment as they cooled and contracted, arranged themselves into globular form, and thus arose the moon.

As previously stated, our satellite is slowly receding from us, and important as its tide-raising powers still are, they are insignificant in comparison with those exerted when the moon was a nearer neighbour to the earth. As the moon's tidal influences have dwindled during past ages, so they will continue to diminish through the approaching years. With the constant decrease of lunar tidal authority, our globe will turn more and more tardily on its axis. In the course of unspeakably remote stretches of future time our day will increase, not merely from twenty-four to thirty hours, but even to a period of two of our present days. Nor is this all. The earth's rotation will, in the passage of periods, still further remote, gradually so greatly lessen that the terrestrial day will ultimately equal, if not exceed, the period embraced by sixty of our present ephemeral days of a paltry twenty-four hours.

When the day has reached the length of 1,400 hours the moon's orbit will have widened, and its distance considerably increased. The lunar rotational period, as well as its period of orbital revolution, will have become

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so greatly augmented that the day and the month will be of equal length, each comprising a period of 1,400 hours. In this transformed state of lunar and sub-lunar affairs, our earth will ceaselessly present the same face to the moon, much as that orb constantly turns the same surface towards the earth.

Without the least violation of well-established physical principles, the foregoing conclusions have been necessitated, chiefly through the researches of the late Sir George Darwin. Although relatively a body so small, the tides raised by the moon have ever tended to slacken the speed of the earth, so that eventually the two bodies must turn one surface only to each other. When this condition of affairs has been arrived at, lunar tides will rise and fall no longer. High planetary tides will prevail in some terrestrial localities and low tides in others, but the position of these tides will become stationary. High tides will always occur in one region and low tides at another. The moon will sail throughout the year in the same part of the sky. It will be visible to the inhabitants of one surface of the earth only, for the opposite face of our planet will never be presented to our satellite. If, in these far-off ages, earth-dwellers insane enough to engage in sanguinary strife still survive, the light of the moon will refuse its assistance to the nocturnal aerial invader on that hemisphere which is permanently turned from our satellite's beams. When the moon's tidal influences have ended, solar power will still continue to operate in generating tidal movements, and these will serve to further retard the axial rotation of the earth. Thus, the time will arrive when the earth's day will be longer than the month, which is now determined by the period occupied by the moon in its revolution round our globe.

A striking analogy of this is afforded by the motions of the Martian moons. Mars possesses two small satellites, and the one nearest to the ruddy planet presents similar features to those ultimately destined to prevail in the earth-moon system. Mars revolves in about twenty-four and a half hours, while its inner moon runs round its primary so rapidly that it accomplishes three journeys as the planet itself turns over once. Mars and his moons form a far smaller system than ours, but they display in miniature within the solar system itself, a contemporary picture of the relations which will reign in the terrestrial and lunar partnership in the unspeakable abysses of future time.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be concluded.)

Militarism, the Church, and the Education Bill.

Without being in the least pro-German, the *Freethinker* has consistently exposed the falsity of the clerical claim, so often made in the past, that Germany's misdeeds were due to her alleged Atheism. The historical connection between the teaching of religion in Germany and the building up of the militarist system on the basis of frightfulness has been again and again pointed out. But the Christian lie has served its purpose, and the time has now arrived, it would appear, for a complete *volte face* on the part of those who so industriously propagated it.

For the "knock-out blow" shows no signs yet of being delivered; and, with the emergence of the possibility of concluding a peace of compromise, rightly or wrongly it has been decided that the militarist system shall be firmly established in this country. In the absence of a great part of the electorate on various forms of national service, and a part which will to a large extent be the fathers of the immediate future, a determined effort is being made to rush into law a new Education Bill. A novel method of furthering this object is the publication of anonymous advertisements[1] in the press, couched largely in terms of vague rhetoric, and urging the overworked portion of the community still left in the country, "For your own sake, your children's sake, your country's sake, do all you can to push through the Education Bill."

There is something suspicious about this sudden rhetorical fervour which challenges inquiry; and the disingenuous candour of style, so typical of similar advertisements of Whatyoumaycallit's backache pills, does not tend to allay the suspicion. In this, for instance: "Let us be honest and ask ourselves, while there is time, whether the democracy of this country is the best educated and the most morally disciplined democracy among the nations of the world?" The question answers itself by implication, just as the other advertisement will ask: "Are you quite sure that your symptoms, such as dizziness, headaches, quivering of the eyelids, etc., are not a sign of something more radically wrong?" Without giving a direct answer, both advertisements finish up by proclaiming the urgent and unfailing remedy.

The purpose of this article is to point out the dangers of so-called "moral discipline." Having provided for compulsory attendance at continuation school up to the age of eighteen, the Bill goes on to provide that the local authority may compel young persons to attend for an additional two hours per day at a prescribed place for physical and social training, camps, centres, and equipments for which shall be provided. Some idea of what form this training is likely to take may be gathered from the organized movement now proceeding for establishing cadet corps in the schools throughout the country. These corps have been "recognized" by the War Office for some time, but the latest development is the extension of "recognition" to the Boys' Brigade as part of the cadet organization.

Moreover, no less a person than the Secretary for Scotland, speaking at a Boys' Brigade function on March 1: "hoped his presence might be taken as betokening the interest and approval with which His Majesty's Government regarded the great Boys' Brigade movement." (Has that any connection, by the way, with the movement which is also going on for raising these brigades in every chapel and church throughout the country?) He spoke of its religious, physical, and military training, and declared: "It was to the youth of the country that the Government looked for the success of the great task of reconstruction, and *he knew of no training and equipment better fitted* to enable them to carry out that task than that obtained in the Boys' Brigade." This should make fairly obvious what kind of moral discipline is referred to in the advertisement above quoted. The *Glasgow Herald* of March 1, in announcing the War Office recognition of the Boys' Brigade, said: "As recognized cadets, it is felt that the

[1] Since the above was written, further advertisements which have appeared state that copies may be obtained on request from the Tootal Broadhurst Lee Co., Ltd., Manchester. This firm is described by the *Daily News* (March 15) as "the big Manchester cotton firm," and the writer, presumably A. G. G., goes on to say: "Speaking personally, the present-day Lancashire employers are probably quite as liberal and enlightened as any similar body in the country. Some of them I know personally are very actively interested in reconstruction work and prepared to back their opinions, *as in this case*, without regard to personal loss." Which means that the innocent *Daily News* wishes its readers to believe that a big business firm is spending money, regardless of loss, on backing its opinions in regard to "moral discipline"! Whether this is the habit of business firms readers of the *Freethinker* may judge for themselves.

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Brigade would then be in a stronger position to insist that the moral and social training of boys is as essential to the welfare of the nation as their physical development."

The officially-stated object of the Boys' Brigade is: "The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys, and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness." And there we have it. This is the "great movement" upon which His Majesty's Government looks with interest and approval. Self-respect, be it noted, comes last in the list, based, as it must be, on the other (admirable?) qualities referred to.

The whole thing is nothing less than a design for the enslavement of the minds of the boys of the nation by the twin despots of Militarism and State-subsidized superstition. That it is being readily entered into by those facile and self-interested sycophants—the clergy—is just what one would expect. But whether the people of this country are going to allow themselves to be rushed into such an authentic replica of "Prussian Militarism" is yet to be seen.

Freethinkers, at any rate, should not deceive themselves as to what is afoot.

"P."

Acid Drops.

So many minor writers have turned religious for the period of the War, but they do not appear to improve the parlous condition of Christianity. Speaking at the City Temple, Mr. John Oxenham, the popular novelist, said "all this suffering is intended to turn us back to God." The idea is not new; but what sort of a Heavenly Father is Mr. Oxenham thinking of, when one remembers that the flower of the manhood of the world is arrayed for slaughter, and civilization itself threatened with disaster? Mr. Oxenham had better stick to his romantic love-stories.

In the course of the same address Mr. Oxenham said:—

> If we had won the War two years ago it would have been the worst thing that could have happened to us as a nation.

Interviewed later, Mr. Oxenham said he declined to withdraw a single word. We must get back to God, and presumably God is prolonging the War so that we may get there. This is quite "Providential," and illustrates the goodness and wisdom of the Christian deity. He permits thousands upon thousands to be killed all over Europe so that *we* may get back to God. And, presumably, he will keep the War on until we do. And, in that case, the War looks like lasting for ever, for the longer the War lasts the farther away from God people are getting.

The War is, in Mr. Oxenham's view, God's experiment in conversion. And a pretty job it is when one looks at it. For one must observe that all the killed are certainly not being brought back to God. They die as they have lived. At most the people who are benefited are those who are left alive. And if the War is being prolonged for our benefit, we do not see why Germany should be blamed. It is part of the divine plan. The worst thing that could have happened would have been the stopping of the War two years ago—and thus have prevented the sinking of hospital ships, and bombing of children, and women, and old men, and all the multiplied barbarities of the War. So thinks Mr. Oxenham. For we are getting back to God—*via* poison gas, and flame-throwers, and air-raids. Good God!

The new postmaster of Jerusalem is named Smith, and the Lord Chief Justice of England is named Isaacs. Curious, isn't it?

A hat belonging to Lord Jellicoe has been sold by auction for £125. Ecclesiastics will smile, for they know how to raise money on relics of people who never existed.

"At least a thousand babies per week could be saved from death if a Ministry of Health were established," said Dr. Saleeby at Whitfield's Tabernacle. This is not a compliment to "Our Heavenly Father," but the congregation allowed the remark to pass without protest.

Prebendary Bolton, vicar of St. Mary's, Lichfield, died whilst in Sunday-school. There is no moral.

The Vicar of St. George's, Wallsall, in resigning his living, says that "the congregation have been unworthy of the efforts put forth, manifesting a lack of earnest co-operation, loyalty, and response time and again. I have scarcely had the spirit to conduct the service." We fancy this gentleman's experience is not singular. And, quite seriously, nothing can be more serious to a simple-minded, honest clergyman, than to see his congregation dwindling through no fault of his own, and in spite of all his efforts. The less honest ones face the situation in a different spirit. And the *Freethinker* knows that the wails of the honest, and the trickery of the dishonest, are equally unavailing against a tendency that represents the impact of civilized thought on primitive superstition.

Soul-saving appears to be a profitable business. The evangelist, Gipsy Smith, has been received by the King at Buckingham Palace.

Invited to preach in the City Temple, London, the Rev. Conrad Noel has been forbidden by the Bishop of London. Apparently the Christian charity of Churchmen does not yet extend to Nonconformists.

The Roman Catholic Church exploited the death of John Redmond for all it was worth. Not only was a special service held at Westminster Cathedral, London, but at Wexford kneeling nuns lined the railway as the funeral train passed. Over 500 priests preceded the hearse on leaving the station. Poor, priest-ridden Ireland!

It is the hardest of all things to kill a superstition. No mental effort is needed for its reception, and once acquired it sticks. And, of course, if a man is a bit of a liar, the matter is all the easier. So we are not surprised to learn, from the *Montreal Daily Star*, that the "Angels of Mons" has turned up in Canada. The Rev. G. A. Kubrong, of St. John's Anglican Church, says he was in France and saw them. So did the Germans. There was St. George, and crowds of aerial cavalry charging the Germans. And as a final proof, when a party of soldiers was afterwards sent out to investigate, they could find no trace of the spiritual army. That settles it! But what a hard job it is for an ordinary liar to hold his own in these times of war! A pre-war liar is hopelessly outdistanced from the start. These late comers ought to be handicapped in some way.

Providence was too busy watching the fall of the sparrows to prevent the death of a Plumstead baby who was fatally burned through pulling the guard from the front of the fire.

Selina Smith, a Reading gipsy, was fined £5 for fortune-telling. There are 50,000 parsons in this country who tell people where they will "spend eternity," but these gentlemen are never fined.

Speaking at the Holborn "tank," the Bishop of London declared: "All my income is gone." The income of this elderly bachelor is £200 weekly, sufficient to keep fifty families in comfort. He should now be able to appreciate the blessings of poverty.

The *Daily Chronicle* declares that Dean Inge is "no longer a gloomy dean." Has he given up his belief in the "eternal fry of almost everybody born to die," as Byron describes it?

The late Mr. John Redmond's oratory was masterly, but he astonished the House of Commons once by a little lapse. During a debate he said: "I fancy I heard an honourable

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member smile." This is not so good as the outburst of a Christian Evidence lecturer: "All creation shows the footprints of an Almighty hand."

The Annandale Presbytery is "up agin'" the Government. Owing to the refusal of the Government to allow petrol to be used for taking people to church, the "shame" and "hardship" existed of people not being able to get to church. The Rev. Mr. Atkinson wanted to know why, if petrol could be used for business purposes, it could not be used for church? Hear, hear! It is all a matter of business. All the same, we fancy the unfeeling Government will tell people they must walk to church, or stay away. Now the Presbytery had better pass a resolution pointing out that the reason why we don't win the War is due to the Government treatment of the Annandale Godites.

The matter has since been carried into Parliament. Mr. Gulland asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he would amend the motor spirit order so that a car might be used for conveying people to Church. The reply was—to use the stupid Parliamentary expression—in the negative. But the impudence of pietists knows no limit.

The following was overheard in a Barrow tram car by a correspondent: Child, watching train loads of 9·2 howitzers passing: "What are they, daddy?" Father: "Christian evidences."

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff called a prayer-meeting a few days ago to "intercede" for the success of the British arms n the coming great offensive. We understood that God was already on our side, and we hope the Lord Mayor is not under the impression that this one of our Allies is going back on us, or needs his memory jogging. But while these people were interceding, why on earth didn't they ask God to finish the whole job—and give him a time limit?

The Mayor of Swansea (Alderman Ben Jones), as reported in the *Cambria Daily Leader* for March 13, is of opinion that "if the people of the land had been more God-fearing the terrible calamity of war would not have happened." Had the Mayor forgotten that God is "a man of war," "the Lord mighty in battle," "the God of hosts," and that in olden times he led the armies of Israel in person? Is he not also aware that the pious Bishop of London calls the present War "a glorious day of God"?

Mr. Lloyd George grew quite flippant in one part of his address before the Free Church Council. There has he said "been only one successful Food Controller in the history of the world—the one who made five loaves and two fishes feed a multitude." We quite agree that this kind of a food controller would be of great service, and as Mr. Lloyd George believes that the Allies are carrying out God's will, it is about time the latter lent a hand in an unmistakable manner. But God does nothing when the doing is much needed.

Sir Hedworth Meux, M.P., knows more about ships and beer than theology. In the House of Commons he is reported to have said that Christ was the friend of publicans and sinners, using the word "publican" in the modern sense; whereas the New Testament word meant a tax-gatherer—then, as now, a much-hated person.

The Bishop of Exeter says "we must feel the deepest regret that, at a time when God's hand is heavy upon us, wicked men should presume to destroy Christian marriage." If his lordship reflects a little longer upon the matter, he will find that more harm has been done to "Christian marriage" by monks, priests, and nuns, than by all "wicked" people put together.

Oh, those "gentlemen of the press"! The *Evening Standard* (London) says: "The German is as the poles asunder from the other people of the earth. He has become a Materialist egoist. His god is large and powerful and ruthless." When will pressmen learn that Materialists have no gods, large or small? They leave such playthings for the innocents of Fleet Street.

Cleopatra's Needle, on the Embankment, and the lions in Trafalgar Square, have been used for advertising purposes; but an American lady has surpassed this method of publicity. She glued a slip of paper on the bronze statue of Saint Peter in a church in Rome. The paper bore the inscription in English and Italian: "From the Teutonic plague, O Lord, deliver us." If this method of advertising becomes popular, General Elections in the future should be quite exhilirating affairs.

Mr. Joseph Hocking is writing some War articles for the *Daily Chronicle*. He has been at the Front, and is describing—what he would have described as well had he stayed at home. His article has too much of a standardized ring to be impressive. But in the course of his article he says that "A grey, grizzled, old major" said to him: "you can't go through the battle of Ypres without believing in Almighty." We think we could present that "grey, grizzled, old major with the names of some who went through the battle without believing in God, and who came out of it more convinced Atheists than they went in.

Said Dean Inge, as reported in the *Star* of March 13:—

> As to the horrors of war through which we were now passing, it was necessary that the world should be convinced of sin. The experience was a terrible one, but other methods of raising humanity had been tried in vain.

We advise Dean Inge to open his eyes to the facts around him, not only in this country, but also in others, and then tell us what amount of elevation has resulted from the War thus far?

The *Herald* for last week published a report of a visit to the Front by one of the men invited to go out by the Government, Mr. R. Palmer, of the National Union of General Workers. Mr. Palmer says that in all his travels he only came across one man who was full of the martial desire to march to Berlin, and he was a chaplain in one of the hospitals.

Archdeacon K. F. Gibbs stated at Stevenage (Herts) that over 500 soldiers, who had been fighting at the Front, have applied to be trained for clergymen after the War. We can quite understand the longing for an easy job with nothing to think about, after all these men have gone through.

There is no doubt that Christianity does encourage feelings of love and brotherhood. The *Daily Express* of March 12 reports the Rev. C. A. Eaton, of Madras Avenue Church, N.Y., as saying: "When I stand before the judgment seat of the Almighty I want to be able to look my God in the face and tell him that I hit the Germans at least one good wallop before I shuffle off.....I say to 'Hell with the Germans!'" And in case a "German propagandist" is encountered Mr. Eaton advises "Hammer his face off. You have ropes here and steel girders. Use them." We hope, when Mr. Eaton does meet God Almighty, he will remind him of what a terrible blunder he made in creating the Germans.

Mr. James Munyon, the famous pill man, spent somewhere about half a million annually in advertising his wares. A great deal of this money was spent on religious newspapers, and this led an American journalist to say that "religious newspapers must take pills or die," others will see a fitness between quack medicines and quack theology.

Rev. David James, a Baptist minister of Swansea, was, on March 15, sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for sheep stealing, and his son to nine months. The skins of some of the missing sheep were found in the James' possession on their farm. Jesus said: "Feed my sheep," Rev. James, evidently, believed in collecting them.

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Concerning the "Freethinker."

Next week, and until further notice, the *Freethinker* will consist of twelve pages instead of the usual sixteen.

For three and a half years of war we have held it unchanged in size and price, and had hoped to remain unchanged to the end. But the struggle gets keener each month, and the burden heavier. Paper is now about forty per cent. dearer than it was last year, and is increasingly difficult to get; while the almost certain prospect of the immediate future is a greater scarcity and a still higher price. If hard work or greater personal sacrifice would have obviated the alteration in the paper, we should have kept on in silence; but the end of the War is not in sight, and the change must be made.

Our aim has been to keep the loss on the paper at the figure it was last year, and although we shall be using henceforth twenty-five per cent. less paper, the actual cost per week will still be greater than it was during the past twelve months. Still, we are hopeful that when we make our annual statement, it will not be worse than the last one. It may even be better.

Most of our readers will be surprised that the change was not made earlier; we have held on to the very last moment. And we are quite sure that while no one will welcome the alteration, their devotion to and interest in the paper will in no degree be diminished.

Now for the brighter side. While there will be four pages, or two leaves, less in the paper, the reading matter will not be greatly diminished. The advertising space will be cut down. There will be more small and less large type used. Articles will be briefer, without any loss in value (contributors will please take the hint), and in this way the loss to the reader will be trifling. It will be more a saving of paper than a saving of matter.

Finally, everyone will be pleased to learn that the circulation of the paper is still moving upward. Last week we printed our largest number—and ran out of print. We could have sold more. Everywhere the paper is making new friends, and getting a firmer grip on old ones. No paper, I think, ever had a more devoted body of readers, and if adversity tries one's metal, it also discloses one's friends. These have worked well for the paper, and I know they will keep on working. New readers are still to be obtained, and we want all we can get. It is our ambition to make the power of the *Freethinker* commensurate with its value.

So, while we are diminishing our size, we have no anticipation of any decrease in usefulness. The *Freethinker* will remain the *Freethinker*, carrying its message of sanity and humanity wherever it penetrates. Through three and a half years of war our friends have helped us with ungrudging devotion to make the paper what it is. We feel certain that we can rely upon their support to the end. We value that support more than we can say. It has cast a silvery radiance on the darkest clouds, and has enabled us to face with a light heart the most difficult of situations.

Chapman Cohen.

Professional Mummery.

A "Dynamite" Funeral.

There were four "Fathers" in the funeral train
Of him who died—too suddenly for pain:
Four holy priests, explosive workers too
Who spend their time in proving false is true,
Though they have damped and damned it all too long.
Truth daily grows more "dangerously" strong;
Already it has got quite out of hand,
Explosions soon may shake the Holy Land.

Ardeer.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 24, Manchester; March 31, Pontycymmer; April 7, Glasgow; April 14, Liverpool; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—W. Owen, 2s. 6d.; T. B. Hutton, 2s. 6d; Harry Shaw, 10s.

W. Owen.—Have acknowledged the subscription, but no P.O. was enclosed in your letter.

G. T. Whitehead.—Have sent your note on to the party concerned.

A. Radley.—The letter contains the usual kind of statement, but, from our own experience, we do not think you are likely to get much "forrader." Whether you pursue the subject or not, is for you to decide. The writer of the letter seems quite honest, but, unfortunately, there is no necessary connection between honesty and accuracy.

C. T. Shaw.—Pleased to learn that you hold the record in your town for *Freethinker*. Hope you will soon lose it, and that someone else will beat you, or at least try to do so. We feel sure you will welcome the attempt. Sorry we could not secure a copy of the pamphlet you required.

G. A.—Three new readers in a fortnight is good work. Keep it up. There are thousands of them waiting, ready to be enlisted.

H. Truckell.—We had a paragraph written on the matter, but thanks for cutting. There is no fear of the paper shortage leading to the disappearance of the *Freethinker*, but it makes its continuance increasingly difficult—far more so than we ever anticipated.

F. Driscoll.—There is nothing in the argument from causation. Causation is a statement of the relations between phenomena, it can have no meaning when applied to an assumed relation between phenomena as a whole and an assumed something beyond. For the argument from design we suggest your reading our *Deity and Design*.

Mr. H. Landsberg writes: "I have been a constant reader for some years now, and I take this opportunity of expressing the pleasure I have in the *Freethinker*. Though often I wish that its pages were open to subjects of an economic nature—since, after all, a half-starved stomach produces a half-starved mind, and you will understand this analogy—yet I have often thought that the liberation of humans from the yoke of religion and religious atmosphere will, by broadening the mind, help towards the advance in other directions. I have always endeavoured to spread the ideas of Freethought whenever and wherever possible, and have always tried to show that the exploitation of the mind by parsons is as criminal an act as the exploitation of the body by the capitalist."

Ignotus.—Your letter reached us too late—Tuesday midday—for insertion this week. Shall appear in next issue.

Will Freethinkers in Hull who are willing to engage in organizing Freethought work please communicate with Mr. D. A. Macheson, 82 De La Pole Avenue, Hull? Years ago Freethought used to be active in Hull, and there is no reason why it should not be active once more.

C. F. Budgen.—Thanks for suggestion *re* paper shortage. We rather fancy your informant confused payment to Chaplains with the Army and those near a camp to whose churches soldiers were ordered.

A member of the N.S.S. Executive is at present home from the Front in a Lincoln hospital. He would be pleased to meet any Freethinker who would care to visit him. Will any who are so disposed please write Miss Vance, who will supply them with all particulars.

A. J. Marriott.—We hardly care to express an opinion in these columns of the policy of the papers or societies you name.

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (March 24) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures at Manchester. This will close the Branch's winter campaign, which, we believe, has been very successful. We have every expectation of a good rally of friends and supporters, which will bring the season to a triumphant close. Mr. Cohen is taking for his evening subject "The Questions of Ignotus." This work, which was noted in these columns some weeks ago, has created considerable local interest, and a large meeting is anticipated, with also a lively discussion.

The *Bere Ferrers Parish Magazine* notes the death of Mr. Hugh Courtney Luttrell, late M.P. for Tavistock, and pays a high compliment to his character and influence. It points out that, "Religiously," Mr. Luttrell "was a professed Freethinker; religious forms, ceremonies, and beliefs did not appeal to him, as his last wishes indicated.....As a neighbour and employer he was consistently kind, gentlemanly, and genial.....He leaves a widow and six children. Mrs. Luttrell, who shared his views and ideas, is well known in the parish, where she has always visited the sick and the poor, and been a good friend to many in their need and sickness." Such a notice in a parish magazine speaks very highly for all concerned. We offer our sincere condolences to Mrs. Luttrell and family.

Mr. Lloyd had two good meetings, large and enthusiastic, at Abertillery, on Sunday last. He also addressed a meeting at Blaina, where Freethought propaganda is quite new. Here, again, the meeting was a great success. All of which verifies our opinion that the whole of South Wales is ripe for the harvest. To-day (March 24) Mr. Lloyd lectures at the Secular Hall, Leicester. There will, we are sure, be a good gathering of "saints" there.

The *Western Daily Mail* of March 11 reports an address by the Rev. C. W. Martin, in which the speaker fully endorsed all we have said concerning the unpopularity in the Army of Church Parade. He said: "By the majority of soldiers, both officers and men, padres were not wanted, and enforced Church parades were responsible for a good deal of feeling." The men, he says, don't want them, nor do the padres. If that last statement be accurate, the remedy should be easy of application. Our own information is that a compulsory Church parade is very often the result of a direct application from the chaplain.

In another column we publish a letter from an Atheist commanding officer on this subject that is of more than usual interest. The writer is in a position to speak with authority, and all he says bears out our information from other quarters. Meanwhile, we might suggest that if Freethinking soldiers would ask for exemption from Church parade, on the ground of being Freethinkers, it would often be granted. We feel sure that officers generally have no desire to force upon their men a duty which is repugnant to them, and the non-fulment of which in no way detracts from their value as soldiers.

Mr. T. F. Palmer delivers the closing lecture of the season at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, to-day (March 24), at 7 o'clock. His subject is "The Warfare Between Science and Religion." This is Mr. Palmer's first visit to Birmingham, and we hope all local friends will see that the theatre is well filled.

An attempt is being made to start a Branch of the N.S.S. in Portsmouth. Will all those who are interested in the matter be good enough to communicate with Mr. Norman Crosby, 118 Commercial Road, Portsmouth?

Tales of Our Times.

III.

LITTLE Dick and Willie, aged respectively ten and eight, having said their prayers and bidden nurse good-night, were reviewing the events of the day before falling asleep.

"What do you think Tommy Smith asked our teacher in Sunday-school to-day?" said Dick. "He asked her if God knew that Adam and Eve would disobey him when he told them not to eat any of those apples."

"And what did teacher say?" inquired Willie.

"She said that of course God knew it, because he knows everything that is going to happen. And then Tommy Smith said, if God knew they would eat the apples, how could they help eating them, because God can never make a mistake about what he knows."

"Of course he can't," said Willie, beginning to yawn a little.

"Then teacher said that Adam and Eve were not bound to eat the apples, because they had free will, and could do as they liked."

"That seems right too," said Willie, in a very sleepy voice.

"But Tommy didn't seem to think so—you know what an obstinate little beggar Tommy is. He answered back that what God knows will happen *must* happen, and so Adam and Eve *had* to eat those apples whether they had free will or not; so what was the use of ordering them not to? But teacher didn't explain anything more to him, but told him that little boys mustn't argue about things they don't understand.

Willie was too sleepy to make any reply to this, and so, unlike Milton's fallen angels "in wandering mazes lost" through discussing the same subject, the two little brains were soon lost in the healthy slumber of childhood.

Next day, on their way home from school, Dick and Willie had to pass old Farmer Jones' apple orchard. Over the wall could be seen the boughs laden with the golden fruit which had been the little boys' daily temptation for a week past. To-day the temptation was stronger than ever. That crusty old bachelor, Farmer Jones, was reputed to have "more money than he knew what to do with," so how could he miss a few apples? and how lovely those apples did look this morning, to be sure. No one was about, and it would be so easy to climb over the low wall and help themselves to just a few. One shake of that heavily laden bough would bring down more than sufficient to fill their pockets. And so, alas, Dick and Willie "fell" as easily as they expected the apples to do.

But, unfortunately, Farmer Jones and his head man on the farm happened to be not far off. They concealed themselves behind two trees as the boys climbed over the orchard wall, and emerged just as the marauders were about to pick up the treasure from the ground. So Dick soon found himself in the relentless grasp of Farmer Jones, while his man John held the collar of Willie's jacket in a grip of iron. And Farmer Jones had a cane too.

"Now, you young rascals," shouted Farmer Jones, angrily, "what have you got to say for yourselves?"

Dick was very white, but looked Farmer Jones squarely in the eye without any sign of cringing. Suddenly a flash of inspiration came to him—perhaps suggested by the apples. It seemed a forlorn hope, but was worth trying.

"Very sorry, sir," he said, "but we really couldn't help it. You see, God knew we were going to steal your apples, so we had to do it."

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"God knew? What the Devil do you mean?" roared Farmer Jones.

"Well, sir, yesterday in Sunday-school our teacher told us that God knows everything that is going to happen. So, as our trying to steal your apples *has* happened, God knew it *would* happen, therefore it *must* have happened. So, of course, we couldn't help trying to steal your apples."

Now Farmer Jones, though undoubtedly a crusty old bachelor, was not altogether without a grim sort of humour, and before such a direct appeal to it his temper completely vanished, so he said encouragingly: "Quite right, my boy. I am glad to find that you have such a wise teacher in your Sunday-school. Of course God knew that you would come into my orchard after apples this morning, but it seems he knew more than that. He also knew that John and I would be here to catch you, and that I would give you a certain number of strokes with this cane of mine, which no doubt grew somewhere under his loving care in order to carry out this predestined purpose. Now, John," he added, glancing quizzically at his old factotum, "how many strokes with this cane do you think God knows I am going to give these youngsters?"

John, who was a kind-hearted old fellow, and had a little boy or two of his own, replied with a grin: "Well, sir, since you asks me, I be pretty sartain as God knows you ain't going to give 'em any strokes at all. These 'ere boys be fine gentlemanly little chaps, only they've bin led astray by that there Sunday-school teaching, Mr. Jones. God knows that they've never bin in this orchard afore (leastways I knows it for sure myself), and so God knows that you're just a-going to let 'em off with a warning this time, Mr. Jones, and to put 'em on their honour never to do this sort o' thing again."

"Well, John," observed Farmer Jones, gravely, relaxing his hold on Dick's arm, "I had no idea you were so completely in the confidence of the Almighty; but I suppose I must take your word for it. Look here, you youngsters, if I let you off this time will you promise me on your honour never to serve me such a low trick again?"

Dick and Willie, now quite free, and standing erect and manly side by side, took off their caps to Farmer Jones.

"Thank you very much, sir," said Dick. "We are very sorry, and will never do it again, Mr. Jones, honour bright. Willie, say that too."

"Very sorry, and never again, honour bright," shouted Willie, with shrill and convincing emphasis.

"That's right," said Farmer Jones, now actually laughing. "Shake hands, and here's an apple for each of you to ratify the bargain. John, let them out by the gate, please—*not* over the wall."

So Dick and Willie went off with a greatly improved opinion of Farmer Jones, but with grave doubts as to the practical utility of theological doctrines in the affairs of daily life.

A. E. Maddock.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

XI.—The Stone Rolled Away.

Very early on Sunday morning, while twilight yet hung over Jerusalem, and Calvary, and the garden of Joseph, a group of women carried pots of ointment and funeral spices, and approached the rock-tomb.

The stone block which had been propped up against the mouth of the sepulchre was rolled away. Bending down, and stepping gently into the shadowy cave, the women were astonished not to find the body of the martyr.

What was to be done? To whom could they go for advice? Who could have taken the body away?

A light shone. Two shining ones appeared in the cave.

"Why do you seek the living man in this place of the dead?" asked the shining men. "He is not here. Remember that, when he was in Galilee, he told you he would be dead only three days."

The women hurried into the city, where people were just beginning to stir in the streets. They went to the house where the Eleven Delegates and other disciples met together each day, and they told the story of the shining men.

"Nonsense," said the eleven Aposties.

Peter,—he that heard the cock crow at the Friday dawn,—tore out, as fast as he could go, and rushed to Joseph's garden, crept into the sepulchre, and, stooping, found linen clothes wrapped in a bundle. That was all. He wondered, and went away, wondering.

On Sunday evening, two of the Galilee men walked along the country road from Jerusalem to a village, some seven miles away. They talked of the rock-tomb, the women, the shining men, and Peter.

"You seem very interested in something, my friends," said a strange voice. "Has anything unusual happened?"

A wayfarer had caught them up.

"Why, sir," said one, "have you not heard of the scenes in the Holy City?"

"What scenes?"

"The killing of the King of the Jews,—King Jesus. The Priests, and Lecturers, and Scribes arrested this noble pioneer of Nazareth, and the people demanded of Pilate that he should be crucified; and the terrible deed was done at Calvary last Friday. It was our belief that Jesus was the man chosen by Heaven to be the Saviour and King of Israel. And this very morning, some of our women comrades went to the rock-tomb where his body had been laid, and found the door-stone rolled away, and two angels appeared, and declared that the King was alive. He was indeed a Wonder-worker, Master of Demons, and a grand Preacher. And we wonder what it all means, and whether".....

"Dullards and slow-wits," said the stranger. "You forget that the Hebrew prophets long ago told that a Chosen Man should suffer a tragical death, and rise out of the gloom of the grave into glory and paradise."

As they walked, the stranger repeated many a verse from old songs, and hymns, and legends, which spoke of a Sufferer who should bear awful pains, and afterwards ride in triumph as a Leader, arrayed in glorious robes, comforting the people, and bringing joy to Jerusalem. Thus chatting, the three travellers reached the village. The stranger bade them good evening, and turned away.

"Sir," cried the two disciples, "abide with us; for the day is far spent, and dusk falls."

"Thank you," he said; and they all entered a cottage, and presently sat at a table, whereon a simple supper was prepared.

The stranger picked up the bread, said a blessing over it, broke it, and gave pieces to his two companions. In a moment, it flashed on them,—the memory of the Supper Table in the Holy City, the Supper of the Bread and Wine. They had scarcely said "Lord!" when he had vanished.

They jumped up, walked rapidly back to Jerusalem along the dark road, and hastened into the meeting-house of the Galileans.

"Comrades," shouted voices as the two men rushed in, "the Master's alive! Peter has seen him."

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"So have we," exclaimed the two. "We met him on the road, invited him to supper, and".....

"Greetings to you all!" said a man, suddenly entering the room.

"A ghost!" shrieked the whole company, as they retreated before the newcomer, who looked like the Man of the Cross.

"Friends," he said, "don't be afraid. These hands," (and here he showed his hands) "which are holed by the Roman nails, are real hands; and my feet are real feet. Come and touch me. Give me food. Watch me eat."

Somebody gave him broiled fish, and a bowl of honey. They all stared as he ate. Then he spoke of the future.

"Stay here in the City," he said. "Never mind about Galilee. Stay here till the wonderful gift comes from high heaven,—the gift of the holy Pneuma,—it will come before many days have passed."

"And will the kingdom come?"

"Ah, it is not for you to know. Your business will be to go and tell the Christ-story to the citizens here, and the folk of Judea, and the Samaritans,"——

"The Samaritans!"

"Yes, my friends, the Kingdom is for them too, and it is for all the world."

He was talking in this same way when, not long afterwards, he led the band out of the city, across the mount where the olive groves grew, and to a very quiet spot, where he meant to say good-bye.

All of a sudden he rose in the air, and a cloud hid him from sight.

Two shining men stood on the hill-side.

"Galilee men," said the white figures, "the man that you have seen ascend will come back."

The Master of jinn had gone from the land into which he came as a babe some thirty years before.

The Eleven Apostles and the rest of the rustic company—simple folk all, none being learned, none able to lecture, none having any gift of words for making long prayers—returned to Jerusalem; and, day after day, they held their meetings of the Society of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Before long the marvellous Pneuma would arrive. The Pneuma—the gift—whatever could it be?

* * * *

In telling the legend of the holy sepulchre, I have passed from the God-spell, or God-Story of *Luke*, to the book called the *Acts of the Apostles*, written by the same person.

In the days of old, many nations had their stories of the Risen God.

The god Dionysus, who was the spirit of fruit-trees, the vine, etc., was supposed to die in the winter, and rise again in glory and bloom in the spring. His worshippers (ploughmen, harvesters, fruit-pickers) at one time tore a live goat, or bull, to pieces to show forth his death; but they also believed that the torn and dead Master could regain his life, and give fruit and corn to the hungry world.

Another Greek myth was that of the corn-seed, Persephone, who was taken down into the under-world by the dark King Hades, and there abode for months. In the spring-time she was allowed to rise from the earthen tomb and sprout into the green blades of growing corn, and so once again to see her dear Mother the Earth. We speak of this rising as the "Return of Persephone."

In Western Asia the god Tammuz, or 'Adonis, rose from the dead. One tale said he was born from the myrrh-tree, the bark of which burst, and forth came a lovely babe. He grows as corn grows, or as fruit grows, and is then ground to death in mill or press. In ancient festivals women carried an image of the dead god to the sea, weeping as they went, and yet all the while believing he would rise in power and beauty; as, of course, he did.

Another such god was Attis, who bled to death under a pine-tree. People in Asia and in Rome kept his death in memory at spring-time (March), and rejoiced when priests opened a tomb and said that Attis was risen.

Egypt had its god Osiris, of whom folk told that he was god of the corn and vine, that his bad and gloomy brother slew him and cut the body in pieces, that the pieces were found and buried by the lady Isis, and she and her sister mourned for him. The gods put the broken body together again, Isis flapped her wings and fanned air into it, and Osiris lived again and became King of the World Below.[1]

People who believed in the resurrection of the dead would easily believe in the rising of men to heaven.

The Greeks ended the story of the heroic Hercules with the legend of his ascension. Having been poisoned by some evil person, Hercules made his own pyre, or burning pile, laid himself upon it, and bade his armour-bearer set it alight. Smoke curled round the funeral pile, and the hero's body was consumed to ashes. Then his spirit, all glorious, leaped from the ashes, mounted a chariot which was drawn by four horses, and, amid peals of thunder, he ascended into high heaven. He had left to his armour-bearer, as a gift or keepsake, his marvellous bow. It was with arrows shot from this bow that many of the great captains of Troy City were slain, and thus the Greek army was aided in its war against the Trojans. Hercules was, of course, worshipped in temples as a Son of God.

And if you would know of Indians who ascended, you should read the tale of the prince and his dog—a very beautiful story too long to be repeated here.[2]

F. J. GOULD.

The Sabbath-Breakers.

A Sabbath well spent
Brings a week of content
And health for the toils of the morrow;
But a Sabbath profaned,
Whatsoever is gained,
Is a sure forerunner of sorrow.

So runs an infantile and quite admirable admonitory recollection. But we would not now confine it to the Sunday. Its application widens and deepens with the years. So the semi-superstitions of a crude and shallow theology may be turned to purer gold in the slow but certain crucible of a growing Humanism and Naturalism. The Church, with all its borrowed secular attractions, fails more and more to satisfy the growing mind of man. Nor is the mental process always slow. Paine, in the *Rights of Man*, makes the suggestion, and one peculiarly applicable to the present time, that—

> The progress of time and circumstances which men assign to the accomplishment of great changes is too mechanical to measure the force of the mind and the rapidity of reflection by which revolutions are generated:

Or, in the words of Keats' admired Chapman:—

> There is a deep nick in Time's restless wheel
> .....when which nick comes, it strikes.

Of which more anon. The Church failing me, and the Church having the monopoly of Sunday amusements in my semi-urban locality, there is nothing for it but to "break Sunday" in the open. Pleasure, like fame, oft comes unlooked for, if it come at all. My little Pagans

[1] All these legends are fully given in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

[2] See Gould's *Youth's Noble Path* (Longmans), chapter entitled "The Prince with the Great Heart."

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and me—my own tribe and a neighbour's son (the latter looks up to me as to a god, and with how little reason for his worship, puir wee sowl!)—took to the winding road; thence, by the brook, to a corner of the wood, where we built a fire and boiled tea. The firing and the feeding over, I, god-like, went apart and listened to the staccato shouts echoing in the trees. It was the anticipation of spring; it was summer. Already, in fancy, the genial dappled sunshine filled the glade; the primrose and the violet were come. The flowers of Freethought seemed not far away. Here, and especially with these children, is a shrine and a sanctuary, an enlargement and an inspiration, a hope and a fulfilment. One may feel morbid, moody, or morose; but there's something here to charm those ills away. And, as N. P. Willis wrote:—

There's something in a noble boy,
A brave, freehearted, careless one,
With his unchecked, unbidden joy,
His dread of books, and love of fun;
With his sincere and ready smile,
Unshaded by a thought of guile,
And unrepressed by sadness,
That brings me to my childhood back,
As if I trod its very track
And felt its very gladness.....

And so half of the Sunday was well broken. I met with a comrade in the afternoon, and together we called at the house of a "hardened Atheist," and found this wicked person reading a handsome volume, entitled *Bygones Worth Remembering*, and which, with his spectacles, he laid aside as he rose to welcome us and take us "ben the room." A Christian could have done no more. A mute and modest-looking, but what proved to be a marvellous, gramophone stood in a corner. Our comrade, who is musical and knows it, was soon making free with his friend's "records," and nodding his head gently, and humming sagely and intimately, as the beautiful creations of Wagner, Beethoven, and Mascagni, preceded by the haunting "Barcarolle," filled the air with melody. There was sweetness and soothing in the Boat Song, passion in the Intermezzo, energy and daring in the multitudinous thunders of Wagner and Beethoven. The whole was as though one had been quaffing champagne. And then a woman's glorious voice awoke on the revolving disc, and memory and affection wakened with it, and wandered backward in the sweet old Scottish song:—

Hae ye min' o' lang lang syne
When the simmer days were fine
When the sun it shone far brighter
Than its ever done sin' syne .....
. . . . .
Where are those bright hearts now,
That were once so leal an' true?
Some hae left this troubled scene,
Some still are struggling thro';
But, tho' lang the night may seem,
They will sleep without a dream
Till they wauken-on-yon-bright-Sabbath-morning!

A pious wish, but a pardonable, and the sentiment is entirely human, and finds an echo in every breast—or gains in poignancy from the sub-conscious certainty that the "Sabbath" really means the Nevermore. When Miss Lizzie Hunter, of Glasgow, sung this song to a city audience just as the mechanical echoes reproduced it for us, that audience arose as one man, and cheered, and cheered, and cheered, and held the singer to the stage till her eyes overflowed with emotions happy tears. It was her masterpiece, or, at least, it was her listeners' master spell. In such a moment the mind leaps forward, despising every obstacle. Our comrade had been showing me the spot in this old-world village where, in the good old days, certain offenders were exposed to public shame and insult. I thought of all the barbarities of the past, and of the lingering barbarisms of to-day, then hearing this love-song, and that boat song, and glimpsing the world of music and art in the great composers, it was not strange but inevitable that one should lean forward and say: Why, we are merely savages. Eighty per cent. of us do not know how to live. Our meagre lives explain our miserable religion, and our miserable religion explains our meagre lives. Christianity was the religion—the consolation if you like, of the miserable. Those who tell us of mansions in the skies would be better employed helping us to mansions, even decent cottages, here below, instead of fitting us to be angels in heaven, of equipping us to be decent citizens of earth. Instead of which we have: Blessed be ye poor, Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted—by-and-by! Anything, anywhere, but *here* and *now*; and mine host agreed.

It was the first Sunday in March, and, according to most *unreliable* rustic information, the crows on that day "lay the first twig" of their nests. The crow is a wise and reverend bird, but I don't suppose he is as partial to Sunday as his human brethren in black. It is more likely that "rustic labour," being more at leisure, merely *observed* Maitre Corbeau building on that day, and straightway gave his natural history notes to the world. In such wise even great religions have been built up. A great truth emerges from this trifling: all days are alike to every animal but man. He only has sought out inventions; and having found an imaginary God he must allot him an imaginary day.

Mister Crow is not such a damned fool.

Andrew Millar.

Correspondence.

ARMY CHURCH PARADES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—You are quite right when you say that "compulsory attendance at church is felt as a real injustice in the Army." Officers *hate* it every bit as much as the men. We also know (those of us who have been through the "blood bath" in France) that religion does not help the soldier—quite the reverse, in fact! In the fighting in France during the whole of the War, I have only met with one actual case of cowardice (*i.e.*, real fear of death and terror of the task that faced us at the moment), and the man I have in mind groaned out his terror while he grovelled in prayer, to the intense disgust of his comrades, who were at this particular moment undergoing most frightful punishment at the hands (or guns and mortars) of the enemy. I knew the man well. The poor fellow was killed that day. He *had* religion—thoroughly! But he was the least useful man of my unit when the particular hour of tragedy and test came our way. I pointed the moral to my brother officers at the time. I hope to see religion completely divorced from the Army. It will mean a cleaner and happier soldier. I have served in the ranks of the old Army, and I know the amount of blasphemy the Church Parade always provoked. It is just the same to-day. But the Chaplain must justify his existence, and so this hated institution goes on.

Freethinkers and Atheists make fine soldiers. This is not a sophism; it is bed-rock truth. I find the right type of mind among them—the type of mind that is centred upon a high sense of duty and a complete devotion to the principle of fair-play. The true Freethinker makes a splendid officer or N.C.O. I've tested the value of this belief of mine, and I've not been let down yet. It would be interesting to know (though the bishops would find the knowledge very disquieting) the number of Freethinkers among the officers of the Army of to-day. As a matter of fact, more than fifty per cent. are sceptics—but more or less passively so. But at least eighty per cent. are convinced of the utter uselessness of religion in the Army. Church Parade is always

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referred to as "divine punishment," and officers scheme more actively than the men to dodge it.

Please accept my congratulations on your wonderful show with the *Freethinker*. I hope that an early peace will help to remove the difficulties that now face you. But the time for peace is not yet. The present crowing attitude of Prussia, with Wilhelm as the chief chanticleer, does not help on the peace idea. Personally, I am devoted to the War with every fibre of my being and every breath of my body until the Prussian is stamped flat.

I must take up no more of your time. Cheerio and good luck.

An Atheist Commanding Officer.

The Blank Wall.

X.

There is much boast these days of the influence of the scientific spirit in modern man. We are in the habit of assuming that superstition—at least of the cruder and more troglodite kind—no longer influences the brains of the people. We have hoped, and our hope has lent colour to the reformer within us, that humanity has made a fraction of headway in the forward line which we conceive to be Progress. But in this we are, as usual, mistaken! Superstition flourishes in the vast majority of minds to-day just as it did ten thousand years ago. The entirely rational and scientific mind does not yet exist.....Even a distinguished scientist like the late Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace believed in Spiritualism! Sir Oliver Lodge, another living scientist, is doing his very best in the interests of superstition.

Is the human race never to grow out of these things? Is the Rationalist a freak of Nature, and the superstitionist on the winning side? It may sound like rank blasphemy to suggest such a thing, but are not the facts obstinate? To-day we are in the midst of a universal and scientific war; yet humanity, in consequence, is behaving in a more barbaric fashion than when wars were less scientific! The primitive man with a sling was infinitely less scientific than the machine gunner of to-day, yet he was less barbaric. He was more humane. Poison gas, one of the most ghastly inventions of this War, is highly scientific, and at the same time inconceivably hellish in its barbarity. The ancient with his bow and arrow was clean and decent compared to the inventors of poison gas, yet he was more superstitious!

Nine people out of ten will avoid walking under a ladder, or spilling salt at table. Mascots manufactured by the million are still sold daily in Regent Street to the superstitious. The success of the famous "Swastika" charm was phenomenal. They may still be purchased in an attractive variety of forms!

Arthur F. Thorn.

Society News.

The Manchester Branch held its second Social at the Downing Street Hall, on the 16th, and was a gratifying success. A flying whist drive was followed by a succession of songs, recitations, and dances, and no effort was spared to make the evening an enjoyable one. The talent willingly placed at its disposal augurs well for the success of the social side of the Branch in future. Thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Batt, Mrs. Pulman, and Mrs. Bayfield for the whist prizes which they so kindly provided. Will members please note that the Annual Meeting for election of officers etc., for ensuing year, will take place at Bakers' Hall on Sunday, April 7, at 6.30, when a good attendance is specially requested.

North London Branch N. S. S.—The debate last Sunday on the question, "Is There a God?" was well sustained, the Secularists being neither vanquished nor disgraced. In view of the forthcoming legislation on this subject, we expect a large audience to-night to hear Mrs. Tiedeman, the Secretary of the Divorce Law Reform Union. A cordial invitation is given to those in opposition to break a lance with Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman.

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, Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman, "The Church and Divorce." Open Debate.

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COUNTRY.

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Abertillery (Tillery Institute): "Keridon," 3, "The Lessons of the World-War: Industrial, Social, and Religious"; 6.30, "The Return of the Gnostic, or the New Epoch of God-making."

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. T. F. Palmer, "The Warfare between Science and Religion."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "Secularism and its Message to the Times."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Truth and the Press.—The Editor	193
Shaking Off the Beast.—J. T. Lloyd	194
The Decline of Devotional Literature.—Mimnermus	196
Who Killed Christ?—G. W. Foote	196
The Queen of Night.—T. F. Palmer	200
Tales of Our Times.—A. E. Maddock	201
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	202

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Truth and the Press.

A great many hard things have been said lately concerning the present quality of the English newspaper press, and he would be a rash man who dared say they were undeserved. During a time of War one excuses much, and when, in addition, we have a Government-controlled press—openly controlled so far as the issue and suppression of news on an all-engrossing topic is concerned, and, probably controlled to a very much greater extent, non-dependence on the information supplied becomes general. A controlled press—no matter by whom controlled—must become an untrustworthy press. It may be telling the truth, or it may be telling a lie. No one can be sure. In such circumstances a newspaper surrenders its primary function of conveying news, and becomes an agency for the coercion, the suppression, or the artificial creation of opinion. It becomes as unreliable as a politician, and as unveracious as a professional evangelist. Freedom is the essential condition of much, it is certainly a prime condition of speaking the truth.

* * *

An Evil Environment.

Having said so much, it remains, however, true that the faults of the English press did not commence with the War, they have only been accentuated by it. Nor are these altogether the faults of the press; they are largely the faults of an unhealthy state of public opinion. This was expressed, in a way, by Mr. Birrell in the course of a recent address, in which he remarked of our newspapers: "If they had been allowed to tell more truth, it is only creditable to suppose they would not have told so many lies." That, we think, puts the matter on a fair basis; and it applies almost as much to individuals as to newspapers. Taking men and women on the average, we do not think they will go out of their way to tell a lie; but neither will they subject themselves to a serious inconvenience in order to tell the truth. Few people may be capable under ordinary conditions of strict accuracy, since that comes of training and education allied with native disposition; but if people were allowed to tell the truth there would certainly be considerably less lying. In most cases people lie for a purpose—to escape inconvenience or to reap a profit, and all that we can do is to see that the incentives to truth are the more powerful. As things are the inducements seem mainly in the other direction. Daily experience shows that in this religion-soaked society of ours, mental honesty and truth-speaking are the most expensive of luxuries. Lying is lamentably common, and the suppression of truth commoner still. And the man who will have the truth at all costs promises to die with no better epitaph than "Here lies a Crank."

* * *

Press and Public.

Now, newspapers may be able to create what is called an opinion in favour of this or that. But the general tone and character of the public mind is not formed by newspapers, it is that which they exist to serve which determines the character of the papers. Generally speaking, the object of the proprietors of newspapers is to sell their wares. It is only a paper, such as the *Freethinker*, which makes sales a secondary consideration. And, taking people as they are, what Mr. Birrell said of the press, with the Government censor in his mind, may be said with regard to the relations between the press and the general public. If the papers were allowed to tell the truth they would not print so many lies. But that supposes the existence of a public that has a genuine interest in and attachment for truth, for freedom, for liberty. And that public is represented by but a small minority. Nothing has struck us more than this during the past three-and-a-half years. We have had to surrender much during that period—one hopes for "the duration" only. We have given up the freedom of the press, of speech, of the platform, even those two old boasts, *Habæus Corpus* and "An Englishman's home is his castle." It is not surprising that people should have surrendered these things in view of what they conceived a larger purpose. The surprising thing is the very few people one meets who seem in the least conscious that they have lost anything worth troubling about. As they did not value freedom when it was theirs, it is not surprising that they attach little importance to its absence.

* * *

The Press and Religion.

Newspaper writers are not really different from other men. The unsigned article or the editorial "we" usually covers a quite ordinary—often a quite commonplace—personality. But like most others, whether they are intellectually honest depends merely upon whether they are allowed to be so. So long as the general public make the path of the liar pleasant and that of the truth-speaker painful, things will remain as they are. In his satirical defence of Lord Northcliffe as Minister of Propaganda, Mr. S. L. Hughes told the House of Commons that if what was wanted in war was a man who did not stick at the truth, no better man could be found for the job. That was more than a covered charge against Lord Northcliffe; it was a charge against the British public. Again, we have been lately advertising this journal in several provincial papers. But in two or three cases the advertisements were refused. Why? Not, we know, because the proprietors personally objected to the advertisement; nor that they did not want

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advertisements. It was simply that the public—some of their public—might take offence. As Mr. Birrell says, they go on publishing lies because they are not allowed to publish the truth. And a newspaper must publish something.

* * *

A Christian Product.

Now, it is not possible to dissociate this condition of the public mind from the influence of Christianity. For it will be observed that it is precisely those faults of the press of which Mr. Birrell and others complain that are most characteristic of Christian methods of teaching. No religion has ever shown a more complete disregard for truth, a greater determination to suppress facts inconvenient to itself, or to disseminate information of a quite misleading character, than has Christianity. The Roman Church has its official Index; the Protestant Churches have no official Index, but they have an unofficial one of extraordinary efficiency. It is in virtue of this unofficial Index that reports of Freethought meetings are boycotted, newsagents who display Freethought papers often warned that they will lose trade unless they mend their ways, and editors of newspapers threatened with a loss of circulation unless they play the religious game. It may or may not be true that a people always has the government it deserves; it is certainly true it will always have the kind of newspaper press that suits it. For the press has to deal with a public that is mentally emasculated by centuries of Christian training and influence. The press is a reflection of the public mind. And if we would have a different press, we must see to it that we have a different public. In other words, we must do away with the occasion for so many lies by making it possible to tell more truths.

* * *

Christianity's Greatest Crime.

When the evils that Christianity has inflicted on the world are finally tabulated, we are convinced that its ill effects in the world of mental life will be accounted the greatest. It commenced with a theory that damned people for wrong belief, and so made the critical use of the intellect the most dangerous of occupations. So soon as it possessed the power, it added terrestrial punishment to celestial damnation. It burned, it tortured, it imprisoned, it boycotted; it suppressed truth and circulated lies. For generations, the most dangerous thing in Christendom was to think. The fool could always make sure of heaven; the thinker always ran a great chance of hell. The thousands who had died at the stake or suffered in Christian prisons for heresy deserve our sympathy, but the general public demand it still more. For the essential evil of Christian rule rested not so much with the people it killed as with those whom it left alive. It separated the sceptical goats from the believing sheep, it bred from the poorer stock, and so lowered the whole level of mental life. It created and perpetuated a social environment in which thinking was at a discount and credulity at a premium. It is from the effects of this heredity we are suffering to-day. We can have more truth and fewer lies in the press if we demand it. But to make that demand effective we must break the influence of a Church whose rule has been one of the greatest blights in the history of the modern world.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

We daily make great improvements—there is one I wish to see in moral philosophy—the discovery of a plan that would induce and oblige nations to settle their disputes without first cutting one another's throats. *There never has been, nor ever will be, any such thing as a good war or a bad peace.* When will mankind be convinced of this, and agree to settle their differences by arbitration?—*Franklin.*

Shaking Off the Beast.

THE Rev. John A. Hutton, D.D., of Glasgow, is a deservedly distinguished member of the clerical profession. He has carefully studied and thoroughly mastered the great art of luminous expression. As a preacher he occupies the front rank, and as a writer of newspaper articles he enjoys considerable popularity. It is in the latter capacity alone that he is known, at first hand, to the present writer. In the *Christian World* for March 7, there is a notable contribution from his pen, entitled "He Shook Off the Beast," which is eminently characteristic of his style both as preacher and writer. He bases his remarks upon an alleged incident in the life of St. Paul, recorded in Acts xxv. 1-5. There had been a shipwreck, and the rescued people were on an island called Melita, where they were shown great kindness by the inhabitants, politely called in the narrative "barbarous people." Out of a bundle of sticks, gathered by the Apostle, when laid on the fire, there sprang a viper which fastened itself on his hand; but he "shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm." As it stands, it is clear that this simple story has no moral whatever, nor any other significance than the one which it naturally bears. But this is how Dr. Hutton looks at it:—

> I have the feeling again and again, especially when he (St. Luke) tells a story, that he is telling the story first of all, of course, as part of his narrative, but also for the sake of a deeper significance which the story has the moment you sit down and think of it. St. Luke was, as we know, a physician. He was a physician certainly with a most remarkable gift for writing. He is not the only physician who in the history of literature has revealed the same excellence.

Then he goes on to say how Thomas Browne, a physician of Norwich, wrote a marvellous classic, called *Religio Medici*, and how "in our own day, the moralizings of Dr. Paget have a simplicity and depth and charm which must be the despair of many a man to whom writing is a lucrative business." Next he indulges in a bit of moralizing of his own, to the effect that a good doctor possesses qualities which are calculated to make him a good writer. This is the pulpit style to perfection—the rhetorical trick of reading into the text what, as it stands, it does not even suggest. The truth is that the preacher must exploit his text-book in this fashion, for otherwise he would soon come to the end of his tether. Nor do we quarrel with Dr. Hutton for adopting this highly convenient method. What we maintain is that there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the author of the Acts, in relating that incident in the Apostle's life, "gave it a particular turn in order to embody in a few sharp outlines an abiding fact and principle." However, on the assumption that St. Luke did so, Dr. Hutton adds: "'He shook off the viper, and took no harm.' That, in a sense, is the claim of Christianity, that man may shake off the beast, and, far from taking harm, for the first time begin to be man." Rather than find fault with the reverend gentleman for pursuing this homiletic plan, we prefer to treat the assumption as if it were legitimate, and to examine this so-called claim of Christianity in order to ascertain whether or not there is any truth in it.

Dr. Hutton makes a bad beginning by laying the blame for the present War at the door of the philosophy which, he says, was dominant in Germany at its outbreak. According to him, the fundamental principle of that philosophy was "that man simply could not dispense with the beast, that if he 'shook off the beast' he would take harm"; and then he refers to one of the philosophers who spoke quite frankly of man as the "blonde beast, hungry for prey," giving a long quotation

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from Nietzsche. It is wholly immaterial, in this connection, whether the quotation is a correct representation of the Nietzschean attitude on the subject of war or not, the point to be emphasized at present being that German philosophers generally have always repudiated the teaching of the Basle Professor. Besides, he who announced without apology that "war is a biological necessity," is a Christian, who has the support of Luther when he oracularly declares that war is not anti-Christian. By war, Luther and Bernhardi mean the shedding of blood on brutal battlefields in the interests of some strong, ambitious State; but in the true Nietzschean sense war signifies struggle against weakness, ignorance, and error. With this Dr. Hutton is in substantial agreement, for he says:—

> A man is at his best when he is pulling against the stream. Deprived of the necessity for struggle, man loses his virility and endurance, begins to live too exclusively by his wits; later, begins to pamper himself, to become aware too pointedly of his body, to become an epicure in his food, more complicated and inventive and diabolical in his pleasures.....It is true and always will be true of man that he must have an active and aggressive principle of life. The day when he ceases to get beyond himself is a day when he begins to shrink.

In war as thus understood there is nothing lowering or bestial. It is in the purely military sense alone that war deserves to be condemned as a mark of the brute; in the sense of an appeal to physical force for the settlement of national or international disputes; or as an instrument in the service of the lust for power and dominion, as it has for the moment been successfully employed by Germany and Austria-Hungary against an exhausted and helpless Russia. In this sense war is the hideous beast in humanity which needs to be shaken off at all cost, or to be "cut out as with a surgeon's knife from the growing organism" of our race. But the crucial question is, "where are we to get the moral equivalent for war" in this signification of the word? "How are we to maintain within ourselves the fine ferment of aspiration and moral activity, the climbing, enduring, hardy attitude?" This is Dr. Hutton's own question, and the following is his answer to it:—

> I do not think it is a difficulty which will ever really arise in men and women who believe in God. To believe in God—that of itself when we ponder its implications—will set man an ever ascending task, and the best men in the world will die like that list of heroes in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, with the thing they have lived for all their lives still unachieved, still "star-like ever luring them on to its exclusive purpose." Men who believe in God as Christ has made him known to us will always have enough to do, enough to do within themselves, to bring harmony between the fine deepening demand of Jesus upon us all and our own poor and inadequate performance.

Such is the reverend gentleman's moral equivalent for war—*the belief in God*. Unfortunately, however, the belief in God, like prayer, has always lacked efficacy. Like the deities of ancient Greece those of Christendom have been constantly at war among themselves. It may be retorted that Christians profess to be Monotheists, and that their divines have written bulky tomes in defence of that profession. For argument's sake, granted; but is it not an incontestable fact that their versions of that one God in three have been and still are practically innumerable; and that the champions of those versions have often fought to the death for their respective idols? Why, only the other day, Dr. Campbell Morgan publicly declared that he, an orthodox Trinitarian, could never enter into any sort of religious co-operation with a Unitarian, however good and noble he might be. Were you to tell the Trinitarian that he believes in three Gods, he would instantly get into a fighting attitude and denounce you as a liar; and it is not so long ago that slight deviators from the dominant Trinitarian position were savagely attacked and burnt alive. The thirty years bloody war in Germany was waged on behalf of different versions of God and his Church. All the warriors were firm, passionate believers in a Supreme Being, but, instead of serving as a moral equivalent for war, their belief irresistibly drove them to furious battle after battle. Does Dr. Hutton deny the truth of this statement? Every believer paints his own picture of God, which only expresses his conception of what a Divine Being should be. The militarists of the present day are no less ardent believers in God than the Pacifists; while, as a matter of fact, there are many Pacifists who are avowed Atheists. No one can be a more passionately zealous believer in a Supreme Being than the German Emperor is, and the God he worships is the one Christ is supposed to have made known to the world. The Kaiser is not only a believer in God, but also an evangelical Christian, as his numerous published sermons abundantly testify. It is his boast that his soldiers are Christians, and that no one is permitted to become a military officer in his dominions unless he is a Church member. And yet this orthodox believer in God, this preacher of the Gospel of salvation through faith in Christ alone, is also a War-Lord, who regards the sword as a Divine instrument for the establishment of what he characterizes as the kingdom of God on earth. Surely, neither Dr. Hutton nor any other British divine has any more right to call the Kaiser, who justifies all the horrors and atrocities of war on the German side, than he and his representatives have to call us a nation of hypocrites. Doubtless there are hypocrites in both countries, but the fact remains that in neither nation has the belief in God, with its varied and often conflicting implications, acted as a moral equivalent for war.

Dr. Hutton's teaching, when we ponder its implications, throws anything but a favourable light upon the character of the God in whom he urges us, with such strenuous insistence, to believe. Take the following illuminating passage:—

> There will be wild thrusts from our past life, belches upwards of an unholy steam from the central fire of our natural origins; there will be flashes of the ideal from the future, memories of loved ones who have gone from us, high words, delicate insights, an army of the living God and an army of the Prince of the Power of the Air—these will always be about us making our life a good fight of faith.

That extract embodies a considerable amount of truth, on the assumption that life is an evolutionary process, conducted under strictly natural laws; but our distinguished divine, while evidently accepting the theory of evolution, is of opinion that its course has been powerfully affected by the action of two outside armies, the one friendly and the other hostile. On the one hand there has been the army of God, on the other, the army of Satan, in violent conflict with each other, and eventually producing the mixed results described in that quotation. How did the Prince of the Powers of the Air come to be? Was he also an evolutionary product in some mystic supernatural sphere, or was he created out of nothing in order that God's life, too, might be full of bracing struggle? It seems that every now and then God steps aside from the conflict to watch what progress it makes without him. Does such a conception reflect credit upon the wisdom and goodness of the Lord who is said to sit as king for ever? As for us, we prefer to be in the hands of physical and chemical laws which operate, if unconsciously, with perfect impartiality, and under the operation of which has arisen,

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at last, that degree and quality of intelligence which, if allowed fair play, and not handicapped by alleged supernatural interferences, will socialize and moralize human life to such an extent that wars, even hostile competitions, shall cease for ever.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Decline of Devotional Literature.

The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away, like a northern iceberg floating into southern seas.—*G. W. Foote.*

WE hear much of the output of books, of the glut of the literary market; but with all the activity of authors there is one department of literature which shows a falling-off. During the past half century a great and continuous decline has taken place in the production of religious books. To what is this decline due? There are several reasons; the first, and the most potent, being the indifference of the reading public to religion. The tide of religion is now at the ebb. In his day, Macaulay noted the singular periodic manner in which the British Public took up questions of religion and morality. John Bull no longer remembers that he has a soul to save—indeed, he is indifferent as to whether he has a soul or not. Meanwhile, he reads novels and newspapers, especially newspapers. Another reason is the lower mentality of the clergy. There are no longer any great ecclesiastics; and it certainly cannot be said that the Churches show intellect in the production of religious books. Not for present-day clerics are the rolling harmonies of Jeremy Taylor, the subtle cadences of Milton, the chastened utterances of Newman. They cannot even echo Baxter or Bunyan. There is not an original idea in their books. Everything is second-hand and threadbare, and the paucity of the prose emphasizes the emptiness of their heads. Yet another cause of the decline of religious literature is the growth of Freethought. The ordinary man is no longer content to be blindly led by the parson. The force of Puritanism has spent itself; it no longer inspires, but merely irritates.

The decline began a half century ago. About that time there was a real and unmistakable interest in devotional literature. The Rev. J. R. Macduff rivalled the foremost novelists in popularity. The sale of his works was to be reckoned in hundreds of thousands. He was, in fact, the Dickens of Orthodoxy. For years Dean Goulburn's *Thoughts on Personal Religion* had an annual sale of many thousands, and Bishop Oxenden's works were equally popular. Newman Hall's publications ran into a sale of millions. Spurgeon's sermons sold like hot rolls, and Dr. Joseph Parker had hosts of admirers who bought his books eagerly. In looking through the old publishers' catalogues, one is surprised at the number of works of a devotional nature. Familiar as household words a generation or so ago, how many of these are known even by name to the present generation? The greater part of the Victorian era was, indeed, a golden age for religious books.

Not only was there a constant demand for the works of individual authors but for such libraries as *The Biblical Cabinet*, *Sacred Classics*, *The Christian Family Library*, and many other series. The taste for such books has [illegible] over. Nor is it to be supposed that fresh life [illegible] given to works like Gladstone's *Impregnable* [illegible] *Holy Scripture*, which served a temporary purpose, and, having served it, have passed from men's minds. In the many volumes on Victorian literature which have appeared no mention is made of numberless religious or devotional books which were once thought indispensable in tens of thousands of homes. The circumstance is highly significant, and illustrates with startling clearness the changed attitude of the reading-public towards religious literature.

The real meaning of this change is that the Christian superstition is crumbling. Everything eventually crumbles which is not true. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism, as at the present time. Never have men attended churches and chapels so little; never have they attended hospital and charity meetings so assiduously. Christianity is in the melting-pot, and Secularism is permeating everywhere. The Christian religion no longer satisfies. No faith can satisfy which is found out. 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 vibrant and triumphant note of the future: "To the service of man." Based on fables, supported by brute force, trading on ignorance, the Christian religion at length finds the conscience of the race rising above it. The voice of reason has been a still small voice, sometimes almost inaudible, though never quite stilled; but now it is swelling into a volume of sound which will overwhelm the din of sects and threats of priests.

MIMNERMUS.

Who Killed Christ?

A JOLLY jack-tar came on shore and went to church for the first time in his life. The sermon was on the Crucifixion. The preacher waxed eloquent on the sufferings of Jesus and the frightful sin of his "murderers." Indignation glowed in the bosom of the honest salt, who felt his fingers itching to thrash the wretches. The next day he was looking in a shop window at a figure of Jesus on the cross. "Poor young fellow," he muttered, "poor young fellow! What a damned shame! Just then a Jew came up and looked into the window. "Do you know *him?*" asked the sailor, pointing to the crucifix.

"Oh, yes," answered the Jew, "dat's Jesus."

"Oh, you know him do you," said Jack, "then take that," giving the Jew a blow which knocked him down.

Picking himself up, and chafing his sore limbs, Mr. Isaacs asked, "Vat's dat for?"

"Ain't you a Jew," said Jack, "and didn't you crucify Jesus?"

"Oh," exclaimed Mr. Isaacs, "dat vas 'undreds of years ago."

"Was it?" said Jack. "Well, never mind, it's all the same; I only heard of it yesterday."

That unsophisticated salt acted like the vast body of Christians, who persecuted the Jews century after century for the alleged crime of killing Christ, and hardened their hearts against the evidences of his divinity. It is no exaggeration to say that the sufferings inflicted on the Jews by the disciples of the religion of love form the most appalling chapter in history. No ignominy, no outrage was neglected. They were degraded, disabled, robbed, tortured, and butchered wholesale. Yet they always remained obstinate; their miseries never converted them; and who can help thinking, with Diderot, that the grand miracle of history is not the Resurrection, but the incredulity of the Jews?

We deny altogether that the Jews did kill Christ. We say that he was actually executed by the Roman governor, and virtually killed by himself. His death was a species of suicide. His fate might have been averted by the slightest exercise of common sense.

Had Jesus been killed by the Jews, he would have been stoned. That was their method of execution, as may be seen in many passages of the Old Testament. Indeed, in the early part of his ministry, his countrymen *did* try to stone him, but he escaped from them; and Stephen, the protomartyr, whose death is recorded in Acts, was killed in that way. Being

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crucified, Jesus was, of course, executed by the Roman law, as is further attested by the report of his trial. He was not even executed for a religious offence. It is perfectly true that he was charged before the High Priest with blasphemy, but the accusation had to be changed when he was brought before Pilate. The Roman governor looked upon "blasphemy!" and such cries as mere squabbles between Jewish sects. Like Gallio, he cared for none of these things, and he would have discharged Jesus had there been no other indictment. But he was bound to try Jesus on the charge of sedition, although he certainly did his best to get the poor fellow acquitted. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" asked Pilate, with mingled pity and derision. Jesus answered, "Thou sayest," which was simply pleading guilty. Setting himself up as King in a Roman province was sedition. He may have been unaware of the fact, but Pilate could not help that, and the rash enthusiast paid the natural penalty of his ignorance or his presumption. Indeed, the very inscription on the cross clearly showed the nature of the offence for which he perished. Surely, then, it is idle to make the Jews responsible for his want of gumption. That he had enemies, and powerful enemies, we have no doubt; and his conduct in Jerusalem before his arrest was calculated to exasperate instead of conciliating them; but they could not have compassed his death, except by assassination, if he had not played into their hands in a manner which can only be understood on the theory that he was half insane, or that his faculties were paralysed by danger.

Suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that the Jews did kill Jesus. Suppose he was put out of the way, not only by a powerful party at Jerusalem, but by the unanimous vote of his countrymen. We still insist that they were not to blame, if Jesus and they both believed (and we have *his* assent) that the law and the prophets declared the will of God. He had set himself up to be God, saying that he and the Father were one. Such language was shocking to an orthodox Jew, and on consulting his Scriptures he found the clearest instructions from Jehovah how to deal with the utterer of this blasphemy. God's order is contained in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy. The words are perfectly plain. A child could understand them:—

> If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Now we should like to know the ground on which Christians deny the propriety of the Jews carrying out this sanguinary order. The Old Testament, as well as the New, is a part of the Christian Bible, and it is the same God throughout, from the curse on Adam and Eve to the brimstone lake of Revelation. Freethinkers may object to the whole business, but how can a Christian do so without the grossest hypocrisy? The supposition that Jesus was God only makes the case worse, for then he was literally dished in his own sauce. *He* told the Jews how to serve those who sought to divide their attachment to Jehovah; *he* prescribed the stoning to death; and *he* was the chief victim of his own brutality. His own curses came home to roost. It was a splendid case of poetical justice. Were Jesus very God of very God, the Crucifixion was a play of "Tit for Tat, or the Biter Bit."

(The late) G. W. Foote.

To Deum Laudamus.

Praise God
Whose all-wise world economy
Caused rain to fall upon the sea!

G. H. B.

Acid Drops.

Teetotalism brings its trials to the ritualistic Christians. One of the American States—Oklahoma—has prohibited the use of alcoholic liquor of any kind or for any purpose. But, as the *Church Times* says: "Bread and wine are the matter of the sacrament, and by wine is meant the fermented juice of the grape, and not any substitute or makebelief." So the Oklahoma Christians are in a quandary, and some priests have been "driven to the necessity of conveying wine surreptitiously into the State." With this smuggling the *Church Times* sympathises, because, as it remarks, the forbidding of all wine involves "dishonour to our Lord." We wonder what the other Christians who have argued that the Bible forbids the use of strong drink think of this? Perhaps they will feel towards "our Lord" as the old Scotch lady did when she was told that Jesus walked about on the Sabbath. "Mebbe he did," she replied; "but I think none the better of him for it."

At the National Free Church Council, a Baptist Army Chaplain, the Rev. D. J. Riley, said the soldiers were out of touch with the Churches. They did not like the narrow views of the Churches, nor their attitude to amusements. This does not promise well for the delayed revival of religion.

Christians have quaint ideas of getting labour cheap, but the following advertisement in an Essex newspaper is quite noteworthy in its way: "Leigh-on-Sea Baptist Chapel. Wanted organist, Christian, no salary, honorarium given. Write Secretary.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley is getting quite an adept at tickling the ears of the groundlings. Writing in the *Sunday Pictorial*, he declares "you can't conduct a big war on the cold and hopeless principles of a blank religious negation. Fighting and Faith must go together." Mr. Bottomley might have learned that Napoleon and Frederick the Great were both Freethinkers, and they conducted big wars successfully. Fighting and Faith do go together, unhappily, for the simple reason that religious folk are always quarrelling.

The Rev. Pedr Williams, after some years' sojourn at Durban, Natal, has now, in response to a Divine call, settled down at Swansea, where the rest of the clergy, with his valuable help, will "endeavour to uplift the banner of morality." Poor old Swansea! Although it has been crowded with churches and chapels for countless generations, it is only now, with the advent of a new minister, that it is going to "endeavour to uplift the banner of morality." We suppose that this is tantamount to a notice to quit to the wicked Freethinkers.

In spite of all appearances to the contrary, British Christians still profess to believe in the justice as well as goodness of the Governor of the Universe. After a very long silence on the subject, the Prime Minister expressed that belief before the Free Church Council the other day. And yet, though we claim to be fighting for God and his righteousness, the Germans unblushingly declare that, thanks to his direct aid, they have won a glorious victory in the East, and are on the eve of the final one in the West.

There is every likelihood of a bad attack of caterpillars on fruit trees this year says the Board of Agriculture. Maybe the Archbishop of Canterbury will draw up a dainty form of prayer to meet the situation.

A daily paper referred recently to the former pastor of Newington Tabernacle as Charles *Adam* Spurgeon, whereas the name should have been Haddon. Had the old Boanerges been alive he would have consigned that editor to the place so often mentioned in his sermons.

Bold advertisements asking for support for the new Education Bill have been published in the newspapers, and stress is laid on the inefficiency of the present system. Nothing is said, however, of the wasting of the time of the scholars by

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teaching such nonsense as the stories of *Noah's Ark*, *Jonah and the Whale*, and other Biblical legends.

An elderly woman stated at Clerkenwell County Court that she caught a cold through holy water being sprinkled upon her at the time of an air-raid.

Dean Inge has told us why women wear hats in church. Speaking at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street, he referred to the Bible passage in which Saint Paul exhorted women to cover their heads in churches. That could only have been on account of the angels, the Dean said, for Paul thought that the passions of those spirits might otherwise have been excited. Oh, those naughty bogeys!

Parsons are very hard driven in order to attract congregations nowadays, and a North Country vicar announces special services for allotment holders, and even invites workers to come in their working clothes. Perhaps the vicar selects suitable subjects for his addresses, such as "The Garden of Eden," and "Eve and the Apple," and "Ezekiel's Cookery."

Sometimes the men of God give their game away with delightful simplicity. The other evening, a Wesleyan minister was suddenly called upon to lead a crowded audience in prayer. He was fluent, eloquent, and very much to the point. He bewailed the miseries, sins, and sufferings of life, and expatiated, in moving tones, upon the horrors and abominations of the War. Then he paused, and significantly added: "And yet, O Lord, thou art doing thy very best for this world of thine." What a compliment to the God of holiness and love!

The Rev. Dinsdale Young, one of the most popular of Wesleyan ministers, is an invincible optimist. In a lecture he assures his hearers that, in every department of life, "the best is yet to be." We agree, but repudiate Mr. Young's limitation—"for Christians only." For Christians the best has already been. The Golden Age of Christianity is a thing of the past. The reverend gentleman admits that this is true, if we judge only by appearances; but he pins his faith in the prophetic word and omnipotent love of Christ, both of which history has completely falsified. We believe "the best is yet to be," because Supernaturalism is passing, whilst Nature and Humanism are coming to their own.

The *Daily Express* declares that Mormons are active in Liverpool, and that 384 women missionaries have lately been appointed to Great Britain. There should be a boom in Joe Smith's religion shortly.

The dear clergy will not fight, but they are up in arms concerning the *maisons tolerees* in France and elsewhere. Perhaps they find it difficult to reconcile the idea with "a holy war."

To meet the increased cost of living, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have decided to raise the stipends of all incumbents of parishes with a population of 300 or more, and £35,000 will be so spent. The incomes of curates has also been dealt with. The Commissioners are keen business men, and know that reliance on prayer alone is mere folly.

Among the 30,000 men at Camp Lewis, near Tacoma, Wash., 113 different creeds are represented. Nearly one-fourth are Roman Catholics, and rather more than one-seventh Methodists. Baptists come next, then Presbyterians, Campbellites, and Congregationalists. There are not far from 200 Freethinkers, 153 of whom report themselves to be Atheists. Eight take the name of Freethinkers, 6 of Agnostics, 36 of Infidels. There is one Materialist, also one Spiritualist. One man is a Fatalist, one is Equal Rights. The Mormons have a contingent of 1,114, and a peculiar people called New Sectarians (possibly an error for non sectarians) supply 2,616. New Thought gets mention with 6, the same as the Holy Rollers. An Occultist, a Yoge, a Swedenborgian, a New Idealist and a "Rosechucionse" (Rosicrucian?) are counted. The two Confucians, it is presumed, are Chinese, and the nine Buddhists, East Indians. The Theosophists supply a troop of 17. The way the denomination of soldiers is arrived at in some instances is peculiar. One man at Camp Sherman in Ohio relates that when an officer asked him what his religion was he replied that he had none. "What is the church in your neighbourhood?" was the next question, and "Methodist" was the reply. "Then," said the officer, "you are a Methodist," and he stands so recorded.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Church of England is determined that the Fancy Religionists are not to have things all their own way, and the rivalry between the Church Army and the Y.M.C.A. is very pronounced. At the new and luxurious Church Army Club, at Marble Arch, titled ladies act as waitresses, and are daintily dressed in pink. Will the Nonconformists respond with pink dominoes?

The following is given in the *Daily Mail* of March 21 as an actual experience of a Church Parade and its sequel:—

> "Church of England, stand fast! Wesleyans, fall out on the left!"
>
> It was Sunday at the training depot, and the sergeant in command was forming parties to march to church or chapel. I hesitated.
>
> "What are you?"
>
> "Congregational."
>
> "You go with the Wesleyans. You—next man—a Baptist? You do the same. What are you lot?"
>
> "Presbyterians," replied one of a file of Scotsmen who were fading rearward.
>
> As there was no church handy approximating to this denomination, this move was checkmate.
>
> "All right. You five dismiss."
>
> The following Sunday the Scottish sect had trebled its adherents. So they were put on fatigues for the afternoon, which had the effect of shrinking next Sunday's Presbyterians to five.

So much for the religious spirit of the Army!

The Rev. Llewellyn Jones, of Newport, Mon., thinks that "we *may* be on the edge of a great Religious Revival"; but we may *not*. We think, on the contrary, that we are not only on the edge, but in the midst, of a great Religious Decline, a decline that has been more or less steadily going on for a hundred years, and which is destined to continue until this baneful superstition has entirely vanished.

We wonder who the tame scientist is the Government keeps on band for consultation! The other day we saw an announcement from the Ministry of Food that "scientific opinion is unanimous that extra rations are not needed for brain workers, because a man does not need more food because he works with his brain than he would need if he were not working." Wonderful! Brain-working does not use up energy; it makes no demand upon nerve tissue. Something is being created out of nothing at last! The age of miracles is *not* past. But we should like the name of that Government scientist. The only explanation we can see is that the statement was issued after a careful examination some of the Government offices.

Rev. H. P. Denison, Prebendary of Wells, appears to have got very near to the truth in a recent book, entitled *The Making of Gods*. He remarks that "Movements towards political liberty have always coincided with the failure to recognize just dues as belonging to God," and also that "The democratic movement is always marked by the revolt against the authority of God." We should not have put it quite that way, but should have said that as people put aside the ideas of the authority of God and dues to God, democracy and liberty develops. Still, it is very near the truth—and from a parson, too!

Rev. Douglas Roper, of Norwich, was charged with having broken into Heningham Church and stealing from the offertory-box. The accused said "it was wise he should make no observation," and was remanded. We presume that is what is meant by maintaining a "dignified silence."

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 31, Pontycymmer; April 7, Falkirk; April 14, Liverpool; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 28, Nuneaton.

H. A. FELL.—Too lengthy for our columns. Thanks, all the same.

R. M.—The use of human excrement in early religious ceremonies is well known. One writer—J. G. Bourke—has written a large volume on the subject. The title of the work is *Scatologic Rites*.

F. L. POLAND (Ohio).—Paper is being sent. We have many readers in the United States, and after the War we hope to properly organize our sales on your side the Atlantic. There is no reason why the *Freethinker* should not have ten times the subscribers it has in America.

R. E. MASON.—We have handed on the information you give.

H. C. HEBLES.—We cannot place the reference at the moment. Can you give us the date of the article. We may then be able to find what you want?

A. MILLAR.—Hope to see you when we travel North.

A. C. APTED.—We may deal with Mr. Kidd's book later. We wish you success in your new departure. Have you anything in view?

G. RULE.—Thanks for suggestion, but there would be nothing saved in altering the *size* of the *Freethinker*, unless the pages were exactly halved.

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 lectures to-day (March 31) at Pontycymmer, South Wales. The meetings will be in the afternoon and evening, and a good rally of Freethinkers from the surrounding districts is anticipated. Mr. Cohen will be glad to meet as many of these as possible, with a view to future propaganda. Time and place of lectures will be found in the Guide Notices.

We have received a number of encouraging letters concerning the enforced reduction in the size of the *Freethinker*, for which we tender our thanks. But some of our correspondents appear to be under the impression that we are "downhearted." We beg to assure them that is not the case, even though the burden and the worry increases weekly. We do not, of course, like the change; but we held on longer than nearly everyone else, and the change we have made is less than that made by any other paper—particularly those of a propagandist character. We are facing the future quite cheerfully, but we recognize that the great thing is to keep the *Freethinker* going. We think we may say, without undue glorification, that the *Freethinker* has kept militant Freethought alive during the War, and that its continued existence is vital to the future of the Movement. In this we are certain our readers will agree with us.

While on the subject of paper it is significant that while the Government long ago fixed a maximum price for the sale of waste paper to the paper makers, they left the price at which the makers might sell paper to the public quite open. That is, on the one hand it guaranteed the makers against paying an excessive price for materials, and then said to the manufaoturers "You may charge the public as much as you like." And they have done it. Fortunes have been made in the paper trade, and some makers have asked prices that represented sheer exploitation. And, as was to be expected, it is the poor, struggling papers that have been hardest hit.

A very able and sympathetic address was given before the North London Branch by Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman, on "Divorce Law Reform," on Sunday last. Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman is Secretary of the Divorce Law Reform Union. N. S. S. Branches would do well to invite her to address them on what is certainly one of the most important questions of to-day.

The new Manchester Branch brought its winter's work to a very successful close on Sunday last with two lectures by Mr. Cohen. Nearly a hundred members have been enrolled, and all are in the best of spirits over the work done, in anticipation of what will be done when the work recommences in the autumn. The sale of literature has been excellent at all the meetings, and this means a very real enforcement of the message delivered from the platform.

All the committee and members of the Branch are loud in their praise of the industry and ability of the Branch Secretary, Mr. H. Black, and at the evening meeting Mr. Cohen was asked to present the Secretary, who was also the chairman of the meeting, with a fountain pen as a mark of the esteem in which all hold his services. The presentation came as a complete surprise to Mr. Black, but was welcomed for the spirit in which the present was made. We congratulate the Branch on having so efficient a Secretary, and can heartily add our own appreciation of his work, and also of the spirit in which the Branch is working. While that continues success is assured.

Mr. Percy Wilde gave a much appreciated lecture before the South London Branch on the "Descent of Man" with lantern illustrations. We understand that Mr. Wilde is willing to lecture on the same subject with the same illustrations before other Societies. Those who require particulars should write Miss Vance for particulars.

Is not the time come when the powerful countries of Europe should reduce those military armaments which they have so sedulously raised? Is not the time come when they should be prepared to declare that there is no use in such overgrown establishments? What is the advantage of one power greatly increasing its army and navy? Does it not see that, if it possesses such increase for self-protection and defence, the other powers will follow its example? The consequence of this state must be, that no increase of *relative* strength will accrue to any one power, but there must be a universal consumption of the resources of every country in military preparations. *They are, in fact, depriving peace of half its advantages, and anticipating the energies of war whenever they may be required.* I do not mean to advocate any romantic notion of each nation trusting with security the professions of its neighbours; but if each country were to commune with itself and ask—What is at present the danger of foreign invasion compared to the danger of producing dissatisfaction and discontent, and curtailing the comforts of the people by undue taxation? The answer must be this—That the danger of aggression is infinitely less than the danger of those sufferings to which the present exorbitant expenditure must give rise.—*Sir Robert Peel.*

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The Queen of Night.

IV.

(Concluded from p. 182.)

SUSPENDED in space at a distance of a quarter of a million miles from our planet's surface, the orb of night tends constantly to fall towards the earth. But at a distance so great, in falling in the direction of the earth, the moon travels round it.

With a powerful telescope, the thousands of miles which separate us from our satellite are reduced to hundreds. This implies that, in the observatory, the lunar landscape is seen as if it were distant about 240 miles, and the objects on the moon's surface appear much as objects would be seen if viewed at the same distance with the unaided eye. Huge masses such as mountains, or broad expanses such as plains or dead oceans, may be rendered conspicuous, while a giant structure such as a cathedral would be visible; but smaller features elude observation. So far as direct observation informs us, the moon might teem with life without our knowledge. But there are other ways of determining the presence of organic bodies on the moon. Air and water are alike indispensable to the existence of floral and faunal entities on our globe. Therefore, in the absence of water and air on the lunar orb, the existence of life, at least as we know it, is completely precluded. Cogent reasons there are for thinking that, even if water be present on the moon's surface, it remains constantly congealed. Traces of water may possibly survive in the moon's interior; for, as the lunar world cooled down, its liquids penetrated the moon's mineral masses. But it is practically certain that the lunar surface is, and has been for ages, quite destitute of water.

The existence of a thin lunar atmosphere is still undecided; but if any atmosphere there be, it is so highly attenuated that no earthly organism could breathe in it. Gases environ Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and the other planets, while the solar orb itself is encompassed by an enormous atmosphere, although its constituents are widely different to the oxygen and nitrogen which so largely enter into the composition of our planet's envelope of air. In this respect, the moon seems distinctly different to all the other members of the solar system available for purposes of study. Aside from the circumstance that some astronomers have detected faint indications of the existence of gaseous substances in depressions on the lunar surface, there appears not the slightest evidence of any lunar atmosphere whatever. Certainly it could be urged that it is impossible to view a translucent envelope. But, in the presence of any atmospheric covering, various phenomena might justly be expected; yet, as these are all absent, the hypothesis of a lunar atmosphere meets with small acceptance.

As the moon wanders round our earth, it occasionally passes between our planet and a star. The star is thus occulted or eclipsed by the moon. When an occultation is predicted, the observer notes our satellite's approach to the star, and immediately the moon moves in front of it, the star is extinguished. But the star's disappearance is so sudden that the moment of extinction may be precisely determined. Now, it is obvious that were the moon encircled by an atmosphere, then a star could not be occulted with such startling suddenness. For, if a lunar atmosphere remotely resembling the earth's atmosphere in density existed, a star would steadily fade and become invisible before it reached the moon's edge. The faintest atmosphere would not only suffice to displace the star, but its appearance would be materially affected by refraction. Such phenomena as these, did they occur, could scarcely escape notice. Similarly, at times of solar eclipse, the lunar disc always appears clearly cut against that of the sun. And there are no traces of twilight on the lunar landscape, nor is there any softening at the shadows' edges, and both these effects would be observed if an atmosphere existed.

A world without water and destitute of any appreciable atmosphere is something entirely alien to us. The earth's mantle of air shields us from the scorching heat of the sun, and keeps the earth temperate during the night by hindering the rapid radiation into space of the warmth accumulated through the sunlit hours. But during the lunar day the solar rays make the moon's surface insufferably hot, although the heat is radiated away with great rapidity. The lunar night is pitilessly cold. The temperature of the moon in daytime probably attains our boiling point of water (212 deg. F.), while the frigidity of the night is probably twice as great as that of our polar regions.

Many superstitions are associated with the moon. In our Midland counties and elsewhere it is thought unlucky to kill pigs in the waning of the moon. Throughout Western Europe the belief is almost universal that the varying aspects of the moon affects the weather. But, as Dolmage reminds us, the moon is constantly changing during the whole of her monthly revolution. "Besides," he remarks,—

> the moon is visible over a great part of the earth *at the same moment*, and certainly all the places from which it can be seen, do not get the same weather. Further, careful observations, and records extending over the past 100 years and more, fail to show any reliable connection between the phases of the moon and the condition of the weather.

It may be interesting to anticipate the emotions of the aviator of the future were he to successfully accomplish a voyage to the moon. Our airless and desolate satellite is a world of endless calm. No sound breaks the silence, no rivers run, no changes of any kind occur. The solar rays strike down upon a wilderness of barren rocks, and black shadows shroud the valleys. The stern contrasts of this barren globe are utterly unrelieved. The craters of the moon would present a melancholy picture of former glory, and the prophet Jeremiah mourning amid the ruins of Jerusalem may, perhaps, serve as an earthly parallel of the feelings likely to overpower an imaginative and sympathetic terrestrial visitor as he surveyed the silent memorials of a once active orb.

The moon's weight is only about one-eightieth part of that of our planet, and therefore the weights of lunar objects would be merely one-sixth part of the weight they possess on our globe. If our adventurous airman were a man of twelve stone, his weight would be reduced to about two stone. He would be able to jump a twelve foot wall as readily as he vaulted a two-foot wall on earth. Buildings could securely rest on the moon were they six times the height of terrestrial structures without exercising any heavier strain on their foundations. We may, therefore, without wonder, regard the fact that lunar elevations attain an altitude exceeding our loftiest mountain peaks. Mount Everest is the mightiest of the earth's elevations, and reaches a height of 29,000 feet. Lunar mountains of this height are numerous, while in one range known as the Leibnitz mountains there are several peaks which soar aloft to nearly 30,000 feet. One majestic peak of this lunar range ascends to an elevation of 36,000 feet.

Still more remarkable are the extinct volcanoes of the moon. Their craters are sometimes many miles in diameter. Indeed, the enormous craters of the giant volcanoes form chasms 100 miles across. The earth's leading elevations are huge mountain masses such as the Andes and Himalayas. On the moon, however, the

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crater type is predominant, and in past times our satellite must have been the theatre of stupendous eruptions. Lunar craters to the number of 3,000 have been mapped already, and Professor Pickering assures us that there are more than 200,000 craters visible on that hemisphere which the moon displays to our planet. Unlike terrestrial volcanoes, those of the lunar orb lie in superficial depressions on its surface. But so immense is their diameter that a dozen of our largest volcanoes could be placed in one of the lunar rings or craters without filling it.

The height of the moon's mountains is determined by means of the shadows they cast. The length of a shadow is ascertained from the position of the sun. Shadows are at their shortest at noon, but the shadows lengthen as the sun descends to his rest. The altitudes of the lunar elevations are measured by first ascertaining the solar elevation above the horizon of the position occupied by the mountain. The shadow's length is then determined, and, consequently, the height of the object capable of casting a shadow of a given length in miles when the sun is situated at a certain position in the sky is easily established.

It has been scientifically known for several centuries that the moon is always present in the heavens in the form of a globe. Yet there are multitudes of people, even in our own enlightened Isles, who appear to imagine that the moon really increases and diminishes in size. It is true that Coleridge made his "Ancient Mariner" see a star lying within the horns of the crescent moon, and the idea that a star may be visible through what is in reality the dark body of the lunar orb, is still quite general even among "educated" citizens. Pictorial advertisements are sometimes displayed on the hoardings in which stars appear in that part of the sky where the opaque body of the moon is always present in a state of Nature. As the moon is sufficiently dense to eclipse the sun, it should be capable of blotting out the stars. It is a serious reproach to our modern educational methods that even the ancient Babylonians surmised that the moon's phases were caused by its illumined hemisphere emerging more and more into view as our satellite travelled through the heavens. This was also known in classic Greece, and Aristotle asserted that the moon was a dark object of spherical form lit up by the effulgence of the sun.

T. F. PALMER.

Tales of Our Times.

IV.

THE Cannibal King was at lunch when the German missionary was announced, but the latter, being no stranger, was graciously accorded an interview. He found the monarch squatting on a lion's skin with a huge dish of raw meat in front of him, and vigorously gnawing at a bone.

"Good afternoon," said the King cordially. "Take a mat and make yourself at home. Have a chop?"

"No, thanks," said the Missionary, eyeing the dish with some suspicion. "What I called to see your Majesty about is a rumour I have heard that you are getting up a war expedition against the Pongowongo tribe. Is there any truth in it?

"There is," answered the King. "Most of my fighting men have already assembled, and we start for Pongowongoland early next week."

"What are you going to fight for?"

"Meat," replied the King.

"Meat!" exclaimed the Missionary, again glancing at his Majesty's lunch with evident disfavour. "I should have thought that meat was about the last thing you needed."

"War-meat," explained the King: "the flesh of brave and powerful warriors slain in battle. You, of course, understand that we don't look upon war-meat merely as food. We regard it as a means of gaining strength, courage, and proficiency in war. The fact is that we Nyamnyams have experienced such a long period of peace that we are getting thoroughly slack. War and war-meat are absolutely necessary to maintain the strength, bravery, and all the heroic and manly virtues of a nation. A people that doesn't frequently engage in war is bound to degenerate and become weak, effeminate, and cowardly."

"There is certainly much truth in what you say," observed the Missionary, "and many soldiers and writers in my country would quite agree with you—except, perhaps, as regards the war-meat."

"We believe thoroughly in it," said the King, "though I am sorry to say my fighting men haven't tasted it for so long that I am beginning to be seriously doubtful of their courage. I, myself, feel that I am degenerating, though I try to keep up my old ferocity on a sort of make-shift diet. Now, what do you suppose this is that I am eating?"

"Haven't the least idea."

"Rhinoceros," said the King. "Now that you white men have killed all the lions in our country, the rhinoceros is the fiercest beast we have, but his flesh is, after all, a poor substitute for the real thing. Anyhow, *I* try my best, but old Whangbango, the General of my army, is becoming a regular slacker. He is practically a vegetarian now, and pretends that meat gives him indigestion. Fancy the Generalissimo of the Nyamnyam complaining of *indigestion!*"

"Deplorable," assented the Missionary. "But now, your Majesty, I want to make a suggestion to you. Instead of marching against the Pongowongos, why not make an alliance with them, and in co-operation with the troops of my august master the All-Highest, invade the British territories to the east of us? The great Kaiser intends to bring the whole of Africa under his dominion, and your Majesty's sound views on the advantages of war and the evils of peace—which are practically identical with those of our own great Von Bernhardi—mark you out as his natural ally. The Nyamnyams and the Pongowongos, numbering together, I understand, about a hundred thousand warriors, would be of great assistance in our coming campaigns; and when the conquest of Africa is completed, as it certainly will be in time, I can promise that your Majesty would be established as chief potentate on this continent under the gracious suzerainty of the All-Highest."

"It is a tempting proposal," said the King reflectively as he picked his teeth with a splinter of rhinoceros bone. "It would no doubt be a supreme honour to be chief potentate under your great Kaiser, and the conquest of all Africa certainly affords a prospect of unlimited war-meat. But I am afraid I cannot give you a definite answer just yet. Fact is, I can't quite see my warriors fighting side by side with the Pongowongos at such short notice, after we have been consistently fighting and eating each other for centuries. Besides, the Pongowongos already know of our intention to attack them, and have been mustering their fighting men as busily as we have, so I am afraid it is too late now for fraternizing. But after this little picnic is over there may be a chance of an alliance. The Nyamnyams and the Pongowongos are never so disposed towards friendliness as immediately after one of these little scraps, so that would be the time to try and put your proposal into practice, and I promise to do my best in the matter."

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After a few mutual compliments the interview came to an end, and next day the supposed Missionary—who was, by the way, no missionary at all, but a political agent in diguise—sent a despatch to the chief of the Secret Service Department in the Fatherland. In it he stated that the All-Highest's schemes for the conquest of Africa were progressing favourably, and that he had practically secured the alliance of a powerful and enlightened monarch who, despite a tendency to look at military questions from a rather gastronomic point of view, showed a quite intelligent grasp of the leading principles of German kultur.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Writers and Readers.

IN the first article of this series I mentioned that I would be glad to have any "relevant comments" on my remarks. The word "relevant" may have frightened those of my readers who stand in need of information which has no immediate relation to the subjects in hand. Let me say that I invite not only relevant comment, but also questions bearing upon literature, and the literary and historical aspects of Freethought. Where, in my opinion, the subjects suggested, or questions asked have a general interest, I shall take the opportunity of answering my correspondents through the paper, and where the interest is merely personal, I shall reply direct. The most pressing need of a paper whose attitude to life and thought is opposed to that of the majority of people, and depends so much upon moral courage, is the cultivation of a more intimate relation between writer and reader. The benefit, let me remark, is by no means on one side. The reader stands to profit by the wider experience of the writer, who will profit equally, if not more, by the suggestion of new points of view, and by the raising again of questions which, he thought, had been answered once for all.

* * * * *

A correspondent who writes me an interesting letter from "Somewhere in France" tells me that he shares my admiration for G. H. Lewes. He seems to have missed Lewes's little book on *The Spanish Drama*, and asks for information about it. It is a 12mo. volume of 253 pages, published by Charles Knight in 1846, and may not infrequently be picked up for sixpence on the bookstalls. Although written so long ago, it is still a good popular introduction to the subject. It deals in a bright and lively way with the origins and characteristics of the Spanish theatre, and then analyses at length the best plays of Lope de Vega (1562-1635) and Calderon (1600-1681). Lewes's same criticism is a rebound from the hyperbolical eloquence of the Schlegels who claimed to find Calderon more philosophical than Shakespeare, whose irreligious humanism had no solution for the problems of life. Calderon, a devout Catholic, and an Inquisitor, who would have cheerfully burnt heretics like our own Marlowe, is praised for solving the riddles of existence in terms of Catholic dogma. Surely the least expensive of solutions! In opposition to the German Romantic critics, for whose hazy metaphysics he had a robust contempt, Lewes stresses the contrast between the intellectual and moral ideals of the religious drama of Spain and the irreligious drama of Elizabethan England. In the one there is no attempt to portray character, human nature is looked at from the outside, the pivot of the drama being the play of external events, of mere intrigue. In the other it is pre-eminently the individual that counts; it is the complex mentality of Hamlet that converts a drama of murders and intrigue into a subtle presentment of human life. Another point Lewes insists upon is the ethical contrast. Homicide, adultery, perjury, and other unsocial actions, are mere venial offence for the Spanish dramatist; the one unpardonable crime is denial of the deity. In Calderon's *Devotion to the Cross* there is a typical religious scoundrel named Ennio. "He recounts," says Lewes,

> a few exploits which have distinguished him, such as the murder of an old Hidalgo and the abduction of the daughter; stabbing another Hidalgo in his nuptial chamber and carrying off his wife. He sought refuge in a convent, and seduced one of the nuns. This apex of his villainy revealed to him the existence of his only virtue. He has a virtue, and one popular enough to cover a multitude of sins. His seduction of the nun stung him with remorse, and the first pangs of conscience he had ever felt. This glimpse of the true faith saved him. The terror of the offended Church and tribute to her awful power is the cause of his salvation.

* * * * *

Yet there is the lyrical side of Calderon's genius to balance his want of the higher objectivity. The gorgeous and luxurial imaginary, the irredescent colours, the subtle sound-patterns did not appeal to the somewhat pedestrian taste of Lewes. If any reader wants a sympathetic study of Calderon as a poet he will find it in Archbishop Trench's *An Essay on the Life and Genius of Calderon* (2nd edition, 1888). But, better still, because to read a book is always preferable to reading about it, he will turn to Shelley's translation of parts of *The Wonder-working Magician*, and to Edward Fitzgerald's *Six Dramas of Calderon Freely Translated* (1853). He will there find material which will help him to appreciate the truth of Lewes's indictment of the Roman faith as a hindrance to dramatic truth. He will also see what it is in Calderon that aroused the enthusiasm of Byron, Shelley, and Goethe.

* * * * *

One of the natural results of periods of great mental and emotional stress is a revival of the grosser forms of superstition. It cropped up everywhere in the Napoleonic period. A belief in "spooks," the communication of the dead with the living, is nowadays the unphilosophical side of a tendency to discredit reason in favour of instinct or intuition. An unconsciously amusing instance of this new necromancy is giving our ready journalists a chance of spreading themselves in non-committal praise or censure. An architect and archæologist, a Mr. F. B. Bond, has just published a book called *The Gate of Remembrance* (Oxford: Blackwell). It is the history of a psychological ("spookological" would be a better word) experiment which led to the discovery of the Edgar Chapel of Glastonbury. The chapel, I am assured by sceptical archæologists, might easily have been discovered without the assistance of monastic "spooks," for its position in relation to the main building is precisely what one would have expected from other early English structures. The chapel is mentioned in early documents, and there appears to be little doubt that Mr. Bond would have excavated where he did even if he had had no ghostly instructions. The "spooks," I am afraid, were worked in to sell the book, which, as a mere archæological monograph, would have attracted only the antiquarian specialist.

* * * * *

The method is interesting, and seems to have been something like this. The business is done by two persons who are either adepts in necromancy or practical jokers. On the whole, I am inclined to think that the book is a rather heavy joke; but mine, I may say, is not the general opinion. One of the persons is a specialist in archæology, with a knowledge of every fact about the Abbey; the other is an automatic writer, a spiritualistic medium. The operator, as it were, sends out a spiritual wireless, calling for help to discover the Edgar Chapel. The message is received by some monkish "spooks" who had been attached to the Abbey, and they are glad of an opportunity to talk on a subject they have at heart. Sometimes the ghostly monks are out in their reckoning, especially with regard to measurements, but correct themselves wken sharply taken up by the operator. The unfortunate thing is that they do not tell Mr. Bond anything he did not know before; but, of course, there is no reason why they shouldn't, and an intelligent "spook" with exclusive knowledge of the subject could relieve us of no small part of our ignorance. And another objection to ghostly communications is that you may get on to a jocular spirit, who will amuse himself by pulling your leg. Yet there are any number of people who read this "psychical" rubbish with bated breath, and who groan with horror if you suggest a hoax.

* * * * *

Still, the method is one that might be used with effect if one could only get on to the right sort of spook. If Mr. J. M. Robertson, with the help of a medium, could have a long conversation with Robert Greene, George Peele, or

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Christopher Marlowe, he would be able to re-write his book on *Titus Andranicus*, and would settle the question of the Doubtful Plays once for all. The ingenuous reader will at once see that the method only needs to be applied to produce the most startling results.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Correspondence.

CONSCIOUS VILLAINY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I always look forward with such pleasurable anticipation to "Views and Opinions," which I invariably read more than once, and sometimes more than twice—and never fail to find stimulating—that I may, I hope, be pardoned a word of criticism on the first paragraph, in the issue of the *Freethinker* for March 17. The Editor says:—

> In judging the evils current in any state of society, there is always a tendency to consider the class that profits from their existence as deliberately and consciously perpetuating them. This view, however, involves a totally false estimate of the quality of the social forces and of human nature. Conscious villainy is not a powerful factor in human affairs. The number who can plainly say, "Evil, be thou my good," is never more than a very small minority. Paradoxical as it may sound, deliberate and conscious villainy implies a degree of *moral* courage possessed by few, etc.

As a holder of the view which, the Editor declares, involves a "totally false estimate of the quality of the social forces and of human nature," I respectfully beg that my dissent may be recorded. I could not love our paper less, loved I not Freethought more.

I may not, of course, be right; it may be that there is some perverse residual religious element in my bones; but if I am wrong, I should like to be convinced of it. Constitutionally, the Editor differs from many of us in one very material respect. He never was a Christian. This may enable him to exercise a judgment more detached, and more impersonal and philosophical, than is possible to ex-Christians; but I venture to think that the observation and experience of very many will endorse my opinion, which is that the Editor has "got the wrang soo by the lug," or, as they say in Aberdeen (varying the metaphor), "tittit the vrang towie," this time.

I can understand it may be argued that lack of intellectual perception takes away consciousness and deliberation from villainy; but I should require very clear evidence to satisfy me that the class that profits from the existence of the evils current in society are such intellectual moles as acceptance of the Editor's proposition would condemn them to be. Villains who feel the need of religion betray their consciousness of the villainy of their depredations by their varying attitudes under varying conditions:—

> When the devil was ill the devil a monk would be;
> When the devil was well the devil a monk was he.

A religious person cannot escape the admission that evil is "ordained" or "permitted" by his deity for some mysterious "purpose." It is no disproof of consciousness and deliberation in villainy that the villains, because of the opportunities furnished by wealth and comfort, engage in social activities of different kinds. Indeed, these activities are generally directed to the buttressing and perpetuation of conditions, institutions, and a system under which villainy in different forms is legalized and legally protected. Social pirates, plunderers, and profiteers are out to keep "evil" as far away from themselves as they possibly can. Divinely ordained evil is for the "other fellows." And society has sustained great loss by the enforced inactivity of many potentially useful individuals who are the victims of adverse conditions inflicted by the evils current in our state of society.

No doubt there is to conventional minds difficulty in separating and distinguishing activities which are purely religious and activities which are purely secular. But to the professional religionist all secular activities which are not sanctioned by, and do not subserve the interests of, religion are valueless. Nay, they are in his estimation, positively hurtful. And yet the professional religionist can find justification for any kind of villainy so long as it subserves religious interests (*cf.* the case of Rahab the harlot). How can we say there is no deliberate hypocrisy in the attitude of the religious man, who has had the benefits of a good, all-round secular education, and takes this course? We have even known of clergymen who banned with one hand what they blessed with the other. The most eloquent clerical advocate of prohibition of alcoholic liquor does not refuse to accept pay partly contributed by brewers, distillers, and publicans.

My point is that professional religionists *consciously and deliberately* dose the common people with their narcotics. They are thus as the henchmen of the governing and wealthy classes of society *deliberately and consciously* trying to blind the poor to the injustices from which they suffer. So long as the poor majority are content to believe that all is for the best in this best of possible worlds, what object has the rich minority in trying to do anything to bring about radical changes? That minority may engage in social activities, but it is all *camouflage*. These activities are *consciously and deliberately* directed not towards effecting fundamental changes, but towards maintaining the *status quo*.

Finally, I demur to the suggestion that deliberate and conscious villainy implies a degree of *moral* courage possessed by few. Why should such courage be required by any one whose villainies are not punishable by any legal penalties?

IGNOTUS.

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.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Kells, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beevor Street): Saturday Night at 7, Business and Reading.

NUNEATON, GEORGE ELIOT BRANCH (The Palace, Queen's Road): 6.30, Mr. E. Clifford Williams, "Agnosticism and the Argument from Design."

PONTYCYMMER, SOUTH WALES (Public Hall): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 2.30, "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?"; Evening, "Do the Dead Live?"

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea): J. C. Thomas, B Sc. ("Keridon"), 3, "Lessons of the War—Industrial, Social, and Religious"; 7, "The Return of the Gnostic, or the New Epoch of God-making."

HARRY BOULTER, Practical Tailor, has removed from Old Premises to 5 BRUNSWICK PLACE (Junction of East Road and City Road, N. 1; near Dawson's). All Freethinkers welcome. Moderate Prices.

WANTED.—*Brimstone Ballads* (Mackenzie), also Taxil's *La Vie de Jesus* and *La Bible Amusante*. Good Prices given.—X Y 2, *Freethinker* Office.

FOR SALE.—*Encyclopædia Britannica* and other books forming part of L/C. Evans' Library.—EVANS, "Talsarn," Palmers Green, N. 13.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

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To South African Residents, SETTLERS, AND TRAVELLERS.

READERS of th *Freethinker* and sympathisers with its cause will alw ys be welcome to call on or correspond with the following;—

Names for the above list are requested, and will be published from time to time free of charge.

Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—*i.e.*, South African Information Department.

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Pamphlets.

By G. W. Foote.

BIBLE AND BEER. Price 1d., postage ½d.
MY RESURRECTION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ½d.
THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. Price 1d., postage ½d.
THE MOTHER OF GOD. With Preface. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By Chapman Cohen.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.
WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and the National Crisis.—The Editor	205
The Christ-Myth.—J. T. Lloyd	206
Francis Thompson.—Mimnermus	207
Obiter Dicta.—William Repton	208
Mr. Maskelyne and the Spirits.—W. Mann	211
The Sons of God.—G. W. Foote	213
The Tenement and the Towers.—Le Miserable	213
Taste.—Ignotus	214

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and the National Crisis.

However grave the situation may be, at home or abroad, nothing seems strong enough to stop the tomfoolery of the Churches. At the beginning of the year we had the stupendous farce of another day of national prayer—under royal patronage. This was followed by an immediate series of disasters—a week's list of which we supplied at the time. A few days ago we had the opening of the new German offensive, which has certainly exposed this country to a graver danger than has threatened it for some time—if not graver than has ever before faced it. German and British have officially appealed to the same God for help, and, judging by results, he has favoured the former. If the German Armies have not done more, if their success has not been more pronounced, the credit must be placed to the obstinate courage, the determination, and the sacrifice of the men of the Allied Forces. They have done what "the God of Righteousness" has failed to do. And if we have to offer prayers of thankfulness to anyone, it should be to them.

* * *

Prayers for Victory.

For Easter week another orgy of prayer was advised —or ordered—by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Free Churches have endorsed the suggestion. We are to rely upon the Lord, we are to "pray to him for victory." Does anyone seriously believe that a week of prayer will have the least effect on the issue? Is the general confidence—a confidence which we share—that horrible as the slaughter now is, and however regrettable the forcing back of the Allied lines may be, victory for Germany is a practical impossibility, is that confidence based upon the help of God, or upon a calm survey of the quantity and quality of the opposing forces? Everyone knows the truth. We do not, in taking stock of the Allied resources, take their prayers or God's help into account. We count men, money, munitions, courage, resolution—everything but religion. The Archbishop of Canterbury says we are to pray "that the blood of our dearest and most honoured shall not have been spilt in vain." But the real question for the Archbishop to answer is, why this innocent blood shall have been spilt at all? God's justice is not vindicated by using innocent blood as a cement for building a better social structure. That is an impeachment of his care. A God who so manages a world that the innocent suffer—even though their descendants benefit—and in which the guilty flourish—even though *their* descendants are punished—is revolting to every sane notion of right and wrong.

* * *

Man Power and the Clergy.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the German offensive means a fresh demand upon the resources of the nation. Peace is farther off than ever while one side is pursuing what appears a victorious career. But we observe that there are two sources of help that still remain untapped. The first is the application of the Military Service Act to the clergy. It is little short of a scandal that while military service is demanded from all others, a whole class should be declared exempt. If we were really savages, and believed that the exhibitions of a priest in public, or the uttering of magical incantations by a medicine man had a direct effect on the fortunes of war, then we could appreciate the exemption of the clergy. But no one really believes this. The Trades Union Congress, which represents the organized labour of the country, actually called for the conscription of the clergy. Their exemption is no more than a piece of political jobbery. It was, probably, thought that this close corporation was too powerful for attack, and their exemption was a reminder to those who are apt to underestimate the organized power of the British priesthood. But now we see that Parliament is to reconsider the whole question of the nation's man-power. And we suggest that now is the time for this question to be reopened. Men are called upon to serve, so are women. Why not make the same call upon Sydney Smith's famous third sex? Those who preach war can have no rational objection to practising it.

* * *

Why are the Clergy Exempt?

About a year ago the Archbishop of Canterbury informed the House of Convocation that the clergy were exempt 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." What is this responsibility? The Archbishop was wise enough not to be precise. He was content to say that they have a great responsibility. Can anyone say what it is? If it is to keep the world at peace they are obviously unfitted for that task. It cannot be to improve the mental health of the nation; no more fatal influence than theirs can be cited. Every church admits this—of all other churches. It cannot be to keep people morally healthy, for the growth of morality is dependent upon the working of a number of factors not one of which can be properly described as religious. And the morality of a people is usually lowest when and where the rule of the clergy is strongest. It is a sheer insult to the national intelligence to say that an only son, or the head of a family, or the owner of a business that cannot exist without his control, all these can be spared, but that a mentally half-emasculated priesthood, many without even family responsibilities, cannot be taken without risk to the country's welfare.

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Tax the Churches.

The other source of help is a financial one. The Government is urging upon everyone the need of the most rigorous economy. Money for the conduct of the War is urgently needed, and fresh taxation, in one form or another, is being imposed. But there is one untaxed source—always a gross anomaly, and now a positive injustice. Churches and chapels, with their annexes, are still free from taxation. Even a hospital cannot demand exemption. A church may. Why not place churches on the same level as all other property? As it stands, this exemption is a Government subsidy in disguise, since others have to make good the default of the Churches. Everybody else is called upon to pay the rates and taxes which the Churches should themselves pay. And as the Government is urging us to economize in every other direction, why should it not urge us to economize on religion—at least, during the War? Why should we still send out of the country millions annually on so gross an imposture as Foreign Missions? The Japanese, the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Jews—abroad and at home—will manage quite well without these missions, at least, until the end of the War. Let us save money, by all means. And let the Government urge this upon the religious members of the community.

* * *

Treat the Clergy as Citizens.

We agree with those who say that the country is passing through a prolonged and acute crisis. We also agree with those who say that this War will be quite unproductive of good, as against a mountain of admitted evil, unless we learn to take a fresh valuation of all our ideas and institutions. And surely religion is one of the things that call for a fresh valuation. From the dawn of history human society has had fastened upon it a priesthood, which represents one of the greatest parasitic classes known. It is non-productive in the fullest sense of the term. Its record is one of folly tending to crime, and of crime resulting from folly. In a time of peace it can do nothing to stop the emergence of war; in a time of war it can do nothing to hasten the return of peace. Surely it is time that the Government and the people of a civilized country took this class at its proper value. At a time when all are called upon for service, when the nation is called upon for fresh endeavours and renewed sacrifices, is there any valid reason why the clergy and their churches should continue exempt from obligations which fall upon all other citizens?

Chapman Cohen.

The Christ-Myth.

All Christians admit that never was a revival of religion more urgently needed than it is at the present moment; a few declare that it is already at the door; and one or two fanatics assure us that it has even commenced in some parts of the country, and is destined to win the people back to Christ and his Church. When an unbeliever visits churches and chapels up and down the land, his report of what he hears and sees differs considerably from what the representatives of the various schools of professing Christians imagine they both hear and see. Of a coming revival he certainly discerns no sign whatsoever. He listens intently, but can hear no wind of promise shaking the tops of the proverbial mulberry trees. Generally speaking, churches and chapels are being gradually deserted everywhere. Of course, there are exceptions. Oratory still draws overflowing crowds to any place of worship. Popular preachers never lack full congregations; but it is they who attract, not the Gospel which they preach. It is they who are appreciated by the multitudes, not the message of salvation through faith in the finished work of Christ. The same message from the lips of an ambassador whom Nature has not endowed with an eloquent tongue sends the handful who attend to sleep. Of the truth of this statement we were furnished with an apt illustration, the other Sunday morning, at a large Wesleyan Church in a well-known provincial town, with a population of over two hundred thousand. This commodious building, seated for at least eight hundred people, was attended by less than fifty, several of whom fell fast asleep under the sermon, not because the sermon was in any sense a poor one, but simply because the preacher displayed no oratorial gifts whatever. From a theological and homiletical point of view, the discourse was equal in matter and composition to any ever delivered by such a master of assemblies as Dr. Campbell Morgan. The text was, "Christ in you" (Col. i. 27), in the exposition of which the preacher showed a more than average measure of ingenuity and insight, but he never once got into grips with his forty odd hearers. There was not one note in his voice that vibrated with feeling; he never even touched a single heart present, much less played with quickening effect upon its keys. As an intellectual performance the service was of a high order, as services go; but as nobody ever dreams of visiting a place of worship for an intellectual treat, but always in the hope of being moved, stirred, tickled, or intoxicated emotionally, the service under consideration was a total failure.

Now, the fact of supreme importance, in this connection, is that the Christian Gospel does not, and never did, possess the omnipotent attractiveness attributed to it by its professional champions, and that it lacks winsomeness simply because it is not true. "Christ in you" is a theological hypothesis, a mystical conception, based upon a purely metaphysical assumption, which is founded upon no fact whatever. Christ is what the divines call a thranthropic person, neither wholly God nor yet wholly man, but an incredible mixture of both. Until about two thousand years ago no such being had ever existed, the real significance of the Incarnation being that a new species of personality appeared in the world. The great modern exponent of this doctrine was the late Professor Shedd, of Union Theological Seminary, New York; but it is substantially the view of Christ held by all orthodox theologians everywhere. They usually speak of him as the God-man, whose mission in the flesh was to make legally possible a reconciliation between the offended Deity and mankind. No doubt this view of Christ and his work is germinally present in the Pauline and Petrine Epistles and, to a certain extent, in the Four Gospels. His work was through suffering to become the Captain of Salvation, to become the propitiation for human sin, and so to abolish the enmity between God and man. In him there were two natures united in a new person: the Divine nature, so that he could represent God to man; and human nature, that he might represent man to God. In other words, he was a supernatural being in whom two natures, the one infinite and the other finite, met and kissed each other, and who, in consequence, became, by his death, a mediator between God and man, reconciling them to each other. In him God can justify the guilty and save the sinful, and in him man enters into loving fellowship with Heaven. The great motto of the Christian religion, therefore, is "In Christ." Without Christ mankind are doomed to perish for ever, but in Christ is salvation, full and free. To be in Christ by faith is the sole condition of acceptance with Heaven and of endless bliss therein. But the curious thing is, that in some inexplicable sense these three, God, Christ, and believing man, are in one another. Christ is repre-

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sented as saying, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me," and as praying for his disciples "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Now, the first and never ending duty of believers is to eat Christ, so that he may be in them the secret and principle of their life, as well as their hope of glory.

Such, in substance, was the Gospel preached at the above-mentioned Wesleyan Church on a recent Sunday morning, and such, no doubt, was the Gospel promulgated in most churches during the Easter holidays a week ago; but it is an essentially lying Gospel, because Christ is a wholly fictitious character, who never existed except in the imagination of those who profess him. As portrayed in the Four Gospels he is an utterly impossible being—quite as impossible as Osiris, Adonis, Attis, or Mithra, on whom he is largely modelled. These documents pretend to be biographical sketches; but the truth is, as pointed out by Professor Gilbert Murray, that the supposed history contained in them will not bear critical examination. Intensely interesting they are from a mythological point of view; but to treat them as historical is to show the blindest credulity. Take, for example, the story of the Incarnation as related in the first and third Gospels, and you will find yourselves in the region of sheer mythology. Besides, nothing can be clearer than that the Virgin Birth was never even dreamt of by the original writers of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, in which Jesus is invariably treated as the son of Joseph and Mary. His genealogy as given in both respects the line of Joseph, which would be ridiculous on the supposition that Joseph was not his father. It was by his parents that the child Jesus was taken to the temple "to do for him after the custom of the law"; and after listening to Simeon's glowing predictions as to his future career, "Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him," not even his mother having indulged in any wild dreams concerning him. We read that "his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover"; and when, at twelve years of age he gave them the slip on the return journey, and they found him, after long and anxious search, "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions," his mother rebuked him, saying: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." At that time Mary had no idea that she had given birth to a God-man, who would be known as the Saviour of the world. Then the silence of Mark and John indicates that the supernatural conception was an afterthought, while even the Apostle Paul declares that the Redeemer was "born under the law." One apologist explains all this away thus:—

> In speech which was not designed to be formally dogmatic it was the most natural thing in the world to place Joseph along with Mary under the parental category, since he fulfilled parental offices toward Jesus, and in the common view was undoubtedly taken as his father. Whatever may have been the conviction of Mary, it was in the nature of the case next to impossible that belief in the extraordinary distinction of her child should gain real lodgment in the minds of neighbours and acquaintances generally in advance of an extraordinary history of the child. Inevitably he would be referred to as the carpenter's son, and the evangelist in admitting a like form of words was only adopting an accommodation which it was much easier to admit than to exclude.

As a matter of fact, what we see in both the Gospels and the Epistles is Christ in the making, and not by any means the completed portrait. Paul's Christ had no history, and no body of teaching attributed to him, his death and resurrection being the only points of essential importance. In the Gospels, Paul's Christ is given an alleged history which led up to the atoning death and life-giving resurrection. By-and-bye it dawned upon the authors or editors of two of the Gospels that a life ending so magnificently and so fruitfully ought to be represented as beginning in a fashion correspondingly glorious and impressive, and the Virgin Birth, taken over from Gentile mythology was introduced. The construction of the Christ with whom we are familiar to-day was a task that occupied many centuries. The Gospels are semi-metaphysical novelettes, while the Epistles are, for the most part, replete with metaphysical dreams and fabulous riddles.

(To be concluded.) J. T. Lloyd.

Francis Thompson.

> That same gentle spirit from whose pen
> Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow.
> —*Spenser.*

> It is the part of a wise man to have preferences, but no exclusions.—*Voltaire.*

Amid thousands of obscure and unloved graves at Kensal Green Cemetery is one with the touching inscription, "Look for me in the nurseries of heaven." This is the last resting-place of the unfortunate Francis Thompson, who was buried there a decade ago. He was then almost unknown, and during his lifetime he had suffered the hardships of lonely poverty to a degree not surpassed by any of the most unfortunate poets of the world. He had sounded the gamut of misery and privation. Many nights he slept upon the Thames Embankment, and under carts in Covent Garden Market. He hawked matches in the Strand, and was a bookseller's porter, staggering through London streets with a heavy sack upon his back. When he was carried to his grave, only a few intimate friends, who had looked after him for the last sad months of his life, were present to mourn. Now Thompson is placed by all good judges in the ranks of poets of genius, and the proud garland of laurel decorates his tomb which was denied to the living man.

It is possible to overrate and to underestimate Francis Thompson's merits; but no one would contend that he was other than a genuine and unmistakable poet. A very unequal writer, he sometimes soared to the pure ether of the great singers, and at other times fell to the lower slopes of Parnassus. He had, indeed, his faults; but against them must be placed his unbalanced, imaginative, reckless nature There can hardly be a sadder story than his in the whole history of literature, though Chatterton, Villon, Poe, James Thomson, and Paul Verlaine are among them. To be at once a genius and a drudge, to live in direst poverty and to die of a lingering disease, is as melancholy a lot as can be imagined. Nor would he deserve less pity if we denied his genius. His faults, whatever they may have been, injured himself alone; but genius he most certainly had.

Thompson is a poet's poet, like Blake, Rossetti, Keats, and Shelley. His kinship with these singers is far nearer than to Crashaw and the ecclesiastical mystics. Assuredly, he calls for a meed of praise equal to that accorded to Maeterlinck, D'Annunzio, Rostand, and other continental writers for whom so many British altars have flamed in worship. Thompson's genius was Oriental, exuberant in colour, waven with rich and strange textures. His poetry was mainly a splendid rhetoric, imaginative and passionate, as if the moods went by robed in imperial purple in a great procession.

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His masterpiece, "The Hound of Heaven," is molten white with passion. Listen to these lines, in which the alchemy of the poet's genius transmutes the dross of theology into the fine gold of poetry:—

> I dimly guess what time in mists confounds;
> Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
> From the hid battlements of eternity,
> Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
> Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again;
> But not ere him who summoneth
> I first have seen, enwound
> With glooming robes purpureal, cypress crowned;
> His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

Now hear the sonorous and stately valediction which concludes his "Anthem of Earth":—

> Now, mortal, son-like,
> I thou hast suckled, mother, I at last
> Shall sustenant be to thee. Here I untrammel,
> Here I pluck loose the body's cerementing,
> And break the tomb of life; here I shake off
> The bur of the world, man's congregation shun,
> And to the antique order of the dead
> I take the tongueless vow; my cell is set
> Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended
> In a little peace.

How fine, too, is his charming vision of the woman sleeping in the child, like a dainty dryad hiding among the lush leaves of early summer:—

> Thou whose young sex is yet but in thy soul,
> As, hoarded in the vine,
> Hang the gold skins of undelirious wine,
> As air sleeps, till it toss its limbs in breeze.

The closing stanza of *Daisy* is dangerously near perfection:—

> She went her unremembering way;
> She went, and left in me
> The pang of all the partings gone,
> And partings yet to be.

There used to be a tradition in common literary circles that poets cannot write good prose. It was a ridiculous theory. To look at the prose of Byron, Coleridge, Meredith, Shelley, and Wordsworth, is to perceive its absurdity. Shakespeare wrote wonderful prose, as in *Hamlet*. The critics who affect to look down upon Thompson's prose are scribblers who are hardly entitled to look down on anything. Francis Thompson was a Catholic, and Shelley was an Atheist. Hundreds of men have written on Shelley, but Thompson's essay is, far and away, the finest ever written. This is what Francis Thompson says of the *Prometheus Unbound*:—

> It is unquestionably the greatest and most prodigal exhibition of Shelley's powers, this amazing lyric world, where immortal clarities sigh past in the perfumes of the blossoms, populate the breathings of the breeze, throng and twinkle in the leaves that twirl upon the bough; where the very grass is all a-rustle with lovely spirit-things; and a weeping mist of music fills the air. The final scenes especially are such a Bacchic reel and rout and revelry of beauty as leaves one staggered and giddy; poetry is spilt like wine, music runs to drunken waste. The choruses sweep down the wind, tirelessly, flight after flight, till the breathless soul almost cries for respite from the unrolling splendors.

A noble and true passage on Shelley's wondrous imagination is the following:—

> For astounding figurative opulence he yields only to Shakespeare, and even to Shakespeare not in absolute fecundity but in range of images. The sources of his figurative wealth are specialised, while the sources of Shakespeare's are universal. It would have been as conscious an effort for him to speak without figure as it is for most men to speak with figure. Suspended in the dripping well of his imagination the commonest object becomes encrusted with imagery.

What a superb tribute from one poet to another! And, remember, the tribute came from a Catholic poet to the Atheist singer. Literature, like music, is wider than opinion, broader than dogma, as limitless as the humanity to which it appeals. At the height of the Bradlaugh struggle, where Gladstone passionately addressed his speech on the Oaths Bill to a hushed and expectant House of Commons, he quoted some perfect lines from the old Roman Freethinker, Lucretius, as daring an Iconoclast as Bradlaugh himself. The majesty of the quotation was its justification. Gladstone's brain and taste persisted in being independent of his heart, like the French soldier who fought in the present War, and who, when killed, was found to have in his pocket a well-thumbed copy of Heine's poems. Catholic though he was, Francis Thompson deserves a few words of praise in a Freethought paper. He never did weak or puling work in prose or verse. Although he waged an unequal war against fate, he was at least a happy soldier. When his turn came, he yielded up his broken, but not dishonoured, sword with a brave and humble heart.

Mimnermus.

Obiter Dicta.

It was nearing the end of the month of February. A few shy primroses were peeping out of the early green in the woods. The calendines had appeared also, like golden stars. Blackthorn trees were in flower, and the birds had begun to sing at six o'clock in the morning. If one counted the number in any flock of birds, it was invariably even. The cock chaffinch was arrayed in all his glory of conquest; goldfinches were to be seen busily picking away at the dried thistleheads of last year. The hedge-sparrow could be heard singing his lively but short song, and any thoughtful person could look at the ruddy gold of dawn over the sea, and wonder: Was there ever such a spring as this? Was there ever such a spring as this in the year 1918, the present dispensation, when humanity seemed to be suffering from the result of a second Tower of Babel? Whether we hear it or not, Spring will sing her eternal song. The enchanting indifference of Nature fascinates, and sometimes repels.

It is not often that any valuable reading matter reaches a camp hut. We forget what matter of importance it was on which we were engaged when we came across a copy of *Longman's Magazine*, dated December, 1891. Our eye at once lighted upon an article in it by Richard Jefferies. It was entitled "The Coming of Summer," written in his glorious style of light and colour and harmony, and we took ourselves to a hillside to sit in the sun and read it for a second time. For a little while we were carried away on the wings of fancy; far, far away from the chatter and bluster of a world where ideals are weighted and thrown in the bottomless pit of ignorance.

As one witnesses the progress of the press from peace-time inanity to war-time stupidity and asinine levity, it is natural to surmise that oblivion will be its reward. The press will drag down humanity with it if Fate does not intervene in the destiny of mankind. Nietzsche was right in his splendid pronouncement when he said, "We despise the culture from newspaper reading." If the influence of newspaper propaganda be real, then mankind is on the wrong path; if the influence is nugatory, then there is a chance of mankind being saved. Idealists are once again faced with a new superstition—the superstition of the printed word. There are fakirs and high priests in the new religion; there are only a few honest men—and Richard Jefferies was one of the latter. His writings are examples of good taste, and thus far they claim a place in eternity. Some witty Frenchman said that words are given us to conceal our thoughts. If that be cynically true, then we imagine that the thought at the back of newspaper words must be in a very bad way. If we move out of the greenhouse atmosphere of the Frenchman into the open air of Richard Jefferies, we find that he uses words to express his thoughts; and in this respect he writes as a man who brings his best to the service of mankind. The world is now groaning for the lies and half-truths of the past; with clean hands and a good conscience, Free-

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thinkers can say this charge does not lie at their door. Christianity and Capitalism, with their tremendous reserves of power, may now share their joint responsibility in the mess, which could not be worse if the power had been in the hands of navvies or dustmen. With our ears filled with the braying of asses (of noble birth and otherwise), let us retire and listen to the liquid, honey-sweet words of Richard Jefferies. He writes:—

> A June rose. Something caught my eye on the top of the high hawthorn edge beside the Brighton Road one evening as it was growing dusk, and on looking again there was a spray of briar in flower, two roses in flower and out of reach, and one spray of three growing buds. So it is ever with the June rose. It is found unexpectedly, and when you are not looking for it. It is a gift, not a discovery, or anything earned—a gift like love and happiness.

We will match that passage with anything seeing the light of print since August, 1914.

Harry, my friend and kindred spirit, was with me on the hillside. In the distance we could see some sheep and lambs in an enclosure. The plaintive bleat of the lambs followed by the answer of the mothers called to my pessimism. "If mankind was articulate, we should hear it make a similar sound." "May be," replied Harry, looking across the sea, "if we could listen to the earth we should hear it groaning." We both lapsed into silence. Then, like sunshine and shadow (for your pessimist does not always live in gloom) I ventured. Won't it be grand when people will pass by that spot and say: "there was once a camp here!" "Yes," he replied, "the place will be covered with rich green grass, and we may be asleep." Children may pluck flowers where only thorns exist now." We got up and moved away towards our place of brief habitation.

Many readers may remember a series of articles, entitled "At the Sign of the Ship," written by Andrew Lang. In this copy of *Longman's Magazine* there is an interesting dialogue held in Elysium. Gathered together are the poet Gray, Sterne, Miss Austen, Thackeray, Sir Walter Scott, and Mrs. Hannah More, and there is flippant discourse between Sterne and Gray about French novels, with the inevitable rejoinders from the two ladies who seemed gravely concerned about the Rabelaisian parson. Sterne remembers, after preaching a sermon on the Prodigal Son, how a charming widow, with an eye, with an ankle ——. At this point he is brought to order by Miss Austen. Mrs. Hannah More is made to say something on the nature of vinegar.

In the light of Mr. John Galsworthy's refusal of a title, it may be interesting to know what Andrew Lang wrote in 1891. He says: "As to being made knights and baronets, who on earth wants to be called 'Sir' of men? Mayors, and brewers, and that kind of people, are welcome to these distinctions.....Praise we all like.....but titles we don't want, titles are exploded.....rather would I be commended by the little boys of the bookstalls." Is there not the ring of honest common sense in that? The heavens are now speaking as they have never spoken before that it shall go hard with shams, flim-flam, artificiality, and hypocrisy. The curtain covering the make-believe of centuries is now rent in twain. Reality, like a fierce March wind, is roaring about convention, custom, and everything which has grown diseased by the aid of lies. Soon we shall have plain speaking, for facts are *above* words, and not, as our slapdash journalists would have us believe, *below* them. The order in sequence is: (a) facts (or realities), (b) words, and (c) understanding or perception. Our modern inkfishes make words come first, and they, and all they stand for will go down like rotten trees before the gale, without a single tear being shed on their departure. They dealt in the corruption of Christianity and Capitalism, and their dissolution shall prove the noble truth of Euripides: "No lie ever grows old."

William Repton.

Topsy-Turvy.

Well, said the Thinker, when he saw the mass
Of Black-coats batt'ning on the corpse of Christ,
"Of old, Christ rode in triumph on an ass,
And now, behold, the asses ride on Christ."

G. H. B.

Acid Drops.

The Devonport Coroner, at an inquest of a child at Devonport, said ninety per cent. of the children born during the past three months were males. He regarded this as an interesting fact, showing how Providence was making up for losses in the War. That is very thoughtful of "Providence"; but, as usual, not thoughtful enough. To be of the greatest use, these children should have been born full grown. As it is, it will be twenty years before they are of much use to the community—either as parents or as soldiers. They will certainly be of no use during the present War. And if "Providence" can deliberately bring people into the world, why the deuce can't it prevent people being taken out? The mystery of "Providence" gets greater. So does the stupidity of some officials.

That hero of a hundred tea-fights, the Bishop of London, who loves to strut around in khaki, has a serious rival in Bishop Russell Wakefield, who has been bidding for popularity by attending a boxing exhibition, and extolling "the noble art of self-defence." According to the press, Brother Wakefield was formerly "very useful with the gloves." It is enough to make the Bishop of London "weep like anything."

The Rev. T. W. Pym, a Church of England Army Chaplain, says "no average professing once-a-year communicant of the Church of England could hold his own for five minutes against any average mildly intelligent and even intellectual Agnostic."

Mr. Herbert Skimpole describes Mr. Bernard Shaw's personal appearance as "half Mephistopheles, half Christ." Perhaps this explains why Mr. Shaw announced his Atheism at a Shelley Society meeting, and years later he preached, with acceptance, at the City Temple.

Unconscious humour lurks in unexpected places. The Rev. E. Milner-White, an Army Chaplain, says that soldiers are ignorant of pious habits, and "we had usually to give notice that each communicant must not drain the whole chalice." And "communion port" used to be one shilling and threepence a bottle.

Speaking at a Health Conference, Lord Rhondda said that nearly 200,000 children's lives had been lost during the past four years, and there were now a million weak and defective children in the schools. What a commentary on the popular hymn, "There's a friend of little children, up above the bright, blue sky"!

The late Rev. J. J. Griffin, of Cheltenham, left estate to the value of £40,560. If the Bible is true, he has forfeited his chance of walking the golden streets of heaven.

The Rev. Clarence Ladron, an American Baptist minister, has been sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for opposing militarism, and refusing the use of his church for recruiting meetings. When he emerges from prison, he should understand that the divine command: "Thou shalt not kill," is only to be understood in the Pickwickian sense.

The pansy was chosen as a souvenir for raising funds for the Young Women's Christian Association's "Women's Day." Doubtless the female Christians were unaware that the pansy is an emblem of Freethought.

Canon Cooper, the vicar of Filey, proposes to take a vote of his congregation on the question of the frequency of collections. If the folk in the pews respond in the negative the Canon will have to bombard the Throne of Grace.

Lady Edward Churchill has been fined £5 at Windsor for using a motor-car to attend church. Perhaps the lady will use the same methods of travelling as were used by the Founder of Christianity when he entered Jerusalem.

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In a City shop window a notice is displayed: "If you are down in the mouth, cheep up. Jonah came out all right." Quite a "fishy" remark.

Lord Hugh Cecil, M.P. for Oxford University, declares that God is the "Architect of Hell." Presumably the deity is also the employer of the stokers. What an ironic comment on the culture of the oldest English University!

A religious objection was one of the grounds on which a divorce was refused to a Portsmouth Roman Catholic. The petitioner had refrained from taking proceedings on account of his religious opinions, and the judge said that in consequence of his religious objections his wife had gone on, and had become the mother of three illegitimate children. He must now take the consequence of his religious objections.

The Bishop of London declares that "we do not know what privation means." Unhappily, we are not all bachelors with £200 weekly income.

Among the recent wills and bequests is that of Mr. Adam, who left £99,563. This is not the gentleman who cultivated vegetables in the Garden of Eden.

A daily paper says that the Bishop of London recommends a book of devotion to his diocese every Lent. Presumably, the book is to be sold, not lent.

Bishop Welldon has been writing on Marriage and Divorce in a Sunday paper, and he says: "The State must legislate upon marriage not only for Christians, but for citizens who are not Christians." Some of the Bishop's colleagues might make a note of this remark.

Although the clergy are exempted from military service, they like to boast of their acquaintance with war. Speaking at the Royal Society of Arts, the Archbishop of Canterbury said he had worn a gas helmet when he visited Ypres. Let us hope he will not wear that helmet in the pulpit.

Pious folk often contradict one another, and in a recent issue of a daily paper a fine example was printed. Dr. Alexander Irvine described London as a "city of God," and the Bishop of Chelmsford was reported in another column as referring to the great East End, with its hard-working population of a million, drawing shameful wages.

Perhaps the acme of stupidity—to say nothing of brutality—in the War was reached on Good Friday, when the long-range German gun fired on Paris, hitting a church, and killing and wounding 165 persons. The uselessness of such a gun from the point of view of military sanity is plain. One cannot aim at any particular thing, it can only be trained on a large and fixed target. On behalf of even aeroplane raids it might be argued that the bombs are aimed at a military objective. But this gun aims at nothing but sheer terrorism of the civilian population. That it fell on a church is a mere accident. In Hyde Park 10,000 Christians were holding an intercession service for God's help and protection. What that is worth the wrecking of the Paris church shows. God does nothing. The malignity of German militarism is matched by the stupidity of our animated praying-machines.

Perhaps Mr. Bottomley, who believed that the power of God upheld the Virgin of Albert, or the Bishop of London, who believes that God guarded from destruction the figure of Jesus in churches in Flanders, will explain why God could not guard his poor worshippers in church on Good Friday. And perhaps those who believed—particularly Mr. Harold Begbie—that clouds of angels guarded our soldiers at Mons, will explain what has become of the angelic army. Why could it not operate to stem this German offensive? Has it been disbanded? Or was it formed for three years only, and not "for the duration"?

Quite naturally, the shelling of the church aroused much indignation in Paris. Speaking in the Chamber, M. Jeanbon, leader of the Left, said:—

> We unbelievers join our indignant protests against the crimes of the false believers who mingle blood with their prayers.

The two opening words were quite French in their directness and honesty. We fancy our own Socialists would have been more inclined to talk of the spirit of "true Christianity," or similar cant. Not because they believe more than M. Jeanbon, but because they are less outspoken and less direct in their thinking.

The number of women parsons is increasing constantly. Mrs. A. W. Constable, of Ovendene, Halifax, has been appointed pastor to a Congregational Church at Sheffield, this being the first appointment of its kind in Yorkshire.

Defenders of the Design Argument will note with pleasure that a lamb has been born at Welton, Lincolnshire, with five legs. This means an extra leg of mutton in these hard times.

Mr. H. Fielding Hall says: "The base idea of every religion, Christian or other, is that nature and humanity are evil, and that life is not worth living." Apparently, the base of religion is a base idea.

The Roman Catholic Church is attempting a "great push" on its own account, and has published in a number of newspapers, at full advertisement rates, a public manifesto by Cardinal Bourne. The cost of this advertisement must have run into hundreds of pounds. Does this desire for extended publicity imply that the Church Catholic is feeling the effects of the World-War?

An advertisement of a mammoth cinema film states that there are "some Dantesque scenes of souls in purgatory." Curiously, the film is entitled "Civilization."

A new book bears the arresting title, *The Church in the Furnace*, and is written by seventeen Army Chaplains. The volume suggests the topsy-turvy condition of present-day Christianity; for, usually, the Church consigns outsiders to "the furnace."

Piety to order is a fearful and a wonderful thing. A cinema poster, during Holy Week, announced that the programme would include "Nearer, My God to Thee, in five acts, and many other sparkling comedies."

"Palestine To-Day" is the title of an article in a daily paper. Superstitious Christians are more interested in Palestine of two thousand years ago.

"Londoners seem more afrard of Sundays than of air-raids," says Father Bernard Vaughan. Perhaps the Cockneys dislike the poison-gas of the pulpits.

How exclusive the clergy are! The Bishop of Chelmsford says that in East Ham, with a population of over 80,000, there are only six clergy. There may be only six parsons of the Government religion, but what of the Free Church ministers and fancy religionists?

Speaking at the Kingsway Hall, London, Dr. Selbie declared that "war is not a Christian thing." Perhaps he can explain why Christian ministers consecrate regimental colours and "christen" battleships.

A newspaper paragraph states that old bones are valuable and must be saved. Priests know the value of old bones better than rag and bone dealers, especially when the relics are advertised as belonging to any saint in the calendar.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 14, Liverpool; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—April 7, Liverpool; April 28, Nuneaton.

"Bonnie Dundee."—Have sent on your card.

R. N.—Pleased to hear from you. Thanks, we are keeping well, and all things considered, we need to.

C. Rudge.—You are mistaken. We have never advocated "peace at any price," nor have we ever asserted that all war is unjustifiable. We believe that all *offensive* wars are, but there may easily be occasions where a people are compelled to resist force by force. What we have asserted is the inconclusiveness of force. Force against force can only prove that one is greater than the other, it cannot prove anything else. But the right of defence against oppression seems to us undeniable.

Mr. A. J. Marriott thinks we have undervalued the power of the press in forming public opinion, seeing that so many papers are under one control, and so manage to refuse all opposition the right of a reply. We do not see that this conflicts with what we said, which was that the general tone and character of the public mind could not be placed to the credit of the press—certainly not wholly.

W. Walden.—We are greatly obliged to you for getting this paper into the Institute you name. That nearly always means new readers and a wider influence. Your experience with the "Padre" is interesting.

H. Rigby writes to thank Mr. Underwood for having introduced to him G. H. Lewes' book on the Spanish Drama. He has since received a copy of the work.

W. J.—That Swinburne's "form" is marred by his "matter" is wholly a question of personal idiosyncrasy. The treatment of dead Freethinkers by living Christians is scarcely on all fours with Swinburne's attitude towards "God" and "Christ." To him these were myths.

E. Schofield.—See "Sugar Plum."

C. F. J.—Received, and shall appear as early as possible.

E. B.—Thanks for useful batch of cuttings.

J. Higgins.—We daresay you are right in your judgment of the man and the case. But we do not know enough of the circumstances to make any comment.

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.

Owing to the holidays and the Editor's absence from London, a number of letters, paragraphs, and one or two replies to the letter of "Ignotus" in our last issue are held over until next week.

Mr. Cohen's meetings at Pontycymmer last Sunday were a great success. They were the first Freethought meetings held in the place, but they will not be the last. The day was a wild one of rain and wind, but, notwithstanding the weather, many were present from the surrounding districts. The large hall was well filled in the afternoon, and crowded out in the evening. The lectures were heard with attention and appreciation. A Branch of the N. S. S. is in course of formation, as is also another at Maestig—a neighbouring place. South Wales is very much alive.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (April 7) at Liverpool, in the Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street, at 3 and 7 o'clock. There have been no special lectures at Liverpool lately, owing to difficulties in obtaining a suitable hall. The week following Mr. Cohen lectures twice in the same place.

Now that we are working with a restricted space, we must economize wherever possible. Will all N. S. S. Branch Secretaries please send their reports of meetings, etc., direct to Miss Vance as early as possible after the meetings? These can then be summarized and published whenever convenient or advisable.

The Swansea Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged for a lecture from the Rev. A. W. Wandle, of that town, on "Some Ideals of Christianity." The lecture will be delivered to-day (April 7) in the Docker's Hall at 3 o'clock.

The *Daily Express* reports an attack by "infidel dogs" in a church in the Hudson Bay country. It appears that the native Christians had built a church of whalebone, and packs of dogs were so starved, they ate the whole of the structure. Christians eat their God inside the church. Dogs from without eat the structure itself. But why "infidel dogs"? They may have been quite orthodox in their opinions.

Mr. Maskelyne and the Spirits.

The late Mr. J. N. Maskelyne was a thorn in the side of the Spiritualists. It was largely owing to his public exhibition of the frauds of the mediums that the physical phenomena of Spiritualism fell into disrepute, and has been abandoned, except in very private circles.

I have to thank Mr. E. Smedley, of Hucknall Torkard, for allowing me to see, and use, several interesting letters he received from Mr. Maskelyne dealing with this subject.

But before dealing with the letters, it will be as well to understand Mr. Maskelyne's mode of operation. Several others beside Mr. Maskelyne have exposed fraudulent mediums—notably Sir Ray Lankester and Sir Bryan Donkin, among others, in this country, and Truesdell and Dr. Hodgson in America. But Mr. Maskelyne was the only one who reduced the exposure of Spiritualism to a business.

Mr. Maskelyne's method was to attend the mediums' *seances* until he saw how the tricks were performed, and then practise them at home until he was perfect. Then he would advertise that he would perform the spiritualistic marvels in public at his conjuring performances, which he did so perfectly that the Spiritualists' papers declared that Mr. Maskelyne himself was a great medium and received help from the spirits, in spite of his declaration that everything was done by natural means.

There is no recorded case of Mr. Maskelyne's ever getting up at a Spiritual *seance* and exposing the fraud. He makes no claim to have done so in his book, *Modern Spiritualism*; and if he had done so, he could hardly

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have failed to mention it there. Nevertheless, it is often stated in the Press that Mr. Maskelyne exposed the Davenport Brothers. The facts are these.

The Davenport Brothers were two mediums who came to England from America in September, 1864. They created an extraordinary sensation by their performances in London. They had a wooden cabinet—not unlike a wardrobe—with a board at each end for a seat. The brothers seated themselves facing one another, and members of the audience were invited to come and bind them to the seat as securely as they knew how. After this had been done, a guitar, a violin, a tambourine, a trumpet, and two handbells were placed in the middle of the cabinet, apparently out of their reach. The doors of the cabinet were then closed; immediately the bolts were heard to rattle into their sockets, and shortly afterwards the musical instruments were heard in full blast. There is no doubt that the Davenport Brothers operated the bolts with the mouth; and thus making themselves secure from interruption, they freed themselves from the ropes before the audience had recovered from their surprise at hearing the bolts shot.

However, they came to grief at Liverpool, where two gentlemen appeared on the stage with the secret of a new knot known as the "Tom Fool" knot, which they proceeded to apply to the wrists of the brothers. The brothers protested, and ordered their manager to cut the ropes, which he did, inflicting at the same time a small cut, which the brothers declared was due to the tightness of the ropes. The performance broke up in disorder, and they afterwards had such a bad reception in other towns, where the news had preceded them, that they were glad to leave the country.

Mr. Maskelyne's account of his part in the Davenport exposure is, that when the Brothers were performing at Cheltenham, the accidental fall of a curtain during their performance enabled him to see enough to explain the mysteries performed in the cabinet. But he did not get up and expose them; he kept his own counsel, and some months later reproduced their performance in public at the Crystal Palace.

In the same way he helped in the exposure of the notorious "Dr." Slade. He visited Slade's performances until he discovered his method of slate-writing; and when Slade was caught in the act of trickery by Sir Ray Lankester, who prosecuted him for fraud, Mr. Maskelyne gave evidence in the witness-box, showing how the supposed spirit-writing was done. Mr. Maskelyne declared that it took him six weeks' hard work to perfect himself in Slade's tricks; but he considered the Davenport Brothers were the cleverest of all the mediums he had to do with.

Many of our readers will remember the law case of Colley *v.* Maskelyne, in April, 1907. Archdeacon Colley was a crank of the first water. At his church at Stockton, Warwickshire, he actually had himself clothed in a shroud and laid in his coffin for his parishioners to gaze upon!

In 1874, Colley became a great friend of the American medium, Monck—Dr. Monck, as he called himself. This Monck was a vicious scoundrel, and in 1876, while Colley—who had been appointed chaplain to H.M.S. *Malabar*—was out in India, Monck, who was giving spiritualistic demonstrations at two guineas a time, was caught in the act of fraud at Huddersfield, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment as a rogue and vagabond. Notwithstanding this crushing exposure, Colley, upon his return from India, resumed his intimacy with Monck, and in 1905 he published a pamphlet, entitled *Phenomena: Bewildering, Psychological.* Its publication led to correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*, including a letter from Mr. Maskelyne on April 17, 1906. Archdeacon Colley replied in a private letter, challenging Mr. Maskelyne to reproduce Monck's phenomena, and offering to pay £1,000 if he succeeded. Mr. Maskelyne accepted the challenge. Colley attended the performance at St. George's Hall on October 9, 1906, and denied that Maskelyne had given a replica of Monck's performance.

> He also resented the statements contained in a pamphlet, called *The History of a Thousand Pounds Challenge*, which Maskelyne distributed to the audience. In this it was asserted that the Rev. Thomas Colley was not an Archdeacon, and had obtained a nomination for that position under Bishop Colenso by false pretences. This statement formed the basis of the alleged libel, and Maskelyne, for his part, counterclaimed £1,000 as the winner of the challenge.[1]

In the result the Archdeacon won small damages on the technical ground that he undoubtedly had the right to use the title of Archdeacon. Mr. Maskelyne was non-suited in his claim for the £1,000 on the ground that he had not completely reproduced Monck's phenomena, which consisted in the production of a materialized human form from his own body and then reabsorbing it. Mr. Maskelyne succeeded in producing the human form from his body but did not reabsorb it.

After the trial Mr. Maskelyne sent a notice to Colley to say that he was prepared at a future performance to reabsorb the form he produced, but Colley hastily sent a special messenger to withdraw the £1,000 challenge.

In *The History of a Thousand Pounds Challenge* Mr. Maskelyne gives particulars of the exposure and conviction of Monk for fraud. In a demonstration at Huddersfield an amateur conjurer, a Mr. H. B. Lodge, at the conclusion promised Monck £50 if, after allowing himself to be searched, a musical-box and other apparatus were not found upon him. Monck refused to be searched, and, rushing at Lodge, attempted to strike him in the face. He then bolted upstairs to his bedroom, having locked the door, he escaped with the aid of sheets from the window. The door was forced, says Mr. Maskelyne, and—

> an examination of Monck's luggage revealed the fact that two large boxes and a full-sized travelling bath were filled with tricky apparatus, including spirit hands, spirit masks, a large quantity of gauzy material, a spirit bird, apparatus for floating tambourines, bells, spirit names, spirit lamps, and a number of incriminating documents. Mr. Lodge took possession of these articles with the intention of giving public exposures of Spiritualism. The police, however, took the matter out of his hands, and prosecuted Monck. The trial lasted three days, and Monck was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, the maximum penalty.
>
> What influenced the magistrates in inflicting so severe a punishment were the incriminating documents, which included disgustingly immoral letters from both married and single women, with whom Monck had intrigues under the cloak of Spiritualism and the convenience of dark seances. In this respect Monck was but a fair specimen of professional mediums, as a body, both men and women. I have had good reason to know that they are immoral and blasphemous in the extreme, yet spiritualistic cranks would have us believe that these wretches are specially endowed by the Almighty with the power to raise the spirits of the dead and create through their vile bodies living entities of our loved ones who have "crossed the bar." The idea is revolting.

And yet at the Colley trial the distinguished naturalist, Wallace, gave evidence of his whole-hearted belief in this vile scoundrel.

(To be concluded.) W. Mann.

[1] See Dr. Ivor Tuckett's *The Evidence for the Supernatural* (1911), p. 286.

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The Sons of God.

The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair.—*Gen. vi. 8.*

According to the first book of the Bible, the earth fell into a very wicked condition in the days of the patriarchs. God made everything good, but the Devil turned everything bad; and in the end the Lord put the whole concern into liquidation. It was a case of universal bankruptcy. All that was saved out of the catastrophe was a consignment of eight human beings and an unknown number of elephants, crocodiles, horses, pigs, dogs, cats, and fleas.

Among other enormities of the antediluvian world was the fondness shown by the sons of God for the daughters of men. That fondness has continued ever since. The deluge itself could not wash out the amatory feelings with which the pious males regard those fair creatures who were once supposed to be the Devil's chief agents on earth. Even to this day it is a fact that courtship goes on with remarkable briskness in religious circles. Churches and chapels are places of harmless assignation, and how many matches are made in Sunday-schools, where Alfred and Angelina meet to teach the Scriptures and flirt. As for the clergy, who are peculiarly the sons of God, they are notorious for their partiality to the sex. They purr about the ladies like black tom-cats. Some of them are adepts in the art of rolling one eye heavenwards and letting the other languish on the fair faces of the daughters of men. It is also noticeable that the Protestant clericals marry often and early, and generally beget a numerous progeny; while the Catholic priest who, being strictly celibate, *never* adds to the population, "mashes" the ladies through the confessional, worming out all their secrets, and making them as pliable as wax in his holy hands. Too often the professional son of God is a chartered libertine, whose amours are carried on under a veil of sanctity. What else, indeed, could be expected when a lot of lusty young fellows, in the prime of life, forswear marriage, take vows of chastity, and undertake to stem the current of their natures by such feeble dams as prayers and hymns?

Who the original "sons of God" were is a moot point. God only knows, and he has not told us. But Jewish and Christian divines have advanced many theories. According to some the sons of God were the offspring of Seth, who was born in holy succession to righteous Abel, while the daughters of men were the offspring of wicked Cain. Among the Oriental Christians it is said that the children of Seth tried to regain Paradise by living in great austerity on Mount Hermon, but they soon tired of their laborious days and cheerless nights, and cast sheep's-eyes on the daughters of Cain, whose beauty was equal to their father's wickedness. Marriages followed, and the Devil triumphed again.

According to the Cabbalists, two angels, Aza and Azael, complained to God at the creation of man. God answered, "You, O angels, if you were in the lower world, you too would sin." They descended on earth, and directly they saw the ladies they forgot heaven. They married and exchanged the hallelujahs of the celestial chorus for the tender tones of loving women and the sweet prattle of little children. Having sinned, or, to use the vile language of religion, "polluted themselves with women," they became clothed with flesh. On trying to regain Paradise they failed, and were cast back on the mountains, where they continued to beget giants and devils.

"There were giants in the earth in those days," says Scripture. Of course there were. Every barbarous people has similar legends of primitive ages. The translators of our Revised Version are ashamed of these mythical personages as being too suggestive of Jack and the Beanstalk, so they have substituted Anakim for giants. In other words, they have shirked the duty of translators, and left the nonsense veiled under the original word.

The Mohammedans say that not only giants, but also Jins, were born of the sons of God, who married the daughters of men. The Jins soon had the world in their power. They ruled everywhere, and built colossal works, including the pyramids.

Of the giants the most remarkable was Og. He was taller than the last Yankee story, for at the Deluge he stopped the windows of heaven with his hands, or the water would have risen over his head. The Talmud says that he saved himself by swimming close to the ark in company with the rhinoceros. The water there happened to be cold, while all the rest was boiling hot; and thus Og was saved while all the other giants perished. According to another story, Og climbed on the roof of the ark, and when Noah tried to dislodge him, he swore that he would become the patriarch's slave. Noah at once clinched the bargain, and food was passed through a hole for the giant every day.

When we look into them we find the myths of the Bible wonderfully like the myths of other systems. The Giants are similar to the Titans, and the union of divine males with human females is similar to the amours of Jupiter, Apollo, Neptune and Mars with the women of old. In this matter there is nothing new under the sun. Every fresh myth is only the recasting of an ancient fable, born of ignorance and imagination.

Let it finally be noted that this old Genesaic story of the angelic husbands of earthly women gives us a poor idea of the felicity of heaven. In that unknown region, as Jesus Christ informed his disciples, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage; that is, no males, no females, no courting, no loving, no children, and no home. Men cease to be men and women cease to be women. Every body is of the neuter gender. Or else all the angels are gentlemen, without a lady amongst them. Perhaps the latter view is preferable, as it harmonizes with the Bible, in which the angels are always *he's*. In that case heaven would be, to say the least, rather a dull place. No whispering in the moonlight, no clasped hands under the throbbing stars. Not even a kiss under the mistletoe. Oh, what must it be to be there! No wonder the sons of God wandered from their cheerless Paradise, visited this lower world, and saw the daughters of men that they were fair.

(The late) G. W. Foote.

The Tenement and the Towers.

A Human Document.

The curtain of night was slowly withdrawn from grey sea and dun wintry landscape. The tall grey tenement stood out with prison-like grimness, silent, almost sinister in the cloud-filtered light of smiling morn. No one was about. The beauty of the morning and the Sabbath calm were, as yet, unprofaned. But by way of contrast with the serene exterior, within was noise and confusion enough. The Tenement children were awake and in nondescript deshabille rolling, fighting, shouting on the floor of the kitchen bedroom. Mater, with her attention distracted between a crying baby and a tardy fire, had her share of the morning duties. Robbed of a precious hour of Sunday sleep by his band of wakeful brigands, a careworn pater somewhat ruefully surveys the scene, and strives in vain to quieten his clamorous brood. He is merely answered by brave merry shouts of "Daddy" this and "Daddy" that. Running his fingers through his unkempt locks, Daddy responds feebly, and all the while absurdly his mind keeps reverting to Mrs. Hemans's "Stately homes of England," "Cottage homes," etc., and wonders if this sweet-voiced lady ever sewed on a button or dressed the kids in the morning. In a happier, more heroic mood, he would have hummed over that exquisite old plantation melody—

> The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
> All merry all happy and bright;
> By-m-by hard times comes a knockin' at the door,
> My old Kentucky home good-night.

The mother was excusably tart after a week of constant toil and worry, and the children came in for many a sharp rebuke, which they heeded as much as the idle wind. Little garments and other *debris* of domestic life lay about in confusion.

Feebly, yet palpably, impelled by a conscience worn somewhat thin in the sordid struggle for existence, Pater would fain have risen and helped to clothe his boys, but shrank

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from the formidable task of disentanglement and due apportionment of the "duds." This was left to the miracle-worker. Only the woman's patient and practised hand might assort the miscellaneous mysteries and clothe the children in contentment's happy rays! It was thus, at any rate, the feeble Pater quieted his conscience. And yet the poor chap was not without some wit and industry. He had great theories of household management—in his bachelor days! So has everybody—*in his bachelor days!*

This morning he wondered how those theories had fallen through.....Other things, too, were more sternly troubling what was left of a brilliant intellect—rent and taxes were overdue, and smaller expenses loomed gigantically over a meagre and depleted exchequer. The gamins on the floor held his wistful eye and wrung his heart, concentrating in their innocent irresponsible presence all the pathos and love of the human heart. How was the few loaves and fishes of his weekly earning to be multiplied in this non-miraculous age? He would go forth and consider the matter yet again. Sweet was the breath of morn as he emerged from the grey block of many dwellers. An Englishman's house is his castle, but Brown, Jones, and Robinson share the noble pile. Past many similar blocks, he took his way, with hives as busy as his own. It is largely an "artificial" man that finds fullness of life in towns and cities. The natural man craves for the fields and freedom. As driven sheep, for instance, gathered from their native hills, from the great peace of the wilderness, to endure long road marches will climb instinctively each little hillock by the wayside and nibble at the sweet herbage as they are allowed by shepherd Destiny and his dog, so Pater, dumbly driven as the silly sheep, but, now and then, would fain escape to the wilderness. He was discontented, ashamed of his own and the stupidity or indifference of his class, and yet in his scarred breast was noblest yearning for higher things, and perhaps infinite capacity for virtue and happiness. He was sad at times. Sometimes in despair. Nothing so surely restores lost proportion as solitary converse with nature herself—the just and gentle, serious and sublime, smiling, whispering, frowning fearful, muttering thundering, all-commanding mother of us all; she who must be obeyed; the constant, the impartial, the inexorable, the non-arbitrary, but the best-beloved. In such filial, faithful communion the healthy passions, long quiescent, reassert their stimulus, and the soothed mind perceives its need and shapes its purposes.

As a boy, Pater remembered he was happy and eager, with wide blue, steady eyes, wistful, apprehensive, humane, joyous as kittens and puppies are, dwelling in a large optimism as in the azure atmosphere; singing, shouting in the woods; blythe as the birds, graceful as the bending spray, lithe and strong as sapling oak; but the bludgeonings of chance and fate, the long immurement in a brick-and-mortar world (albeit a *chosen* world), the long, unvarying hours of toil, and perhaps that gravitation we call sin, had made him timid in the wilds, and almost afraid to enter the wood, where the "pampered menials" of some little lord of earth might drive him from its grateful shade. But at length, saying "They can't hang me," he leapt the wall, and found himself—at home. Glorious! Soft, dry footing in the bleached grass and rustling leaf; long grass stems, untrampled and erect, glistening in the morning light, and gleaming afar down every glade like glittering ranks of fairy hosts welcoming back the long-lost heir to his domain. There is a pleasure in the pathless woods; there is an inspiration; the eye sees visions and the soul has a revelation. Pater saw the truth with great suddenness and unequivocal certainty. He saw what quicker-sighted men had seen before him—that there were but two kinds of people in the world, the Haves and the Have-nots; that the latter were *not* the blessed.....

Beyond the wood was a noble expanse of lawn surrounding the massive towers of a mansion, sequestered and serene. Pater's well-read mind and vivid imagination could picture the interior, and appreciate the comfort and glory of "high life." He was not envious. He merely knew for the first time the vast social gulf that separates even the moderately rich from the average poor—as far away as Paris is. Yes, the Towers are distant from the Tenement as Heaven is from both. He knew, also, with the utmost certainty—Pater was terribly definite at times—that the denizens of the Towers were not primarily superior to the dwellers in the Tenement, but only that "Fortune in men had some small difference made." Out of a common heredity, environment works the miracle; and these people become godlike and feel like gods, and, indeed, must look down upon the aproned cobbler and grimed collier as very inferior persons indeed; which for the time, as articles of *vertu*, they certainly are.

Seeing and thinking these things, Pater felt he was standing on the boundary line between two worlds: on this hand the world of clockwork, hand-to-mouth wage-slavery, with its stupefying, stultifying round; on the other the world of the free-born, the upright, the patrician souls to whom life is is life, and not mere vegetation—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever; noble, deep-breathed beings. Sonorous voice of man; silvern, sweetly modulated tones of woman; all the glorious music and texture of the life refined—that alone constitute man's pre-eminence over beast, and justify Hamlet's apostrophe.

The very dogs in such environment are separated from the curs of the canine world by a chasm as wide as that dividing the human spheres.....Pater starts suddenly. There is a rustling in the brown leaves, a sniffing and pattering in the silent wood. Soon two pairs of bright doggie eyes are gazing at him through the herbage—smiling, careless, magnanimous, friendly eyes—and two tails wag behind, almost in apology. Pater, on his part, uneasy in the company of nobility, would fain have apologized for his intrusion. And yet the poor *gentle* man might have met all mankind on footings of equality; for had he not sounded all the chords of life—seen all, heard all, felt all, owned all? *Owned?* you say; where, then, was *his* estate? Even yours, my lord; it is the Estate of Man. And so Pater said, "God dog! fine fellow! Ha, ha, old chap!" And the dogs understood him, every word, wagged their tails, and trotted off again, and he heard them pattering in the distant leaves.....Pater rose and reclimbed the wall, and, turning homeward, wondered rather sadly what was life worth to him. On the Tenement stairs joy and warmth filled his heart again. Aloft a voice cried "Daddy!" and in a moment he had folded in his arms his little Pater's son!

Le Miserable.

Taste.

Refinement and restraint of feeling are nowhere and at no time insisted on as essentials in the Christian scheme of social ethics. On the contrary, they are frequently condemned, and people are warned that æsthetic allurements are a danger to their immortal souls. These facts should be brought before bawling advocates of the Christian Faith who insolently (and falsely) claim that Christianity has protected learning and advanced knowledge.

We are justified in our assertion that coarseness of taste is compatible with the profoundest piety, and with the most strenuous Christian activity can be proved from broad facts. The Salvation Army has within recent years received well-advertised recognition from the most influential quarters. One of the most run-after Christian orators of to-day is Billy Sunday, an ex-pugilist. Even clergymen who would not like to be thought vulgar, but who are keenly desirous of meeting all classes of men on their own level, exclaim in the heat of their enthusiasm that Christianity is the greatest gamble in the world! Everything is done on the part of those out "to win souls" to make admission to the Christian fold easy and attractive. Churches and chapels have week-night "tea services" in various centres for sailors and soldiers, and pious touts may be observed buttonholing passing Service men, and "compelling them to come in." The text upon which up-to-date Christian drummers exhaust most of their energies is this: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We venture to say that a person's tastes is, in 999 cases out of 1,000, a reliable index to his moral standard. We do not associate Billingsgate with thought at a high elevation. Do not let us be misunderstood. We are not stigmatizing even gross vulgarity, which prevails among certain ignorant sections of the people (rich and poor), *as a crime*. Unconscious vulgarity is as common, perhaps, as unconscious

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humour. The ignorant, vulgar man is not, as a rule, class-conscious—or self-conscious, if it comes to that. He is what he is by reason of his parentage, surroundings, associates, and want of upbringing. Such a man is not to be sneered at, blamed, or condemned for his vulgarity. It is *not* vulgarity—*to him*. But he *is* to be classified—and anyone who knows better is not doing him or his kind a service by going to the other extreme of praising, encouraging, and even *copying*, his coarse vulgarisms. And we do claim that we are justified in stigmatizing the "educated" Christians who adopt such methods as being guilty of the most anti-social conduct. We have heard of Parliamentary candidates, sprigs of the aristocracy, going round amongst labourers, garbed like themselves, and smoking short clay pipes. And we have heard of intelligent labourers who were capable of being *insulted* by such a proceeding. But they did not make their resentment vocal. They had enough sense and restraint to understand that silent contempt was the best policy.

Lack of taste is every day exhibited in the impudent noisiness of the religious tout and cadger. They are, in this War, having the time of their lives; and the orthodox press gives plenty of laudatory notices. What strikes one as the leading feature of such people (after their noses) is their hopeless incapacity to discriminate. But that is always what distinguishes coarse and vulgar minds. The headlong and violent blatancy of their processes causes blurring; the finer sensibilities and perceptions of the brain are atrophied, and differentiation and distinction become impossible. Even approximately accurate classification is beyond them wholly.

Lack of taste is always to be found combined with lack of true knowledge. The mental activities of the many are directed not to the acquisition of true knowledge and of the equipment or *desire* to beautify life, but to the development of that animal cunning necessary to self-preservation, self-protection, and self-aggrandisement as a weapon to be used against a world of potential competitors, each of which is busy acquiring the same "education" for himself. To such an anarchy has the teachings of Christianity reduced us! The Victorians had their faults. Some of them treated the poor like beasts, and, naturally, the poor multiplied *as beasts*. But are some of our modern Georgians any better? And are they helping matters by encouraging the idea that a bestial state of life is to be prized?

The stock-in-trade of the pre-War political and religious bluffer—"honey, money, soap, and butter"—is, happily, in the minds of many in all ranks of society coming to be despised. The assertiveness of the individual mind is the herald of the doom of supernaturalism. The independence of the individual mind is that doom accomplished, and the collapse of all the organized hypocrisies of hundreds of years. But progress from intellectual bondage to intellectual freedom should never be represented—as religious touts represent justification by faith to be—as the work of a moment, painless and easy. Things worth keeping are never found without assiduous effort and toil: mental freedom is one of them.

Ignotus.

"To Cambria Enslaved."

(Y gwir yn erbyn y byd.—The truth against the world).

Thy spirit flamed in bygone years. O land
Of wind-swept mountain-crag and headlong flood!
For thee great leaders shed their patriot blood,
Nor deemed it dear the price they paid. The hand
Of tyrant hatred crushed thy just demand
For peaceful cult of muse in leisure's hour,
Frowned on thy zeal for wisdom's ancient dower.
Fast linked with feudal might, the priestly band,
Suspicious, saw thine aspiration's goal,
Dazzled thine eyes with sight of mystic wine,
With many a fairy tale of Palestine
Thy simple heart beguiled; shall mitre, stole,
Or bigot's frown put out the light divine?
Flame forth once more: win freedom for thy soul.

D. V. T.

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. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. F. A. Davies, "A Visit to the Western Front."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Swasey, Dales, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

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Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta, "The Wishing Cap." Performed by children of the Secular Sunday-school. Silver Collection.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Secularism and Social Reforms"; 7, "God and the War."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall,): 6.30, Annual Meeting of Members for Election of Officers, etc.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. C. H. Chandler, "Men and Scenes in France."

Outdoor.

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Jail Square): 5, R. Ogilvie, "An Atheist's Reply to Cardinal Bourne"

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and Death.—The Editor	217
The Christ-Myth.—J. T. Lloyd	218
"The Saint Paul of Darwinism."—Mimnermus	219
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	220
To the Members and Branches of the National Secular Society.—Chapman Cohen	224
Mr. Maskelyne and the Spirits.—W. Mann	224
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	227

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Nonsense.

We said last week that nothing seemed strong enough to stop the clergy talking nonsense. And the statement applies with equal force to religious writers as a whole. Presumably it is the fault of the subject. One cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled, and one cannot preach on a nonsensical subject and talk sense. When Charles II. was asked how he could account for the popularity of a certain shallow-minded preacher, he replied that "His nonsense suited their nonsense," and the reply serves as an explanation of much that occurs to-day. Anyway, we had hardly got rid of last week's notes before we came across another illustration of what we had said, this time from the *Times*, which provides its readers with a weekly religious article from an anonymous correspondent. The article is entitled "The Easter Assurance. An Answer to a Moral Demand." Where the moral demand exists it is impossible to say. It is as imaginary as the assurance is doubtful. Those who find comfort in the writer's "assurance" will quite justify Charles's explanation—His nonsense suits their nonsense.

* * *

A Satire and an Absurdity.

What is the "Easter assurance?" What is "the moral demand" to which an answer is given? The Easter message is, of course, the resurrection. "Christ has risen"! And that follows upon the Christmas message of Peace on earth, good will to men! The first part of the message is a satire, the second is an insult to civilized reason. Think of "Peace on earth" when the nations who accept and profess the message are engaged in more ruthless slaughter than the world has yet seen, when the deaths of only a few hundred men are summed up in the laconic message "All was quiet at the Front yesterday"! When has there been peace on earth during the whole period of Christian history? Christian peace is like Christian veracity: it is something peculiar to itself. There is nothing like it in the world. And it is well for the world that there is not. It would be better still for the world if neither were so general. And the satire is equalled by the insult. A resurrection from the dead is beyond human belief, because it is outside the power of human conception. No one can *believe* it to be true, one can only *say* one believes it. The savage credits it because he is ignorant of the processes of life and of the nature of death. The civilized man cannot because his knowledge of life and death—imperfect though that knowledge may be—excludes real belief. A mere formula is made to usurp the place of reasoned conviction. The modern Christian does really try hard to remain a savage, but he is not altogether independent of his environment. The modern man will out, and the faith of the savage is apt to wear thin when it runs up against the insistent pressure of civilized life.

* * *

A Useless Example.

The *Times* writer is concerned with the many thousands of young men who have died and are dying during the War. To them and to us, he says, "faith in the resurrection assures us that those who have passed out of our sight have lost nothing that made their life true and beautiful." How so? Faith in the resurrection of Jesus can prove nothing so far as we are concerned. If Christ was God how can what happened to him be any indication of what will happen to us? On the Christian hypothesis he belonged to an altogether different order from that to which we belong. *His* resurrection may prove that Gods will not remain in the grave, it has no bearing upon what will happen to man. And he did many things that are beyond our power. To commence with, he got himself born without an earthly father. How many of us can accomplish that? He fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and had more food left at the end of the meal than he had at the beginning. Not even the Government Food Controller can do that. He walked on the waves, stilled the tempest with a word, cast devils out of men and women, converted water into wine. How many of us can do these things? And if we cannot imitate him in these things, why should we be able to imitate him in rising from the dead? His end matched his beginning. Both are equally reasonable; and the man who begins by crediting the one has naturally, no difficulty in accepting the other. If he was a God his example is useless to us. If he was a man his birth, life, and resurrection are, in the light of reason, a tissue of fantastic absurdities.

* * *

Morality and a Future Life.

The Christian doctrine of a future life, we are told, answers the moral demand that good shall prevail. It does nothing of the kind. The moral demand is that right shall prevail, not somewhere else, but here. And a postponement is not an answer. When a wrong is done, the moral demand is not satisfied because someone is punished for it. The moral demand is that it shall not occur at all. Man's faith in God is strained because the wrong occurs; it is not strengthened by being told that in some place God has straightened it all out again. That is merely stupefying the moral sense with the narcotic of faith. And reason is apt to reflect that, if there be a God, he made this world as well as the next. It would surely have been as easy to him to so arrange this world that the reasonable demands of the moral

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sense should be satisfied. The plea of another world in which God has made things right, is an admission that in this world he has made them all wrong. It is bringing God under the jurisdiction of a First Offenders Act. God is given another chance to redeem his character—somewhere else. He has admittedly forfeited it *here*; he will reform, and vindicate it *there*. Man is very forgiving to his gods. He excuses their blunders and palliates their iniquities. He *hopes* that God will behave himself better in the next world. He *knows* he has conducted himself but poorly in this. A future life in which the thousand-and-one injuries of this life are to be removed is the hypothesis of a knave that will satisfy only the credulity of a fool. * * *

Can the Future Atone?

The future cannot undo the past. An injustice once done, remains an injustice for ever. Think of the folly, the criminal folly, of telling the people of Belgium, or Siberia, or Poland, who have seen their homes ruined, their sons and brothers and fathers killed, their daughters, sisters, and mothers outraged, that justice will be done in the next world! Revenge—natural, inevitable revenge—may be gratified; but will that restore the life of the one or the honour of the other? How can the next world make good the loss of the many thousands of young lives that might have been spent in labour to make the world better worth living in? It is this world that mourns their loss; it is this world that is the poorer for their going. Poorer it might have been had they lacked the courage to face the prospect of departure; but the loss remains a loss none the less. Our grief over their death bears witness to the loss we have sustained, and it gives the lie to the pulpit theorizing of these pious traffickers in human sorrow. It is bad enough that our moral sense should be outraged by the slaughter of the world's youth, but surely there is no need to outrage our reason by this attempted justification of their death. * * *

Away with Cant.

Death sits crowned in thousands of homes to-day, and will sit enthroned in many more with the passing of each day's sun. The fact is before us, gross and palpable, and we all face it with what resolution we may. But it is surely unnecessary to pretend that this world-disaster is a blessing in disguise, and that childish faith in a fantastic future life compensates for the loss the world is experiencing. It is a lie to say that those who have died "have lost nothing that made their life true and beautiful," even though it may be true they would have lived a poorer life had they lacked the courage to lose it. They have lost all. *If* there is a gain, it lies with [those who remain. The profit from the dead lies with the living; but it need not be the base gain of these profiteers of the pulpit. Our young men have faced death with their heads up and their eyes open, and we only show ourselves worthy of their sacrifice when we clear our minds of cant and face their loss with something of the same courage with which they faced their end.

Chapman Cohen.

The God of the Bible is an old Jew. A maniac, and even a monomaniac.....A furious sort of fool who passes his time in grumbling, threatening, howling like an angry wolf, and spending his time in a delirium of rage shut up in his cloud. He is a fool who thinks himself Judge, Public Accuser, and Executioner all in one. We are amazed at the tenacity of his hatred, which fills the Bible with bloodthirsty murmurings. —*Romain Rolland, "Jean Christophe."*

The Christ-Myth.

II.

(*Concluded from p. 207.*)

Some theologians make a distinction between Jesus and Christ. A few maintain that Jesus became the Christ as an historical character, and generally speak of him as Jesus Christ, whilst others regard the Gospel Jesus as a Divinely endowed human being, and Christ as a purely theological creation. Such thinkers as Dr. Anderson, of Dundee, however, deny the historicity of both the Gospel Jesus and Christ, and yet worship the latter as the completest manifestation of God. We are in full agreement with Dr. Anderson as to the unhistoricity of both Jesus and Christ, but differ from him absolutely in his estimate of Christ as a veritable revelation of any superhuman being, our contention being that no such personality has ever existed, and, consequently, that no revelation of him is conceivably possible. And yet there are divines not a few who still believe that Jesus and Christ are two names of one historical character, who lived on earth in the capacity of the God-man. They assume an air of superiority, and refer contemptuously to such Biblical critics as Strauss and Bauer, declaring that they have outlawed themselves "in the sight of all sober judges. What did Bauer, for example, say about the Four Gospels? Simply that they contain not so much history, serving as a basis for dogmas, as dogmas or abstract conceptions turned into history." Bauer says:—

> We have shown that all that which constitutes the historical Christ, what is said of him and what we know of him, belongs to the world of conception, and indeed of Christian conception, and consequently has nothing to do with a man belonging to the real world.

Surely that is a sane and safe position to occupy, against which no valid arguments can be advanced. Henry C. Sheldon, an American, has published *A Critical History of Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*, which, though weakly critical, is in no true sense a history. With the pseudo-historical aspect of it we are not now directly concerned; but as a criticism of the anti-Christian theories of last century it is a highly amusing failure. Strauss is pronounced an unreliable critic of the Gospel Jesus, because in his later years he plunged "into the abyss of materialism and negation." That fatal plunge, the author admits, did not "immediately discredit" his critical work; "yet this dismal transition cannot be wholly put out of sight in the estimate which is to be formed of the competency of Strauss to deal successfully with the deeper problems which belong to the history and philosophy of religion." It is beyond all doubt that such an illogical and immoral insinuation puts Mr. Sheldon entirely out of court as an honest and competent defender of the Christian faith. Were such a canon of criticism to be generally accepted all unbelievers in the inspiration of the Bible and the truth of the Gospel narrative would be excluded from the list of "sober judges"; and this is the kind of exclusion in which Mr. Sheldon unblushingly indulges throughout his book, thereby disqualifying profound scholars like Mr. John M. Robertson and Professors Gilbert Murray and Bury for a seat among "sober judges." Merely to state such a pretension is to condemn it. And yet all Mr. Sheldon's attempts to refute the arguments of unbelieving critics are laughably futile. Assuming the existence of the Heavenly Father and the absolute perfection of the character of Jesus he says:—

> To take Jesus for the ideal means, in short, little else than to accept the historical demonstration. Men

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simply find it impossible out of all the resources furnished by the annals of the past to paint in the abstract an ideal which can take precedence of that which stands forth in concrete form in the Gospel story. No theory about the necessary imperfection of the individual can be permitted to contradict the well-attested fact that in Jesus Christ the real and the ideal found their identity.

Now, as a matter of fact, we do not admit the ideal perfection or sinlessness of the Gospel Jesus. Brief as the alleged record is, it presents him as vain, conceited, claiming equality and even oneness with God. No sane believer in a Supreme Being would have spoken about himself as he almost invariably did. To believe in him was man's chief duty and privilege, while not to believe in him was to be damned for ever. Obedience to his commands was the sole condition of continued acceptance with Heaven. If a person ever lived who made such wild claims for himself, the only sensible inference we can draw is that he was a more or less mad visionary. Then, on the practical side of his character, he was anything but ideal. He even disowned his mother and brethren, who regarded him as beside himself. His one ambition was to be followed as he wandered up and down the country, passionately urging people to leave everything and go after him. "Suffer me to go and bury my father first," one pleaded; but Jesus angrily answered, "No; let the dead bury their dead, but come thou and follow me." With all these strange characteristics in his mind, Strauss spoke of Jesus as a problem, an enigma; but Mr. Sheldon asks, "Why should one who has so powerfully affected the course of history be accounted a perfectly unsolved problem? Is not such a conclusion a virtual judgment on the criticism of Strauss?" For once we are forced to take Mr. Sheldon's side. Jesus is not an unsolved problem, but a burst bubble; not an unread riddle, but a spent illusion. That he has powerfully affected the course of history cannot be disputed; but it is equally certain that he has affected it largely to its detriment. When he came to power under Constantine, the clock of progress not only stopped, but was turned backwards several long hours. His history has been one of turmoil, cruelty, and war. The Church herself has been a well-nigh continuous battle-field, party rising up against party, and faction crushing faction, love being conspicuous by its absence. Mr. Sheldon adds that "a valid criticism surely ought to make of Jesus something better than a mere enigma"; but is a sheer myth of any more value than an unsolved problem? Christ is a myth, and in reality has never done anything, either good or evil; but the Church has wrought mightily in his name, and naturally held him responsible for all. She has opposed social reforms and justified slavery in his name; she has tortured, burnt, and beheaded whom she called heretics to the glory of his name; and she has engaged in many bloody wars in order that his so-called kingdom might come. But at last both the myth behind the Church and the Church herself are being increasingly seen in their true light, and are slowly disappearing. To day's cry is for realities, not dreams; for the light of reason, not the vagaries of faith; for the kingdom of man, here and now, not the kingdom of God in a world to come.

J. T. Lloyd.

CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE.

Ah! how true it is that Christianity has not, as you say, Christianized the world! There is something curious in the spectacle of the embarrassment of every sect of Christians in accounting for this fact. I know no subject on which there is more miserable floundering among incompatible views and untenable assertions.—*Harriet Martineau.*

"The Saint Paul of Darwinism."

The distance, and as it were the space around man, grows with the strength of his intellectual vision and insight; his world becomes profounder; new stars, new enigmas, and notions are ever coming into view.—*Nietzsche.*

Grant Allen deserved well of his generation, for his finest and most suggestive work was that of a popularizer of science. He fell early under the domination of the master minds of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, and he never tired of bringing their teaching before popular readers. He was not a specialist, but he had a complete acquaintance with science, and he had a splendid and attractive gift of interpretation. "The Saint Paul of Darwinism," someone dubbed him, and certainly his power of popularizing the master's teaching was very remarkable.

Whatever Grant Allen wrote was always pointed and illuminative. This was, in part, due to the variety of his early experiences. Before he was twenty-five he knew Canada, England, and the West Indies. He was educated in America, in Dieppe, in Birmingham, and at Oxford. He also had some experience in the Indian Statistical Department. And all this varied experience of men and affairs was turned to account in his writings. His papers on biology, philology, the evolution of species, and kindred subjects, were bright and readable, even at times amusing. As a rule, when serious scientists try to be humorous, the result is "too deep for tears." This racy gift of Grant Allen's made him suspect in some scientific circles. Serious pedants professed to scorn his scientific journalism. They despised the star-gossip of Richard Proctor on the same grounds, preferring, presumably, the scholastic and unbearable simplicity of the lamented Dionysius Lardner, whose chaste volumes used to cumber booksellers' fourpenny boxes, alongside such light reading as Zimmermann *On Solitude* and Hervey's *Meditations Among the Tombs.* Whether the scientists felt that, having gained their knowledge by years of work, it was prodigality to give it away so easily, or whether the old clerical spirit had found a new lodgment in scholastic circles, may be an open question. Nothing appeared to irritate some of the authors of ponderous monographs so much as having their life-work made intelligible to the masses. But Grant Allen hoisted the engineers with their own gunpowder. He opened up a new universe to tens of thousands, with a charm all its own.

Who that came fresh to the study of science could ever say an ungrateful word of the author of *Carving a Cocoanut, The Æsthetic Analysis of an Egyptian Obelisk, The Romance of a Wayside Weed, The Daisy's Pedigree,* and scores of other delightful and informative papers? He awoke a new interest, and, unconsciously, led the unsuspecting reader through a course of Darwin, Spencer, Tyler, and many another disregarded author. In entrancing chapters, Grant Allen led the large reading public to understand the mysteries that, expressed in the esoteric terminology of scientific language, else had remained comparatively unknown. Now, thanks to Grant Allen, the ordinary reader has a clear idea of the labours of the great thinkers of our time, and, it may be, see more clearly the tendency of those movements than those who, with technical knowledge, dissect the old faiths whilst still worshipping the Goddess Grundy.

Grant Allen was more than an amateur, but he carried his weight of learning gracefully. Though prejudiced against the classics, he produced a translation, with an anthropological introduction of Catullus's most famous poem. From the lofty region of thought and scholarship it is a sharp curve to turn to Grant Allen the

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novelist. In the days of threadbare plots, when all the old devices that were as embroidery to well-spun stories, were worn to skeletons of construction, it was a pleasure to find Stevenson and Rider Haggard rivalled in their romances by facts from the laboratory, and problems from the researches of philosophers. Towards the end of his career Allen wrote certain "Hill-top" novels, penned purely for didactic purposes. *The Woman Who Did* and *The British Barbarians* did not set the Thames afire, but, owing to clerical influence, they caused a drop in the sale of Allen's other novels. The Irish booksellers, as was no doubt natural in a priest-ridden country, refused to sell these books, and Allen found, to his cost, that propagating advanced opinions was not "roses all the way."

Theology has always met strange bed-fellows, and one is not surprised to find the versatile Grant Allen among the theologians. He was rightly proud of being one of the first to apply seriously evolutionary theories to the belief in deity. In his preface to his masterpiece, *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, he said:—

> It contains, I believe, the first extended effort that has yet been made to trace the genesis of the belief in God from its earliest origin in the mind of primitive man up to its fullest development in advanced and etherealized Christian theology.

It was an honest attempt to explain a big matter, and Allen had his reward. The book made a deep impression, and Herbert Spencer wrote: "I congratulate you on its achievement. I had no idea you had been devoting such an immensity of labour and research to the subject. The bringing together of the evidence in a coherent form, and showing its bearing on the current creed, can scarcely fail to have a great effect." The tribute was deserved. In Allen's fine book the whole theistic question is discussed in a nutshell. He shows quite clearly that the Christian idea of deity is but a residuum. The attenuated deity is what is left when the other gods of the Pantheon are broken to pieces and ground to powder; simply the abstract form and general designation. A bubble is blown with real soapsuds, but it grows ever thinner and more transparent, and is most beautiful when it is at the point of breaking. The beauty does not save it, it breaks and disappears.

Allen met with great opposition on account of his book. Publishers, who were simply tradesmen, feared to offend their customers, and would not allow him to give full expression to his ideas. Science, pure and simple, did not pay; and novel-writing, to which he was compelled to turn, had to be carried on within absurd and galling restrictions. The publishers wanted "smooth tales, generally of love." The last kind of work in which he exercised his versatile pen was art criticism and guide-book writing. His papers on Italian art are as valuable as they are interesting, and in his series of *Historic Cities* he showed us what a guide-book should be.

No religious ceremony was permitted at his funeral. It would have been an outrage on his life and teaching if any theological invocations had been intoned over his dead body. His life was a battle against creeds and conventions; he lived free of such bonds and he died free of them. "The rest is silence."

Below all the strife of opponents the quiet growth of appreciation, silent but real, gathers strength. For in the heart of the democracy his lessons have sunk deep, and if professors frown and undergraduates sneer, it is something to have helped the people to grasp the teachings of science. Allen called himself a humble disciple of Darwin and Spencer, but, in popularizing the work of these masters, he made an enviable reputation, and what writer desires more?

Mimnermus.

The Mechanism of Man.

Physiology, although a quite modern study, has made enormous progress, and the functions of the body, both in health and disease, are now extensively understood. But much remains to be accomplished before this far-reaching department of biology can more than approximate to exactitude. Anatomy preceded physiology in order of historical development, and when we recall the obstinate and vindictive antagonism of the Church towards the pioneers of anatomical inquiry, we cease to wonder that our knowledge of the workings of the animal-organism remains incomplete. But the advances of the science of physiology are now much greater than at any earlier time. Improved methods of investigation are to-day employed in all the leading medical and biochemical colleges in the civilized world. From Tokio and Calcutta to Paris, London, and Vienna; from Cambridge and Edinburgh to the up-to-date laboratories of America, legions of workers are engaged in mastering the problems presented by the marvellous organic substances of Nature.

Many years ago Huxley discerned in protoplasm the physical basis of life. The life and growth of the human organism, in common with the life and growth of all other animals, depends upon the activity of the living material termed protoplasm. And this is equally true of the entire vegetable kingdom. Protoplasm is contained in minute bodies called cells, and one of the single-celled creatures, the tiny amœba, is a fair example of the myriads of cell-units which build up the bodies of multicellular animals such as fish, birds, reptiles, and mammals. A thousand amœbæ arranged in a row would barely measure an inch. Yet each amœba is a complete animal, although, when viewed under the microscope, it seems a mere jelly speck. Still, this primitive creature will protrude any part of its surface so as to secure a fragment of food, or, if the nutrient particle is in contact with the amœba, the unicellular animal closes round the material and absorbs it. Any part of the amœba's body functions as a mouth. It has no organs of any kind, and breathes from all areas of its body surface. Having grown to a given size, it reproduces itself by splitting into two parts, and this process of reproductive division constantly proceeds.

Countless millions of cells similar to those that form amœbæ enter into the architecture of the higher animal body. The human skin, nerves, blood, bone—indeed, all our organs—are constructed by cells. Like the simple amœba, the human body-cells are perpetually changing with the activities of life. Moreover, in the blood-stream of man and the lower animals reside vast colonies of colourless cells—the phagocytes—whose function appears to be that of warriors, for they promptly attack and devour any detrimental substances which invade the circulatory system. The resemblance of these white phagocytes to the amœba is striking, although, unlike the amœba, they are confined to the higher animal blood. Our body-cells multiply by means of division, and thus growth takes place, and injuries to the organism are repaired. The somatic cells absorb the nutrient substances conveyed by the blood, utilize it, develop, and reproduce themselves. New tissue is thus formed. All living Nature, from the lowliest organism to the majestic oak and lordly mammal, consists of cells.

The biological cell is a protoplasmic fragment containing a nucleus, which usually carries a smaller body, the nucleolus. But protoplasm forms the chief material of the cell, which is generally enclosed by a cell-wall. A speck of protoplasm bearing a nucleus is the simplest mode of life positively known to exist. The plasm of

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the cell-body is termed cytoplasm, while that of the nucleus is the nucleoplasm.

Just as a society is composed of social units, so is the organism constituted of cells. In the amœba we find that all areas of its body-surface function more or less alike. But in the higher living realms a physiological division of labour has been evolved. This differentiation has immense advantages. Not only are specialized organs more efficient in fulfilling their functions, but in the progress of life these peculiar structures have become specially fitted to their work. The chief function of the cells is to build and repair the tissues. They are thus occupied from the cradle to the grave. In one body-region the busy cells are eliminating waste products, in another they are active in restoring with living substances the places vacated by dead material.

Of tissues seven kinds are known. The muscular and nervous tissues—the master tissues—are instrumental in consuming and controlling the energies of the body. The remaining five tissues are the supporting tissues. These furnish energy to the master tissues, sustain them in position, feed, and guard them. The muscular tissue mainly consists of cellular layers arranged end to end. These cells possess the important property of becoming widened or shortened when stimulated by nerve impulses. Nerve tissue is composed of delicately branched cells. The fibres or branches of some nerve cells reach a length of several feet, and may extend from the vertebral column to the foot. The nerve fibres which conduct impulses *to* the nerve cells are termed sensory fibres, while those which transmit impulses *from* the nerve cells are the motor fibres. The organs of the body act in response to the impulses sent through the motor fibres.

Connective tissue is also constructed by cells generously furnished with delicate fibres. These last are of two kinds—attenuated and rigid white fibres and coarser yellow fibres which are extremely elastic. This tissue is present in all parts of the body, and connects the other cells and tissues. The muscle cells are interlaced with it, while the tendons at the terminations of the muscles are almost entirely made up of it. As a matter of fact, if all the non-connective tissue were taken away, the connective tissue would provide a complete model of all the animal organs. As Coleman remarks in his excellent *Biology*: "How abundant this tissue is in the skin may be known from the fact that leather consists entirely of it."

Oil is deposited in the connective tissue cells, and this gives rise to fatty or adipose tissue. The epithelial tissue is formed through one or even several layers of cells lying in close contact. This form of tissue is devoid of connective tissue, and, indeed, of any fibres, and is therefore the simplest of the tissues. The outer layer of the integument or skin—the epidermis—is composed of epithelial tissue, as is also the mucous membrane which lines the interior of the body. Epithelial tissue is destitute of blood vessels, and the epithelial cells derive their nourishment from blood liquids which ooze through the adjacent tissues. These cells are mostly transparent, and the redness of our lips and gums is due to the blood which lies beneath their mucous membrane. The nails of our fingers and toes consist of epithelial cells, and, when clean, are practically transparent. And, in shaving, as Huxley once said, so long as we do not penetrate the epidermis no bleeding results.

Another kind of epithelial cell serves as a glandular lining. Glands secrete useful fluids, and likewise form noxious excretions which, in healthy conditions, are expelled from the body. Then there is cartilage or gristle—a tough if pliable tissue. Cartilage is extremely useful in easing jars and jolts, and in the case of moveable joints in diminishing friction.

When scrutinized under the microscope the hardest bones are seen to contain small cavities. Within these cavities the bone cells lie immured in mineral matter. The stone-like bone is developed by the living bone cells which deposit phosphate of lime and limestone around themselves, and thus build themselves a prison. The imprisoned bone cells are sustained by nourishment which passes to them through minute channels. The duration of cell-life varies considerably. Bone cells remain alive for years, while other cells are born and die in the space of a few short hours.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Acid Drops.

We really sympathize with Mr. Bottomley over one incident connected with the recent German advance. The hanging Virgin of Albert, which was secured in its place by mechanical means, but which Mr. Bottomley "boomed" as a miracle, has now fallen—taken down or shot down by the Germans. So, bang goes another miracle. After doing so much to help God during the War, it would only have been gracious of God to have helped Mr. Bottomley a little. The legend was that the War would end on the day the statue fell. But it is a big blunder to date a religious prophecy. It should have run simply "after the statue falls."

The truth about the Virgin of Albert is that it was fixed in its leaning position by British engineers. Every soldier who had been in Albert knew all about it. The *very* surprising thing is that Mr. Bottomley, who said he had been in Albert, knew nothing about it. Such want of observation is very regrettable.

The Rev. Professor David Smith, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for April 4, tells an inquirer who doubts the justice and goodness of God that it is not his true self that is speaking, but a lower and less worthy one. All doubters are mad. Scepticism is a form of insanity. It is that kind of silly talk which is making unbelievers by the thousand; and if he but knew it, Dr. Smith is doing our cause incalculable service by flinging such senseless expressions into circulation.

Providence is as careless of its churches as of its children. Iver Heath Church, Slough, has been broken into by thieves for the sixth time.

Londoners were startled on Good Friday by heavy rolls of thunder, but considerable relief was experienced when it was realized that it was only "Heaven's artillery," to quote a newspaper phrase.

Oh, the glorious free press of England! In the case in which the Rev. Sir Douglas Edward Scott, Bart., was charged with bigamy with a barmaid, a number of papers suppressed the fact that defendant was a clergyman. And the dear clergy so seldom pay for advertisements.

The *Ashton-under-Lyne Reporter* contains a smart passage of arms between the Rev. Mr. Cannings and a Rev. Mr. Parry who had objected to State help being given to poor children. Says Mr. Cannings:—

> Within a stone's throw of Mr. Parry's door there were little children living in wretched slums, ill-clad and insufficiently fed, and very many of them needing medical treatment. Mr. Parry, as a beneficed clergyman, enjoyed a secure position, his food and shelter safely provided. The progressive merely asked that the same security that the State gave to the clergyman should be given also to needy childhood, and that provision should be made for these helpless victims of unjust social conditions. And to foam against these humane and reasonable requests, and ridicule them as "State Pap" was to reveal one's-self as out of touch with the modern demands of reason and humanity.

The only comment we have to make is when Mr. Cannings sees so much, it is a pity that he does not pitch the rest of his religious lumber overboard and have done with it.

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Canon Burroughs asks all Christians to stay away from theatres that openly flout "all that we stand for." The world would be a pretty place if some of these clerics had their way. There would be a committee of clergymen sitting to decide which plays should be produced, and they would probably enforce the singing of a hymn before the curtain rose, and a collection in aid of the Churches after the performance closed.

Canon Burroughs, in an Easter message to the *Daily News*, quoted a passage from an officer's letter at the Front, "Come on! Be a man and fight like hell." This is precisely what the dear clergy will never do. They much prefer to console the girls left behind by the fighting men.

Principal D. L. Ritchie, in an article entitled "An Epochal God," which appeared in the *Christian World* for March 18, informs us that hitherto we have had two kinds of God, namely, the intellectual and the sentimental, and that now a brand new Deity is about to put in an appearance, who will be known as the moral God. Thus we learn that the Divine Being is a moulded, not a moulding, character—man's creature, not his Creator. That is to say, man has made God in his own image, not God, man's. We have been saying this for many years; but it is a new and most refreshing thing to find it so clearly expressed by a clergyman, and a trainer of clergymen, as well.

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, the popular Wesleyan minister, tells us that what we need most at present is a new religion, the old one being out of date and impotent; and the great refrain of a lecture recently delivered by him was: "O, God, when will it come?" Christianity, as we know it, has had its day, and even its ministers are looking for its successor. At any rate, Mr. Pearse is said to have held his audience spellbound as he flung orthodoxy to the background and made "a living humanitarian religion his outstanding theme." The world *is* moving after all.

After extolling the "noble art of self-defence" at a boxing show at Birmingham, Bishop Wakefield said he had just challenged Sir John Holder, the brewer, to stand up in a bout. The Bishop added, "Sir John has given me best." What a pity the contest did not take place! In the event of victory, the Bishop might have aspired to the Boxing Championship.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll declares that "in the new world of Christ and nowhere else is there any hope." Then this world is, indeed, absolutely without hope, for "the new world of Christ" is a sheer myth, and they who believe in it follow the veriest will-o'-the-wisp, though the majority of them know it not.

Sir William's credulity is a perfect marvel. Speaking of the resurrection of Christ, in the *British Weekly* for April 4, he says: "Who could have imagined the story of his resurrected life if it had never been? Who could have contrived that unimaginable blending of heaven and earth?" Why, the truth is that the world literally teemed with Saviour, God and resurrection stories. At that time of day there was no need to create or imagine anything, but simply to arrange and adapt materials that were already in existence in superabundance. The Christian myth is only one of a great multitude of similar ones.

We are fast approaching a religious agreement as to the cause and perpetuation of the War. We have several times cited religious speakers and writers in this country who said that God allowed the War to spiritually purify us, and permitted it to continue so that we might become religiously clean. Now, the Ex-Chancellor of Gemany, Dr. Von Michaelis says that the German people were also becoming spiritually corrupt, and "God desired to preserve us from complete materialism." So its all for our good. We should be duly thankful!

Rev. W. A. Duckworth, Lord of the Manors of Frome and other places, died leaving an estate valued at over £186,000. Of course, this money did not come from his profession as a clergyman, but it is clear that being a clergyman offered no bar to its possession. So "Blessed be ye poor."

The Church Missionary Society is appealing for £10,000 to Christianize Palestine. After promising to found a Jewish State, a vigorous attempt is to be made to turn it into a Christian one. Of course, the Jewish State is a myth; the most that can happen is a State in which a large proportion are Jews, and in which Jewish freedom is secured. But it is not playing the game to ask British Christians to supply £10,000 to undermine the Jewish State before it is established. And there really are quite enough Christian States in the world. That is one cause of the present trouble. A few more non-Christian States might make things a little pleasanter.

The dear clergy are always assuring the faithful that religion is without money and without price, but ecclesiastics are not innocent of finance. In a recent Chancery law case, the payment of a legacy of £100,000 by the late Baron Llangattock to the Welsh Church was ordered by the Judge. The touch of irony was added, for the followers of the Prince of Peace were instructed to invest the sum in War Loan.

Two women have been admitted as deacons by the Bishop of Llandaff. As most congregations are composed of ladies, Christianity promises to become almost entirely a feminist movement.

£117,503 was raised in the Salvation Army Self-Denial Week. This should have the pleasing result of keeping hell alight a little longer.

Rev. Fort Newton said at the City Temple the other day that "the greatest teacher of the Christian doctrine of forgiveness was Shelley." The peculiar thing is that this "greatest teacher" should have written himself down an Atheist. The truth is that what Shelley saw was the evils of malignity and of the spirit of revenge. Forgiveness is no more Christian than is gravitation. And of vigorous haters and practisers of revenge Christian nations are easily first.

Some of the Good Friday newspapers were rather startling. One had a leading article, "The Day of Calvary." What was that editor thinking of to print "news" two thousand years old?

A Sunday paper declares that Father Bernard Vaughan "makes his own bed and sweeps his own room." Millions of people do the same, but they do not get flowers thrown at them.

The *International* (Johannesburg) of February 8 publishes the following:—

> A coloured man was going along an East Rand Suburb one Sunday morning. He saw a number of people entering a Church, and as he was far from home he mingled with them intending to spend the hours in worship; but no sooner than he was inside he was jostled out. A policeman was hailed and he spent the next hour in the Charge Office instead of the church. On Monday he was convicted and fined £1 for trespassing in a private place—a church. We cannot wonder at that man turning round and saying, "I shall have no more of your religious mockery with its theoretical 'Come Unto Me,' and your practical £1 or a month with hard labour.

But what would you? Even in Christian America the white man will not usually worship in the same church as the black one. Christian brotherhood has its limitations.

Owing to the demand for War-news, the newspapers were published on Good Friday, and the obsequious editors did their best to put a little piety in their columns. One penpusher wrote, "London was mostly at church," undismayed by the headline in the same page, "Seaside Resorts Packed."

The Bishop of Birmingham declares that "England needs to be aroused by suffering." Indeed! It is a pity that the clergy evade their share of hardships.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 14, Liverpool; April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—April 28, Nuneaton.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—E. J Pearce, 2s. 6d.; J. Maclachlan, £1; J. S., 2s. 6d.; W. Booth, 5s.

Mrs. E. Taylor.—Very pleased to hear from you. Such heartfelt letters as yours does one good to read. We agree with you that nothing can exaggerate the horrors of the old English Factory System. And you have placed your finger on its greatest evil—it has accustomed generations to live in a way that should be impossible in a civilized country.

G. F. Lawes (Vancouver).—We were not thinking of, nor were we concerned with the personal character of the man. We were only interested in the nature and influence of the forces set at work. And we have seen nothing in the course of events to seriously change our opinion. Great ideas have a way of overleaping the character of those who express them.

D. McDermott.—The poem is an imitation of Burns, but *not* by a master hand, although the topic commends itself to Freethinkers. We have noticed what you inquire after in the journal indicated.

Bert Olds.—The number of clergymen of all denominations in Britain is probably about 50,000. As you say, the casualties amongst them are not striking. But then, as a class, they are exempt. We wish that all parents would follow your example in bringing up their children. The letter by "W. Sivertson" is quite a good one.

Robert Parker (Glasgow) writes that he is trying to show his gratitude for all we have done in keeping the paper going during the War, by putting it into as many new hands as possible. That is the kind of gratitude we want. When we are at liberty to write the story of *how* we managed, it will form quite a tale of adventure.

H. Dawson.—Glad to hear your son and his comrades find the *Freethinker* so interesting. As you say, it will tell its tale "when the boys come home."

W. Booth.—Your requirements have received attention. As you say, the difference between a German shell falling on a church and on a Freethought hall is considerable. One is an outrage; the other would have been a divine judgment.

We have to acknowledge several letters of thanks for parcels of literature sent to soldiers for distribution. We rejoice to know these have been found useful, and shall be pleased to send more, so far as we find it possible.

A. Hindley.—Sorry we cannot answer your questions at length. (1) Not received. (2) Shall be pleased to have an account if anything improper occurred when you asked to affirm. (3) We do not know the age of the person mentioned. (4) Certainly, in our opinion, the Bowman judgment legalized all bequests to any Freethought Society. (5) You will only find what you require in the twelve-volume edition of Ingersoll's Works. Thanks for your good opinion of our work.

General Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Bethnal Green Branch, 5s.; Manchester Branch, £1 4s. 10d.; "In Memoriam" Emma Theobalds, £2; Charles Day, 2s.

Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Bethnal Green Branch, 5s.; Manchester Branch, £1 4s. 10d.

J. Masters.—Thanks for securing two new readers, with a promise of more. Paper has been sent.

H. Amey.—Get your friend to have done with generalities, and ask him where, and in what way, Christianity acted as the champion of women.

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

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 visits Liverpool to-day (April 14), and lectures there in the hall of the Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street, at 3 and 7 o'clock. The Liverpool "saints" have been much troubled lately over the shortness of suitable halls—all being taken up in other directions for the War. Mr. Cohen hopes to see a good gathering, however, of all his Liverpool friends.

Our readers will be interested in the news that Mrs. Francis Gordon Foote, wife of our late editor's only son, presented her husband with a daughter on December 29, 1917. Mr. and Mrs. Foote reside at Berkley East, South Africa, hence the time between the event and the announcement. We congratulate the parents, and wish the young lady a safe and comfortable journey over the ills with which nature so thoughtfully provides newcomers.

The Executive of the N. S. S. has decided that the Annual Conference shall be held in London on Whit-Sunday, for which purpose the Queen's Hall has been engaged. Railway travelling is not over-pleasant under War conditions, but we hope that provincial Branches will make a special effort to send delegates. The business will be important, as will be seen by reference to another column in the present issue.

The *Manchester City News* for March 30 publishes a report of Mr. Cohen's last lecture in that city. The report is a very good one, and we notice it here in order to record a departure which is a welcome sign of the times. Reports have been much more frequent of late than they were, but there is still room for improvement. We are late in noticing the matter, but the fault is not ours. A copy of the paper has only just reached us.

The leaflet on *God and the Air-Raid* has been out of print for several months owing to delay connected with the shortage of labour. We have now a fresh supply, and they can be secured at 1s. per 100, postage 2d. extra. The leaflet has been found very useful, and the two editions that have been issued brought plain truths before Christians in a striking manner. We hope our readers will see that this edition gets the rapid circulation it deserves.

We are asked to announce that a debate between Mr. M. Maubrey and Mr. E. Bury has been arranged to take place at the Caxton Hall on April 17, at 8 o'clock. Subject, "The Ship Without a Rudder." Admission is free.

"Tab Can" writes:—

> I have noticed that in Europe, these last few years, the word "Pagan" is coming into employment. The population is slowly dividing, not into sects, but into Christian and Pagan. This shows advance. Gradually, I hope that the the Christians will slip back into a comparatively small minority, holding their own laws, morals, and customs, but unable to impose them upon the nations by force.
>
> Only, I would that those who are not of them (I am an Agnostic-Deist) should come forward, and boldly declare that all who accept Authority against Reason are intellectual enemies of mankind—for such they certainly are, however well-meaning.

Whatsoever nation should get the start of the other in making the proposal to reduce and fix the amount of its armed force, would crown itself with everlasting honour. The risk would be nothing; the gain certain. This gain would be the giving incontrovertible demonstration of its own disposition to peace, and of the opposite disposition in the other nation in case of its rejecting the proposal. *The proposition should be made in the most public manner*—should be an address from nation to nation. This, at the same time that it conciliated the confidence of the nation addressed, would make it impracticable for the government of that nation to neglect it, or to stave it off by shifts or evasions. It would sound the heart of the nation addressed. It would discover its intentions, and proclaim them to the world.—*Jeremy Bentham.*

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To the Members and Branches of the National Secular Society.

Directly after my re-election as President of the N. S. S., I said that in my opinion the time had arrived for an overhauling of the machinery of the Society. Further experience has served to confirm the opinion, which, indeed, is widely held throughout the country. I have no desire to dwell upon the defects of our organization—they are fairly apparent to those conversant with the N. S. S. My suggestions take the more positive form of reconstruction. And I am printing them here—preparatory to their being brought before the Conference—because I wish to give all the members and Branches of the Society ample time to reflect upon them and to digest them. I shall also be pleased to receive suggestions for improvement before they are placed on the Agenda.

My suggestions, which are governed by the ideas of securing a more efficient organization at headquarters and of giving all parts of the Society a more direct control of, and greater interest in, its work, are as follows:—

1. That the Executive consist of ten members, elected at the Annual Conference. Not more than one member of a Branch to be eligible for election. Members who do not belong to a Branch must belong to the Society for at least three years before being eligible for election on the Executive.
2. After the Conference of 1918, the names of all candidates for election, with the Branch—if any—to which they belong, shall appear on the Agenda, which shall be issued one month before the Conference.
3. The present Conference (1918) to nominate and elect the Executive.
4. An Annual Report and Balance Sheet shall be issued to all members of the Society.
5. Each Branch shall appoint a Corresponding Member of the Executive, who shall receive a report of all business done by the Executive, and be advised of any special and important business coming before the Executive.
6. In places where no Branch of the N. S. S. exists the Executive shall have power to appoint a representative who shall keep the Executive informed of all events touching the work and welfare of the N. S. S.
7. Branches to be grouped over given areas and an organizing secretary appointed as early as possible.
8. There shall also be appointed, as early as possible, an organizer for the whole of the country, with such duties and on such terms as shall be afterwards decided.
9. Either in conjunction with, or separate from, other officials there shall be appointed local press representatives, and a general Press Representative at headquarters, his duties to consist in watching all matters connected with Freethought work which may arise in the public press.
10. That it shall be an instruction to the Executive to appoint a Finance Committee and a Propagandist Committee.
11. That in place of the Interim Conference ordered by the Conference of 1917, the Executive be authorized to call an annual meeting of members and unattached Freethinkers for the discussion of such subjects as are of general interest and importance.
12. That the place of the Annual Conferences shall be determined by a vote of the Branches, the Executive having first ascertained what places are prepared to receive the Conference, and that the Conference shall not be held in the same town more than once in four years.
13. That whenever possible the Executive shall require a prospective member to be proposed and seconded by two members of the Society.
14. That at an early date steps be taken to (*a*) combine the N. S. S. and the Secular Society, Limited, under the general title of the National Secular Society, Limited, or (*b*) convert the N. S. S. into an incorporated body.

I am convinced that the above suggestions contain the skeleton of an organization that will consolidate the work done. During the two years I have been President of the N.S.S. I have spared myself in no degree. What has been done is before the party. The N.S.S. is stronger than it has been for years. Branches have greatly increased in number, and the membership has been almost doubled. Naturally, I am anxious that the results achieved should be conserved, and, I believe, this can best be done along the lines suggested. I hope, therefore, that Branches of the Society will give the whole matter their serious attention, and that the Conference of 1918 will mark the beginning of a new and flourishing era in the history of the N.S.S.

Chapman Cohen.

Mr. Maskelyne and the Spirits.

II.

(Concluded from p. 212.)

During the past 40 years I have investigated the manifestations of every Medium of note who has appeared in this country, and I have found nothing but fraud.—*J. N. Maskelyne to Mr. E. Smedley*, March 31, 1906.

Having obtained his flukey verdict over Mr. Maskelyne, Archdeacon Colley, of course, made the most of it. He gave lectures in different parts of the country, at which he made statements that Mr. Maskelyne regarded as distinctly libelous; and, in a letter to Mr. Smedley, he declares his intention of sending a shorthand reporter to take notes of Colley's statements. In another letter to Mr. Smedley (December 3, 1907), Mr. Maskelyne complains: "He (Colley) entirely suppresses the fact that the Jury gave a verdict against me solely because they thought I should have made the spirit disappear, and immediately I announced my intention of doing this he withdrew his challenge. One of the Jury also informed me that ten of them held out for two hours for a farthing damages but two cranks would not agree to less than £75. Colley claimed 3,000."

Mr. Maskelyne employed a private inquiry agent, who made some astonishing discoveries in Colley's past career, but as the Archdeacon is now dead—he died in October, 1912—we will bury the details with him.

Mr. Maskelyne, commenting on his death, observes (October 7, 1912), "He (Colley) was going to preach Spiritualism at the Church Congress, where he was generally laughed at, and I think the excitement was too much for his weak heart. He was awfully afraid of being buried alive, and directed that his body should be dissected at Birmingham Hospital and cremated."

In a letter to Mr. Smedley dated September 25, 1913, Mr. Maskelyne observes:—

> .....With reference to the address of Sir Oliver Lodge to the British Association, he has said nothing new. For many years he has believed in Spiritual Manifestations upon insufficient evidence. I have sat with him and Sir William Crookes at *Seances* and have seen them puzzled by the simplest tricks. The minds of Scientists are quite unsuited to such investigations, sharp school boys are much better. You often find that persons who are exceedingly clever in some respects are exceedingly foolish in others. One faculty appears to be enlarged at the expense of others.

But the most interesting letter of all is one dated April 15, 1909, it deals with Home, Dr. Wallace, Mrs.

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Guppy, and the Davenport Brothers. It runs as follows :—

St. Georges Hall, Langham Place, London, W.,
April 15th, 1909.

Dear Mr. Smedley,—In reply to your letter of the 12th inst., I must tell you that I never had an opportunity of attending Home's *Seances*. He was a great swell and never gave public *Seances* and never made a charge for his services but always expected a present worth 4 or 5 times more than he could charge as a fee. I have been told by persons who know him well that he used hypnotism largely, he could do very little with those he could not get under control. If you read reports of his *Seances* you will find that he went round the circle and made passes over each sitter. You must always bear in mind that a medium can produce an effect upon some persons that no Conjurer can produce. A Conjurer says I am going to show you a trick. A medium says I am going to raise the spirits of the dead. The effect upon persons who believe such a statement is very great, in fact they become hallucinated and can be made to believe almost anything.

There is no doubt about the sincerity of Dr. Wallace, but if you knew him personally you could not fail to see that he is just the kindly confiding gentleman that can be imposed upon. Some people, such as Mr. Stead, humbug themselves. He can sit down with a pencil in his hand and allow his subconsciousness to run riot and believe that spirits are guiding his hand. I know an old gentleman who could sit and think instantly of his dead wife until he could see her sitting in her empty chair. This gentleman had the good sense to know that it was simply an illusion conjured up in his imagination.

The trick of producing flowers has often been exposed. Females usually perform this trick; they carry the flowers between their legs and the dew is produced by a small bottle of water. Doubtless Mrs. Guppy worked the trick in this manner. She was a fat, vulgar woman. I once advertised a pair of old houses for sale and Mrs. Guppy (then Mrs. Volckmann) came to my house to see them. We struck a bargain and had a glass of wine together afterwards. I asked her how the spirits were getting on, and she gave me a knowing wink and burst out laughing. She had given up Spiritualism then.

As regards the Davenport Brothers, one of them died in Australia many years ago, and shortly before he died both brothers confessed that all they did was trickery.

It is quite untrue to say that all great thinkers who have studied Spiritualism have become believers, it is only those who believe that are paraded by the wire-pullers of the fraud. Thousands of great men have investigated the subject and have turned away in disgust. You should read the "Report of the Seybert Commission on Spiritualism."

I could give you facts that would fill a book but must conclude for want of time.

With kindest regards, Yours sincerely,
J. N. Maskelyne.

The statement about Home bears out what I have stated in previous articles to be the reason why Home was never publicly exposed. His good social position and his refusal to take a fee gave him the power to exclude from his *seances* all those, like Mr. Maskelyne, who he feared exposure from. Mr. Maskelyne says he never had a chance to attend one of Home's *seances*. But if Home's manifestations were really genuine, he would not only have welcomed investigation, but he would have challenged it.

Of Mrs. Guppy, as Mr. Maskelyne remarks in his little book on *Modern Spiritualism* (pp. 99-100), "the great marvel by which she obtains a niche in the Spiritual Temple of Fame is that she was taken up from her household accounts, *en deshabille*, at Highbury Hill Park, and carried *by the spirits* to 69 Lamb's Conduit Street, where, when she dropped through the roof and through several ceilings (without leaving any apertures), she came down 'plump' upon the centre of the table, the ink with which those 'household accounts' were being made up still wet in the pen!" The last word, uncompleted, was understood to be "pickles."[1] The distance between the two points travelled is three miles, and as only three minutes elapsed between the wish for her appearance and her arrival, she must have travelled at the rate of a mile a minute. As she was said to have been the heaviest woman in London, it is a wonder she did not knock the house down. She must have been a pretty good handful for the spirits. The cover of Mr. Maskelyne's book is adorned with a picture of the event, entitled "A Moonlight Transit of Venus." Two female spirits and one little sprite, seated on a spirit-bottle, are engaged on the operation. Mrs. Guppy, represented as a fat, middle-aged woman, attired *a la* middle Victorian, is holding a quill pen in her outstretched hand. In the background looms a public-house, bearing the legend, "Gammon, Importer of Spirits." The moon, wearing a human face and a monocle, looks down smilingly on the scene. *Punch* satirized it as follows :—

There is a lady, Mrs. Guppy—
Mark shallow scientific puppy!—
The heaviest she in London, marry,
Her, spirits three long miles did carry.

Upon a table down they sat her,
Within closed doors. What! you know better,
And we're all dupes and self-deceivers?
Yah! Sadducees and unbelievers!

Mrs. Guppy was, however, very jealous of her rivals in the medium business, and, says Podmore, "on more than one occasion, assisted in exposing or embarrassing rival pretenders to mediumship. She subsequently married Mr. Volckman, the gentleman who seized the 'spirit' at Miss Cook's *seance*."[2]

It was during a *seance* given by Herne and Williams, in June, 1871, that Mrs. Guppy performed her aerial feat which landed her on the *seance* table. Now, this Herne and Williams were both impudent frauds. In 1878, at Amsterdam, Williams was caught in the act of producing fraudulent phenomena, and upon being searched there was found, says Podmore, "on Williams a dirty black beard with brown silk ribbon, and several yards of very dirty muslin—the simple ingredients which represented the spiritual make-up of the repentant pirate, John King—together with another bottle of phosphorized oil, a bottle of scent, and a few minor properties."[3]

This spirit of the pirate, John King, was the same spirit on duty at the *seance* in 1871, although it was another spirit named "Katie" who did the donkey work of conveying Mrs. Guppy across London. We give an extract from an account of the proceedings :—

> John King's voice was a very deep one, while Katie's was more like a whisper, but perfectly distinct.....When asked if she would bring us something, she said, "Yes, yes." One of the visitors (a confederate, evidently), in a joking sort of way, remarked, "I wish she would bring Mrs. G(uppy)."..... Upon which another said, "Good gracious! I hope not; she is one of the biggest women in London." Katie's voice at once said, "I will, I will," and John's rough voice shouted out, "You can't do it, Katie," but she appeared to chuckle and repeat, "I will, I will." We were all laughing and joking at the absurdity of the idea, when John's rough voice called out, "Keep still, can't you?" In an instant somebody called out, "Good God! there is something on my

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 83, says "other accounts" give the word "onions." Perhaps it was "pickled onions."

[2] *Modern Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 79.

[3] *Modern Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 111.

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head," simultaneously with a heavy bump on the table, and one or two screams. A match was instantly struck, and there was Mrs. G(uppy), standing on the centre of the table, with the whole of us seated round the table, closely packed together, as we sat at the commencement. John King's voice shouted out, "Well, you *are* clever, Katie."[1]

It is amazing that people could be made to believe that such puerile hooligan antics were the work of spirits.

In conclusion, it may be said that Mr. Maskelyne, by his public performances at the Egyptian Hall, and afterwards at St. George's Hall, did more than any other man to discredit this pernicious superstition; and our thanks are due to Mr. Smedley for allowing the late Mr. Maskelyne's letters to be made public.

W. Mann.

Correspondence.

CONSCIOUS VILLAINY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—The question raised by "Ignotus" regarding conscious villainy among professional religionists seems to me, as an "ex-Christian," of vital importance to the cause of Freethought—and, indeed, it must decide whether Truth shall triumph soon or only after prolonged struggles. For, if we are opposed to a group of religionists who "*consciously and deliberately*" assist in what, in the end, amounts to villainy, then we might well abandon the strong cudgel of Reason and try less abstract methods. And by new tactics we could speedily wreck the last hulks of religion. Indeed, so much worthier would our opponents (in my opinion) be, that the fight would be short and sharp, and could only result in universal Freethought. Such, however, is not the case.

Without considering the phenomena of religious mentality or the general trend of human nature towards folly, "Ignotus" has crowned religious practitioners with really undeserved honours—for there is merit in being *deliberately* and *consciously* bad or good. He appears to forget that conscious villainy must have opportunity and incentive, and that given such, it is, at the most, a powerful minority in human affairs. And without unconscious folly—where is conscious villainy?

There is, in my opinion, insufficient *sub-conscious* villainy prevalent to warrant the assertion that "professional religionists *consciously and deliberately* dose the common people with their narcotics" in order to help maintain an unjust *status quo*. That in this respect there are a handful of consciously villainous clerics I do not deny, but as with similar human fallacies undergoing the test of time—the main body of them are *dosed by their own narcotics*, and, being mentally chloroformed from the clerical cradle onwards, are peculiarly prone to the unscrupulous few—who are, of course, of great social influence, and have deeply rooted interests in almost every phase of modern life. But even this villainy is not a predominate cause; it only exists after folly, and decides nothing, and may, all along, have no immoral basis whatever—some of the greatest minds are prone to intellectual perversity.

It is passing strange that "Ignotus" should need clearer evidence of the strength for harm of rampant folly when utilized by villainy than the present War. The parallel is there. Men, far from "intellectual moles," have justified any diabolical deed, and, no doubt, felt anything but conscious of villainy. Nor does "intellectual perception," at its highest, always analyse the moral groundwork of any of our cardinal obsessions to-day. A few scoundrels may pervert the whole mind of a nation; and, from not insignificant intellects, obtain "highly moral" justification.

Far from having the "wrang soo by the lug," the Editor's assertion that "conscious villainy is not a powerful factor in human affairs" must surely be the wider view, and the most worthy of Freethought. After all, though intellectual stupidity is more formidable than rank villainy, we shall not attain the goal by denouncing the lesser evil, in the belief that there lies the root of the trouble. On the contrary, and whether right or wrong, such a proceeding makes the going harder and creates more stupidity where mental clarity is direly wanting.

Finally, "Ignotus" misvalues the quality of *moral* courage when he thinks that, without legal penalties, it is not implied in conscious and deliberate villainy. It depends, of course, upon the condition of the mind at the moment of decision or inception. Given a certain rectitude or habit of mind, a flash of moral courage is undoubtedly necessary, and generally present, when conscious and deliberate wrong is "wirelessed," as it were. But if such rectitude be absent, both the consciousness of villainy and the moral sense are either partially impaired or entirely absent. Even so, the *moral* courage, living and dying, primarily and upon the inception of thought, is not influenced in the first place by a sense of one's immunity from, or liability to, punishment. "And the man who will have the truth at all costs promises to die with no better epitaph than 'Here lies a crank'"—the whole human tragedy in one anguished sentence, Sir. Truly, this Freethought is a hard but *magnificent* cause! Oh, for a millionaire!

In closing, may I—a very recent recruit in your ranks—also record my profound appreciation for the ever-welcome and always re-read "Views and Opinions."

W. O. Parker.

Sir,—May I suggest to your correspondent "Ignotus" that the examples of "villainy" which he adduces as "conscious" do not bear out his contention. "Villains who feel the need of religion" do, as a matter of fact, show the exact contrary very vividly. Their awakened consciousness brings with it repentance and, as a corollary (perhaps temporary), abstention from villainy; and though they return to their vomit again, it is not until their consciousness has been once more lulled into slumber by force of habit or by renewed temptation. It must be borne in mind that few of us are capable of steady, consistent thinking. We act on the thoughts of the moment, and neither remember that those of the past have been different, nor foresee that those of the future will be. We do not even correlate such thoughts as we entertain at any given moment, with a view to their mutual consistency.

Again, "Ignotus" says: "The professional religionist can *find justification* for any kind of villainy....." Do not those two words which I have italicized destroy his argument? Has he never heard of self-deception? The religionist (and he is not alone in this) has deluded himself into believing his own justifications; that is the truth of the matter. Those who forged apocryphal gospels must have known that they were telling lies, and those who burnt men and women for a difference of opinion must have known that they were killing their fellows; but they glowed with conscious virtue—not villainy—nevertheless.

That the governing classes have often deliberately perpetuated evils is undeniable; but that does not prove that they believed them to be evils. We are all of us too apt to think that what we should not like is nevertheless very good for others. Those who "dose the common people with their narcotics" do often believe that these are beneficial medicines, or at least not harmful. If it be argued that men wilfully and deliberately remain blind—that they will not examine and consider lest they should be compelled to amendment—I am in agreement; but does not this show that they could not continue their villainy, did they become truly conscious of it?

Chester Keith.

Obituary.

Another link with the age of Bradlaugh has been broken by the death of Mrs. F. W. Theobalds, of Leyton, who was buried in Chingford Mount Cemetery last Saturday. Mrs. Theobalds was born at Kettering in 1850, and joined the N.S.S. at the Hall of Science in 1884. She was a hard-working wife and mother, striving and cheerful to the last hour in spite, or rather because of her lack of religion. She brought up seven children, three of them, it seems, for the War. Two are still at the Front; one has been discharged, a grandson has been killed. Her calm and noble life through sorrow, struggle, and storm will be a ceaseless inspiration to her husband and family. The Secular Burial Service was read at her grave by the undersigned.—H. V. Storey.

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 82, quoting from a letter in the *Echo*, June 8, 1871.

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National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on April 2.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Braddock, Brandes, Eagar, Gorniot, Leat, Neate, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

Twenty-five new members were admitted for Goldthorpe, Manchester, Nuneaton, Portsmouth, Swansea, West Ham, and the Parent Society.

Application was made for the formation of a Branch in Portsmouth, and the necessary conditions having been complied with, permission was granted.

The President reported the opening of new ground in Pontycymmer with two highly successful meetings.

A letter from the Birmingham Branch expressing their willingness to make arrangements for the Conference and a similar letter from Manchester, subject to the possibility of procuring a hall for the public meeting, were both discussed. Finally, in view of the increasing difficulties of railway travelling, further augmented by the rationing system, it was resolved that the Branches be thanked for their invitation and the Conference be held in London.

The Secretary was instructed to proceed with the usual arrangements.

Messrs. Eager, Palmer, and Roger were elected as an Agenda Committee.

Grants were made to various Branches for propaganda purposes during the coming year, and the meeting adjourned until April 25.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

The Blank Wall.

XI.

Most people who think at all about anything must have realized by now that the distinctions in society between aristocrat and democrat, rich and poor, were essentially artificial distinctions dependent upon the possession of money and the fineness of wearing apparel. The real distinction, that is the mental distinction, is negligible. The rich are quite as stupid as the poor, the West-end clubman is on a mental par with the L. C. C. dustman; if there is any superabundance of mental vitality it will probably be possessed by the latter, because he is more closely in touch with the realities of human life, and is unprotected from certain ugly truths by large, soft cushions, etc. A man is sometimes forced to think because his stomach is empty, or because the conditions of life are abnormally vile and unpleasant. Nothing is more certain than that the distinctions between rich and poor are artificial distinctions. The same fact may be observed in military caste. The sergeant we may call the working-class; he is the backbone of every army, and without him no great military project would be possible. Yet, the mere accident of birth and education (the latter often nothing more than the development of a bored and delicate series of mannerisms), these things, allied with the power of money and social influence, enable a man with no practical experience of either men or war to become an officer, who is set in authority over the sergeant. His blood is much bluer than the sergeant's language. He is a higher type; he represents the aristocratic caste.

The sergeant can never hope to feel like a "real gentleman"; not even if he wins the Victoria Cross and gains a commission. There will always remain in his consciousness the fact that he is not the social equal of an officer who has been given a commission without any specific effort, and as a result of class right. The two men may be equally brave; take them as men and they are magnificently heroic, but the caste idea prevails. It is a tremendous reality is the caste idea, just as real as the facts of heroism and gallantry. It is artificial, and at the same time a most dreadful reality. It constitutes that fixity of social relationships which thwarts progress and goes largely to make humanity a failure.

Arthur F. Thorn.

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.

London Society, *Morality based on the Laws of Nature* (West Central Hall, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, M. Montbars, "The Philosophy of Art." Lecture in French.

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Shaller, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, Mr. Thos. Swift, "A Half-Hour from History."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta, "The Wishing Cap." Performed by children of the Secular Sunday-school. Silver Collection.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street and 30 Lord Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Do the Dead Live?" 7, "Why Men Believe in God."

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Coun. W. Appleyard, "Where To? and What To?"

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, second floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Hannan, "Why I am an Atheist."

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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By J. C. THOMAS, B.Sc. (Keridon).
Author of *Darkness, Dawn, and Day, etc.*
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It is not the object of this pamphlet to seek either a negative or a positive answer to this daily query during the first year of the War, but to indicate its utter irrelevance, by pointing out the purely mythical function ascribed in popular belief to the ethical emotion usually denoted as "conscience."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Man Power and the Clergy.—The Editor	229
"The Justification of God."—J. T. Lloyd	230
The Leicester Secular Society.—Mimnermus	231
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	232
The Soul of a Dog.—Arthur B. Moss	236
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	237
A Building Made with Hands.—Ignotus	238

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Man Power and the Clergy.

When the Government brought in its new Man Power Bill it contained—in spite of its substituting, in the name of freedom and democracy, Government by Order in Council in place of constitutional methods—one feature that gave widespread satisfaction. It provided for the inclusion of all clergymen of military age. At last the Government had decided to drop its "third sex" legislation and treat the clergy as citizens. True, it was only half-heartedly done. They were to be liable to non-combatant service only. And non-combatant service is evasive at best; it is cowardly at worst. The case of a man who voluntarily undertakes to do what he can to repair the ravages of war is one thing, the man who becomes part of the organization of an army, and who of his own choice says: "I will not fight, but I will do another man's work so that he may fight in my place, is in quite a different category. No man is warranted in asking another to do what he would not do himself. The clergy have urged others to fight; the least they could do would have been to set these others an example.

* * *

Exempting the Clergy.

Perhaps the clergy realized this at the last moment. Perhaps the Government never intended the conscription of the clergy to remain part of the Bill, but only placed it there in order to facilitate its passage through the second reading stage, and thus get the House committed to the Bill as a whole. The first indication of the real position came with the Government announcement that there should be a special tribunal to deal with the clergy (one member suggested that the proper body to deal with the sky-pilots would be the Air Board). It was going to be Dooley's description of the right way to give votes—give everybody the vote, and do the counting yourself. But even that was not enough. The clergy were not, and are not, taking risks. So on Monday (April 15) Sir George Cave announced that the Government had decided to insert a clause exempting ministers of religion altogether. And that is where the matter stands as we go to press. Even the contemptible farce of non-combatant service has broken down. The clergy are out for privilege, and the Government will see they get it. Whether the clergy will receive a medal and a pension for so bravely urging others to fight, and for conspicuous ability in keeping the home-fires burning, remains to be seen.

Was Conscription of the Clergy Intended.

What lies behind this throwing the cloak of privilege over the clergy. It is noticeable that the expressions of some of the bishops and leading Nonconformists were very guarded. They said they were sure the clergy would not shirk their duty, but they would wait and see how events worked out. Most probably they knew how events would work out, and their waiting was therefore pure farce. "General" Booth complained loudly and bitterly at the Army taking his "officers," and the *War Cry* said:—

> All around us the Governments and Parliaments, and great captains of this world, can give no place in their scheme of things for anything but force—gun-powder and man power, and so on. God-power, and the power of prayer, and of truth, and of heart religion seem of little moment.

Can it be that the Government has at last awakened—really awakened to the value of "God-power and the power of prayer"? If that is the case something definite should have been announced from the Government benches. Or was the whole thing from the very beginning an elaborate farce—a mere trick of the shifty kind that makes politics stink in the nostrils of honest men?

* * *

That Seven Per Cent.

Sir George Cave, in announcing the exemption of the clergy, said that, "after allowing sufficient clergy for the needs of the country, the Government would not obtain a large increase of military man-power from the remainder." "Military man-power" clearly means here fighting men. But the Government has already announced that it does not expect to get more than seven per cent. of fighting men out of the country by means of its new Bill. For the sake of that seven per cent., thousands of homes are to be broken up, thousands of businesses ruined, and men of fifty and upwards will return to civil life, probably broken in health, and quite unable to enter into competition with younger men and with the big combines—which will be the main business firms conserved by the War. But not even this seven per cent. is to be taken from the Churches! The man on whose health and strength the prosperity of a family depends must join the Army, in which he may already have sons fighting; the man who has spent all his life in creating a small business must shut his doors and go; but the dear clergy must remain! Does Sir George Cave, does the Government, with all his and its confidence in the stupidity of the British public, really expect men and women to believe that the country will go to ruin if seven out of every hundred clergymen are put into the Army? There really are limits to human credulity, even if there are none to political jobbery.

* * *

Does the Nation Need Religion?

What are the religious needs of the country? Who is to decide what these needs are? We have heard no complaint from any quarter that there is a shortage of religion, there has been no clamour from the people for more parsons. We have seen queues standing for sup-

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plies of butter, of meat, of sugar, and other things, but we have neither seen nor heard of queues waiting for religion. Why not adopt the system of rationing? We feel quite sure that there would be no complaint, however small the ration fixed. Allow one parson to so many thousand people, and let the people say whether they really feel they require a clergyman to look after them. Letters have, we believe, poured into the letter-boxes of Government officials pointing out the hardships and injustices that will be the result of the Man Power Bill. Against all such protests the Government is adamant. Businesses must be ruined, homes broken up, the future of children jeopardized. The nation needs men. Everything and everyone must go—except the clergy. And Sir George Cave declares that the religious needs of the nation demand their exemption! Religious interest and vested interest hang together. Perhaps one day when the British people are bitten with a desire for genuine freedom they will hang together in a more satisfactory sense.

* * *

Our Contemptible Clergy.

At the opening of the War, the clergy disgusted thousands of their supporters by their general attitude. When conscription became the law of the land, and the clergy, after being zealous recruiting agents, obtained exemption, contempt was added to disgust. And now, when a further measure of conscription is about to be enforced, the clergy decline to give even a miserable seven per cent. of their number. And the Government, insistent in its plea that the nation needs *every* man, yields to pious pressure, and declares they must not be touched. We hope the mothers, and daughters, and wives, and sweethearts of Britain will remember. We hope it will help them to realize that in every clergyman they have a representative of one of the most useless classes that ever saddled itself on a civilized community. Aristocracy may be an affront to civilized sense, but an aristocracy will play its part at a time like the present. It will claim privilege, but it will also face duties. The clergy ask and stand for privilege alone. They will inflame men's passions to the point of battle. They will urge others to go and join in the battle. But for themselves—their mission is to stay at home and *prey*.

Chapman Cohen.

"The Justification of God."

Such is the arresting title of a characteristic and deeply significant book from the fertile pen of P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D., Principal of Hackney College, Hampstead, which, in a sub-title, is said to be a series of *Lectures for War-Time on a Christian Theodicy*. Dr. Forsyth is an exceptionally clever man, endowed at once with a keenly artistic and critical intellect, who has cultivated an exceedingly forcible but not always too lucid style of writing. He is a theological specialist who affects a burning hatred of the amateur. He used to taunt Mr. R. J. Campbell, during his brief New Theology campaign, with being nothing better than a theological charlatan, who had no moral right to mislead the public on the most momentous of all subjects. It is necessary to bear in mind, therefore, that Principal Forsyth comes before us in the guise, and assumes all the authority, of an expert in theological lore. Powerfully impressed by "the magnitude of our present calamity," he is under the spell of an all-consuming passion for the high task of adjusting the ways of God to conscience. In other words, following the example of a great predecessor, he has come forth in the work now before us,—

> To vindicate Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to man.

The Justification of God is a theodicy, a fresh attempt to defend the Divine character, to adjust the ways of God not only to man's conscience, but "to his own conscience above all." Describing the work in the Preface, the author says:—

> Its object is not to bring God's ways to the bar either of man's reason or man's conscience, but rather to the bar where all reason and conscience must go at last, to the standard of a holy God's account of himself in Jesus Christ and his Cross. A philosophical theodicy or vindication of God's justice has not yet been found. And if faith wait for it, the soul may perish first. But a religious and theological theodicy (for here the one means the other) is not only not impossible; it is our only refuge.

Already we are in possession of an all-important admission, namely, that hitherto no attempt to defend God philosophically has been crowned with success. In Dr. Forsyth's opinion, Leibnitz, in his famous *Theodicee*, utterly failed to justify the Supreme Being, nor has the Hackney trainer of budding clergymen the least hope that any work on those lines will ever succeed in achieving the desired object, and myriads of immortal souls may perish before there is any chance of such a work making its appearance. It follows, therefore, that if the theologian fails us, the cause of God is utterly doomed. It is from him alone, if from any source, that a satisfactory theodicy can be expected. The Principal adds:—

> This is the kind of theology that retains much public interest or promise to-day—the justification of God by himself, and not by a course of history which is a dim mixture of his ways and our ways, and where the cross lights make it impossible to see it steadily and see it whole. The only vindicator of God is God. And his own theodicy is in the Cross of his Son Jesus Christ. The problem of God is the problem of history with God in it. The doubts that unsettle men most to-day are those that rise not from science but from society, not from the irrational but the unjust.

Two alleged facts have now been brought to our notice in the short Preface, namely, that of the complete inability of the philosopher to produce a theodicy, and that of the supposed competency of the theologian to supply the much-needed article. And yet our author seems to think that even the theologian is scarcely equal to the herculean feat, a religious and theological theodicy being merely declared to be "not impossible," though "our only refuge." Indeed, Principal Forsyth is courageous enough to concede that history is by no means exclusively on God's side. Superficial divines, like the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, are constantly appealing to history for confirmation of their apologetic positions. In one of his popular lectures, in which he so successfully plays to the gallery, Mr. Young repeatedly, and with a show of conscious triumph, exclaims, "If people would but honestly face history they would see what Christ has done for the world," "If you only consult history you will realize how uninterruptedly God has been fulfilling himself"; but though the reverend gentleman makes ever so many confident appeals to history, he seldom dares to make literal citations from it. Dr. Forsyth, however, is veracious and discreet enough to confess that history is, at best, but a doubtful witness for God, there being in it "a dim mixture of his ways and our ways." No; history, at any rate, is not one of the data upon which the belief in the justice and goodness of the Divine Being can be verified. Brought to the bar of human reason and conscience, or, in other words, brought to the bar of history as interpreted in the light of human reason and conscience, God neither is nor can be justified. Dr. Forsyth, by making such admissions, makes it clear that even to the theologian the construction of an adequate theodicy is in no sense a simple undertaking.

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The chief obstacles which lie across the apologist's path are not scientific but social. Scientific discoveries have swept away supernatural beliefs not a few, such as the Mosaic cosmogony, the inerrancy of the Bible, and the theological view of death; but the most cogent of all arguments against the existence of God is derived from the conditions of social life at which Christianity has winked in all generations. The fact that man's injustice to man has been allowed to exist throughout the ages is an insuperable barrier flung across the road pursued by the apologist. All the dogmas which science has discredited are now regarded by the theologians as entirely non-essential, the disappearance of which has been a gain rather than a loss; but the continued existence of the evils from which society has always suffered, and in consequence of which it has now been overtaken by the most dreadful calamity, discredits not a dogma here and there which may or may not be essential, but the entire Christian system. This being the case, Dr. Forsyth is forcibly driven to the following conclusion:—

> It will then be found that the justification of God to man is not possible except to the conscience of man as justified by God. We have God's justice as a gift and not as a conclusion. God vindicates his justice by saving man from the doubt of it, and not by demonstrating to him the truth of it.

Such is Principal Forsyth's theodicy as condensed in the Preface to his book. The sum and substance of all he says is that, to the natural man, the justification of God is impossible. Judged by unaided human reason his ways are not equal, his government of the world is a total failure, the argument being: "If he has power to stop these things and does not he is not good; if he is good, and does not, he has not power." This argument never has been and never can be refuted; and Dr. Forsyth does not even try to meet it. He says: "The only vindicator of God is God," only he never acts the part. Had God been his own justifier there would have been no need of such a book as this one which the Hackney College divine has seen fit to publish. God has never undertaken his own defence, with the result that his self-appointed champions are never tired of issuing apologias on his behalf, not one of which can be pronounced in the least degree adequate. Fancy a man in his senses saying that "God's method with evil is not prevention but cure"; but the fact that stares us in the face is that God neither prevents nor cures it. Evil is with us now, and seems to exercise a completer sway than ever. What is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? The former believes against evidence that God is just and good, while the latter is convinced by irrefragable proofs that there is no God at all. On the Principal's own showing, God never demonstrates the truth of his own justice, but saves man from doubting it, thus verifying Tennyson's well-known line—

> We have but faith, we cannot know.

While this frightful War is raging at the top of its fury, the believer can only exclaim: "In spite of all these indescribable horrors and abominations I am convinced that a God of infinite justice and love is over-ruling them so that they shall hasten the coming of his own glorious kingdom.

J. T. Lloyd.

It surely is far sweeter and more wise
To water love, than toil to leave anon
A name whose glory-gleam will but advise
Invidious minds to quench it with their own,
And over which the kindliest will but stay
A moment, musing, "He, too, had his day!"

—*Thomas Hardy.*

The Leicester Secular Society.

We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O Pioneers! —*Walt Whitman.*

Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Pioneers and apostles are ever prophets. Swinburne saw and sang "A Vision of Spring in Midwinter," and long before that 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 the present, 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. For them there is nothing irrevocable, for their eyes are ever looking forward.

Even the pioneers who are not poets possess this fervent belief in the future. Hissed at by the superior people, stoned by the vulgar, they have a hard road to travel. Perhaps the hardest of their trials is that of seeing charlatans ride by in their carriages, or, in other words, to mark the success of humbug and chicanery 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. Charles Bradlaugh, prematurely aged by his many years' struggle for liberty, saw honours showered on men not fit to black his boots; Francisco Ferrer, fronting the rifles of the soldiers of Authority, had to find his triumph in his own heart; George Foote had to listen to the mocking voice of the Christian judge telling him that he had devoted his great talents to the services 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 and penalties of martyrdom, heroes without the laurels, and conquerors without the jubilation of victory. Labouring not for themselves, but for the world and for coming generations, for them shall be influence as far-reaching as the utmost reach of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

Now and again the work of the pioneers comes to fruition within a shorter space. Such, for example, is the record of the work of the Leicester Secular Society, which recently celebrated its thirty-sixth anniversary. Its history is a veritable romance, and dates back to the "stormy forties" of the past century. It is a noble record of small beginnings, of struggles, and of ultimate brilliant victory. The Society sprang from a discussion class held in the Mechanics' Institution, originated and animated by George Bown, one of the small band of pioneers who carried the flag of Liberty in those dark days. Among the young men who gathered about him was Josiah Gimson, the father of Sidney Gimson. The intellectual subjects discussed in the class soon became the talk of the town. Afterwards a school was carried on during the week, with lectures on Sundays, and a lending library was formed. The advanced views of progressive thinkers were discussed constantly, and Leicester thus had the opportunity of listening to new thoughts, and of widening her mental horizon. Out of this evolving institution, which readily adapted itself to changing circumstances in 1873, was organized the Secular Hall Company, and the site of the present hall was purchased. Eight years later the hall was completed from the designs of W. Larner Sugden, one of whose hobbies was the publication of pretty little booklets of a Freethought character. It is a handsome structure on one of the best streets of Leicester, with ample accommodation for improvement and pleasure.

The opening took place on the first Sunday in March, 1881, and a large number of notable Freethinkers were present from all parts. That sombre genius, James

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Thomson, contributed a poetic address at the opening of the hall. A few lines are well worth quotation, for they show the vigorous Freethought of the poet, whose talents have won for him an imperishable name in his country's literature :—

> So, all the lands wherein our wandering race
> Have led their flocks, or fixed their dwelling-place,
> To till with patient toil the fruitful sod,
> Abound with altars to the unknown god
> Or gods, whom man created from of old,
> In his own image, one yet manifold,
> And ignorantly worshipped. We now dare,
> Taught by millenniums of barren prayer,
> Of mutual scorn and hate and bloody strife,
> With which these dreams have poisoned our poor life,
> To build our temples on another plan,
> Devoting them to god's creator, man ;
> Not to man's creature, god. And thus, indeed,
> All men and women, of whatever creed,
> We welcome gladly if they love their kind ;
> No other valid test of worth we find.
> Who loveth not his brother at his side,
> How can he love a dim dream deified ?

Another illustrious name associated with the Leicester Secular Society is that of Professor Huxley, the world-famous scientist. Not only was he in agreement with the objects of the organization, but he was one of the financial supporters. In enclosing a cheque in support of the Society, Huxley said it was sent "in evidence of the full sympathy with the objects of the Society." To a request for permission to publish the note, he replied : "You are quite at liberty to publish my note, and I shall be glad if it is of any service." This record places Huxley in complete accord with the principles of Secularism, and should clear away much misapprehension on the subject.

The importance and far-reaching nature of the Leicester Movement will thus be understood. For near two generations it has spread Secular principles far and wide, and still maintains a vigorous propaganda, including a Sunday-school for the children. We thus see that, give Secularism a fair field, it will show its true adaptation to human needs and welfare.

In the hall are the portraits of Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake, and Josiah Gimson. The name and fame of the last-named can never be forgotten in the history of this Society, or even in the record of the Secular Movement. He was one of its founders, and a most generous supporter. At his death, in 1883, he bequeathed, in maintenance of the institution, an income of one hundred pounds annually for ten years.

The lesson to be drawn from the inspiring record of Leicester is that "Unity is strength." Forgetting trivial distinctions in the face of entrenched ecclesiasticism, these brave Freethinkers have closed their ranks and stood shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy. It is precisely because the hearts of these dauntless pioneers were aflame with human sympathy that their work has had vital and permanent effect. They deserved well of their generation, for they did their best to hasten the day when the world will be one country and to do good the only religion.

Mimnermus.

BIBLE MORALS.

How little good and bad conduct were associated in thought with the intrinsic natures of right and wrong, and how completely they were associated in thought with obedience and disobedience to Jahveh, we see in the facts that prosperity and increase of population were promised as rewards of allegiance ; while there was punishment for such non-ethical disobediences as omitting circumcision or numbering the people.—*Herbert Spencer*, "*Principles of Ethics.*"

The Mechanism of Man.

II.

(*Continued from p. 221.*)

The skin of the human body is composed of two layers. The skin's external layer is the epidermis, and is distinguished from the internal layer—the dermis—by its greater transparency, rigidity, and thinness. The epidermis is made up of epithelial cells lying in close contact. The inner layer of the skin is a complex woven mass of connective tissue, and appears under the microscope as a medley of blood vessels, lymphatics or absorbent vessels, sweat and oil glands, nerves, and hair roots. The dermis is, therefore of much greater moment to the organism than the epidermis.

The epidermis is composed of a mass of cells bound together by a cement-like substance, similar to the white of egg. Epidermic cells situated on the surface are hard and flattened. These are dead cells, and are removed by washing the body or cleansing the hair. The scurf, which we brush from the scalp, or remove when we bathe the skin, is simply the worn-out cellular material which has been thrust out by the active cells of the dermis, so that it is no longer nourished, and, therefore, dies. But quite unlike these epidermal cells, the dermal cells are soft and circular. They are living and growing cells, and as they multiply they replace the cells of the surface skin-layer, and thus maintain the epidermis.

In the deeper layers of the epidermis, grains of colouring material or pigment are present. Pigment differs from ordinary epidermal cells in possessing the property of absorbing and arresting light. In animals where the normal amount of pigment is present the usual colours peculiar to the species are displayed. But in abnormal instances where the pigment is absent, albinism is manifested. Organisms devoid of pigment have pale skins and pink eyes, for the absence of pigment in the iris permits the blood vessels of the eye to become visible. In one of the leading exhibits in the Natural History Museum in London various examples of albinism may be seen which range from white ravens, crows, and blackbirds, to white, or extremely pallid moles, mice, and frogs. A tropical climate seems favourable to the development of pigment, and the native races are darker there than elsewhere. There appears to exist a tendency towards the darkening of the skin among the European settlers in the sunnier regions of America, while the fair Norwegian affords an illustration of an adaptation to colder and less sunlit surroundings.

The hair of our heads and bodies arises from a sac or follicle. Vascular vessels and a nerve fibre run to the bulb or root from which a hair springs. The hair continues to grow so long as its papilla or bulb lives. It not only serves to keep the head warm, but it also provides protection to the brain. In the lower mammals and with savage man the hair is useful as a protective covering to various important areas of the body. Oil glands discharge their secretions into the hair pits or follicles. These glands elaborate oil from the blood. The oil produces the glossiness of the hair, and prevents undue dryness and hardness in the skin.

In common with the hair bulbs the sweat glands lie entrenched in the deeper parts of the dermis, and assume the appearance of a tube coiled into a ball. This tube passes as a duct through the two skin layers and emerges at the surface as a pore. Perspiration in average circumstances evaporates as readily as it flows from the pores, but at moments of unusual exertion, or in hot weather, it pours out very rapidly,

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and then forms into beads or drops. This sweat is chiefly water, but it holds in solution several salts with a trace of urea. The blood, which circulates in a network of small vessels around the sweat gland furnishes the material for the perspiration. Nervous subjects are more prone to blush or perspire than the more self-possessed. The nervous system controls sweating in two ways. Certain nerves regulate the activity of the epithelial cells which coat the gland, while other nerves regulate the diameter of the vessels which supply the gland with blood.

It is an obvious inference from the foregoing that a clean skin is conducive to health. It is a plain verity that "A bath is to the skin what gymnastic exercises are to the muscles." The muscular walls of the blood-vessels, with their nerves exercising authority over them, crave activity in company with the other organs of the body.

When wild in woods the early savage ran, his skin was bare to all the winds that blew. He was probably not so much addicted to the bath as were the old Romans, but his constant exposure to the sun, the rain, and the breeze helped to invigorate and healthen his skin. Many modern Europeans to whom ordinary ablutions were not unknown have experienced utter astonishment as the dirt ran from their bodies during their first Turkish bath. Heavy underclothing, combined with the absence of open-air exercise, allow our sweat-glands to become quite clogged. Hence the hygienic value of tepid or cold baths. These promote the physiological activities of the dermal structures, and assist in maintaining in healthy action the pores of the skin. Even the dingy London sparrow, that Arab among birds, delights in washing, even in dirty water; while that most intelligent mammal, the elephant, is fond of showering water over his body with his trunk.

The kidneys are highly important organs of the body. Situated on each side of the spinal column, in the lumbar region—the small of the back—they extend a little above the level of the waist. Shaped in the form of a bean, their length is about four inches. They are attached to the rear wall of the abdominal cavity. One artery travels to each kidney, and becomes distributed into minute vessels or capillaries, and these encircle the tubules of the kidney. A secretion in which impurities of the blood are suspended is constantly being lodged within the tubules, and these convey it to a funnel-like cavity at the kidney's inner edge. Proceeding from this receptacle is a tube termed the ureter, which passes along to a storage organ in the pelvis. This organ is the bladder, which must be emptied from time to time. There is ample accommodation for the free flow of liquid from the ureters—one from each kidney—into the bladder, and from that organ into the urethra, and for its final expulsion from the body. There is, however, this reservation. Arranged circularly around the neck of the bladder, at its junction with the urethra, there are certain muscular fibres forming the sphincter, which are usually in a contracted state, and thus function to close the bladder's exit while the remaining muscular fibres of the organ are relaxed.

At given moments, however, this state of affairs becomes reversed. Then the walls of the bladder contract and its sphincter relaxes, and thus the urine is discharged. This latter process is intermittent, but the excretion itself is constant. The urinary fluid is driven drop by drop "along the ureters by rhythmic contractions which pass along their walls in the direction of the bladder, where it accumulates, until its quantity is sufficient to give rise to the uneasy sensations which compel its expulsion" (Barcroft).

The fluid holding the nitrogenous waste materials of the organism varies with the amount of liquid imbibed, and with the skin's activities. The lungs assist the skin and kidneys in eliminating superfluous moisture, while the kidneys are almost entirely responsible for the excretion of certain mineral salts and a white crystalline substance termed urea. When retained in the body, urea proves very detrimental. This product is largely responsible for rheumatism, head troubles, and other ailments. Nitrogen is introduced into the animal system as protein food, and almost all of this element is expelled from the body in the form of urea. It is worth recalling that urea was the first animal product artificially elaborated in the chemical laboratory from inorganic (non-living) substances.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

A report reaches us that religion is a feature of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers. We are loth to believe the report, but it may well be that, in some of the Branches, one or two fanatics may try to introduce their anti-social ideas. If we might give advice, we would say to the members, "Destroy the infamous" while it is small and weak, and so prevent future troubles, leaving a free and untrammelled field for the social and intellectual welfare of all connected with the cause for which the Federation stands. Belief in the supernatural is a weed-like growth, and, like all noxious growths, if not kept under, will quickly overrun and destroy the beneficial plants of humanity.

The dear clergy like to pose as belonging to an overworked profession, but the social activities of the bishops and higher clergy do not lend support to the view. By the death of the Rev. C. W. Holditch, Vicar of Warrington, the interesting fact is revealed there have been only two vicars of the parish in 107 years. Evidently, these two clergymen were not cut off in their prime by overwork.

A pocket guide to the *May* Meetings contains a list of 404 fixtures to be held in London. Christian loquaciousness has not lessened since Lord Macaulay remarked sarcastically that "Exeter Hall sends forth its annual bray."

Canon Burroughs, of Peterborough, says that a Chaplain at the Front had written to him that "to the layman denominations are damned nonsense." That Army Chaplain is learning things at the back of the Front.

A religious contemporary says that the first duty of a poor Christian is to suffer and obey. Just so! And if he only obeys, the autocracy will see that he suffers.

"There is a very great shortage of biscuits," says a daily paper, and posters advise the public to "eat less bread." Perhaps the dear clergy will take the hint, and dispense with wafers and bread in their services.

"Our novelists ought to write for the young citizens of both sexes," declares Mr. James Douglas, who is old enough to know better. For whom, does Mr. Douglas think, the "smooth tales, generally of love," are written? The dear clergy agree with Mr. Douglas, but they also thrust the Bible into the hands of "young citizens," and the Bible is the bluest of blue books.

The War is teaching the clergy that there are many heresies mixed with the orthodoxies of the ordinary Christian, even after centuries of clerical teaching. Principal Forsyth,

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for instance, is astonished that average Christians display "far more passion to see their dead than to know Christ." The wish is not so unreasonable after all. Surely a mother would wish to see her own son rather than an Oriental preacher she had never been introduced to.

Principal P. T. Forsyth has written a new book, *This Life and the Next*, in which he trounces the Spiritualists. He is also out of patience with those Christians who seek to communicate with the dead through mediums. It is the old, old story of the disagreement of rival tradesmen.

Present-day novelists make a great display of originality, but there is precious little fundamental brain work in their books. Conan Doyle, Wells, and others have tickled the ears of the groundlings with their romantic views on theology, and other writers of fiction follow dutifully like a flock of sheep. There is a Spiritualistic element in Sir H. Rider Haggard's new story, *Love Eternal*, and the villain of the story is a parson. Rider Haggard had better be careful or he will be excommunicated by the dear clergy, who have great weight on the committees of "free" libraries.

The Archdeacon of London says that all sincere prayer is answered, either by "Yes," "No," or "wait." How does this apply to the prayer asking that our legislators may have "grace, wisdom, and understanding"?

"The Army of Movement"—The Church Army which is too proud to fight, but valiantly defends the communion-port.

The charges for getting hair cut have recently gone up. Pious folk may adopt the style of hair-dressing favoured by the Twelve Disciples—in pictures.

Mr. Moses Brain, of Warmley, who is a Sunday-school superintendent, has celebrated his hundredth birthday, and the newspapers are recording the pleasing fact. It is only reasonable that Christians should make the most of what Brains they possess.

What quaint ideas religious folk have! A Sunday paper reminds its readers that "the Devil is a mighty fighter," and a daily editor prints a headline referring to the soldiers: "Fought like Demons." One would imagine that both periodicals were published in the South Sea Islands, and not in the capital of a civilized nation.

The clergy pretend that they receive their call from "on high." The following paragraph from a daily paper is therefore interesting: "Canon Adderley has accepted the living of St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, which is in the gift of the Duke of Bedford." In this instance the call was no higher than the Peerage.

In order to save space, newspaper editors are condensing information into single-line paragraphs. Sometimes the result is humorous, as in the following, which appeared next to each other: "The Archbishop of Canterbury is 70 to-day. Vesuvius is in eruption."

"I do not know a single Churchman who has been a conscientious objector," says the Bishop of London. Few people, however, expect to find consciences among the followers of the Government religion.

One of the great doctrines of the Christian Church is that of justification by faith, which means that a guilty sinner, if he only believes in Christ, may be pronounced innocent. But Principal Forsyth has just introduced a new dogma, which he calls the Justification of God. The Supreme Being, too, is a guilty sinner in the estimation of thousands, but he, also, may be justified by the faith of those who trust and love him. The one justification is as much a figment of the religious imagination as the other, and both immoral.

The Canadian Government has passed an Order in Council asking the Imperial Government not to create any more hereditary titles for Canada. We wonder when the flunkeyism of our own House of Commons will lead it to pass a similar resolution. As matters are at present, a title is almost an insult to a man of worth, and a slur on the nation when it is given to a man of un-worth.

Principal W. B. Selbie says: "When spiritual ends are to be gained no price is too high." This may account for the fact that poor laymen permit thirty-nine archbishops and bishops to share £180,700 annually.

Dr. Colin Simpson, an Aberdeen doctor, who has served with the soldiers since the outbreak of war, has performed 2,000 operations, treated 38,000 wounded, and superintended 47,000 dressings. This is better work than that of the Army Chaplains, who conduct "divine service" at a safe distance from the fighting front.

The Founder of the Christian religion said, "Woe unto ye rich," but the dear clergy are quite willing to take their chances. The late Canon Hawkins left estate of the value of £29,177, a sum sufficient to keep him in the place where there is no winter.

A religious contemporary says that the present World-War is "the world's Calvary." Our contemporary might have added that mankind was being crucified between the two thieves—Kingcraft and Priestcraft.

Mr. John Oxenham, a minor novelist, whose articles lighten the solemnity of a weekly newspaper, says that, prior to the War, "as a nation we were dropping God out of our reckoning." Bless his innocent heart! Does he think that a nation of Atheists would maintain 50,000 parsons and build churches?

In a leading article, the dear *Daily News* says that "In Egypt the priests were custodians of everything, knowledge, wealth, power." The editor might have noticed the same phenomenon nearer home. In this country they are the "custodians" of everything they can get their saintly hands on.

A new and original hymn "for those in peril in the air" has been written and composed by two enthusiastic Churchmen. We hope that it will not displace the old favourite, "There's a friend for little children, up above the bright, blue sky."

The sacred side-shows in the Holy Land are well patronized by the soldiers, so the *Times* assures its readers. "All who can, visit the Church of the Nativity," writes the correspondent in Jerusalem. We rather fancy that correspondent is an Army chaplain.

A Sonnet.

To a Christian Child.

Oh, Thomas Jones, why dost thou stand and cry?
(I need not ask you why you do not *sit*)
Your punishment was only meet and fit
As witnesseth the law of God on high.
For as your teacher saw your grandsire lie
Sodden with liquor, and devoid of wit,
Last night; why, then, to-day, his cane did hit
Your flesh with sanction from the very sky.
For He who gave the laws to Moses sware
That if one sinned, his son, and his son's son,
Should feel the weight of His destroying might.
Why dost thou, then, a doleful visage wear,
And murmur now that justice has been done?
"Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?"

G. H. Bosworth.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 21, Goldthorpe; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—April 28, Nuneaton.

T. O. Harding.—Thanks for cuttings. The "miracle" of the Virgin of Albert *ought* to be dead now; but one never knows. If it pleases some other politician, or journalist, or pietist to tell the lie, he will certainly do it. While there are fools there will always be knaves to trade on their folly.

A. J. Marriott.—We quite agree with your opinion as to who is the "villain of the piece." But what a commentary on the calibre of the British public!

S. Cottart (Sergt.)—We are sending you on *Freethinker*, with other literature, for distributton.

J. Breese.—You will see next week we have acted on your suggestion. Hope the change of residence will be beneficial.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Goldthorpe Branch, 6s. 6d.

N. S. S. General Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Goldthorpe Branch, 6s. 6d.

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

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

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 visits the new Goldthorpe Branch to-day (April 21), and lectures there in the Empire Palace. The morning lecture, at 10.30, is on "Christianity and the Logic of Life"; evening, at 6.30, "Why Atheism is Inevitable." The local friends are expecting large meetings, and we hope they will not be disappointed.

A Correspondent writes:—

> I have been visiting friends at a Surrey village who have a son *six years of age*. This child attends the village church, the incumbent being a parson named Longley, who, each week, gives the children texts to learn for the following Sunday. Imagine my surprise when I ascertained that the text for this child to learn was: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." I protested against the six-year-older being compelled to repeat such stuff, but was informed by his guardian that he would have to get it by heart, otherwise he would have a whipping and be sent to bed without any tea, which forced me to the conclusion that there is as much ignorance in the villages as ever there was.

The subject of Determinism is not really a difficult question to master, provided the issue is fairly stated, and the terms employed used with care and accuracy. In *The Problem of the Will* (Watts & Co., 9d.) Sir George Greenwood supplies a very effective answer to many of the false issues raised by opponents of Determinism, and, in so doing, places the subject in its proper relation to morals and sociology. Sir George properly emphasizes the truth that the whole essence of Determinism is the application of the principle of causation to human conduct. And once that is grasped, its opposite, the denial of causation, is seen to be downright lunacy. We can safely commend *The Problem of the Will* to all interested in the subject.

Another work, issued by Messrs. Watts & Co., is *The Popes and their Church*, by Joseph McCabe, price 6s. The first part deals with the history of the Papacy, the second with the position and influence of the Roman Church to-day. The first portion strikes us as being too compressed to quite do justice to the subject. The second part is more satisfactory, and it is a phase of the conflict between Freethought and Supernaturalism with which all should be familiar. After all, there is nothing worse than underrating one's enemy, unless it is to mistake one's enemy. And the Roman Church represents by far the strongest, and the best organized enemy that Freethought has. Mr. McCabe, as usual, makes effective play with his own experience within the Catholic Church.

Mr. William Romaine Patterson (better known, perhaps, under the pen-name of "Benjamin Swift") publishes—also through Watts & Co.—*The Credentials of Faith: a Conversation on Religion* (4d. net). The speakers are a clergyman and a sceptic, and within a small compass many of the questions with which Freethinkers are concerned are discussed. We are glad to see Mr. Patterson combating that popular delusion—popular even with Freethinkers—that, religiously, Christianity represented an advance. It did not. It was a retrogression, here as elsewhere. The pamphlet is a small one, but "meaty."

We are asked to announce that an "important" business meeting of the Glasgow Branch will be held in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street, on April 21, at 12 noon.

Two very satisfactory meetings were held last Sunday at Liverpool by Mr. Cohen. In the evening the hall was rather inconveniently crowded, and the opposition led to its being rather late before a conclusion was reached. But everyone seemed in high good humour, and so all ended well.

Argument.

O stormy winds of argument,
How ruthlessly ye blow!
In whirling up the blinding dust,
Accumulated by the rust
Of thoughts formed long ago,
Ye cause mine eyes to lose their trust
In paths they do not know!

O stormy winds of argument,
Ye fill mine ears with pain!
Not that ye make them truly *ache;*
But gusty truths delight to take
On wings unto my brain;
Whereby I gather thoughts which make
My childlike faith complain.

Yet, stormy winds of argument,
Why should I thus bemoan?
Though *ill* winds blow no good, as said,
Your winds of robust thought have spread
Their seeds of knowledge sown
In soil on which your rains are shed—
Where wisdom-trees are grown.

Come, stormy winds of argument,
I'll face each lusty gale!
With mind well fixed on solid fact,
Stout Reason makes his sure compact
With Truth, who does not fail
In leaving wisdom-trees intact
Where arguments prevail.

J. F. Cordon.

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The Soul of a Dog.

One summer evening last year, accompanied by my faithful dog, I wandered into one of our many parks in South London, and came across a group of elderly men who were discussing a variety of topics. I listened for awhile, until one, who looked like an old-fashioned Scripture-reader, introduced a subject upon which I was deeply interested, and then I thought it was time for me to join in the discussion. Several times I heard the name of "Tom Paine" mentioned by the speaker, and once I heard him declare that Paine was a confirmed Atheist, and that he died a miserable death, recanting at the last moment, and calling upon God to destroy all his blasphemous writings that had done so much to contaminate the minds of the rising generation. Although I had heard these Christian lies many times before, I felt very indignant at the wretched misrepresentation of the views of Thomas Paine and the calumny of his alleged death-bed recantation, and I undertook on the spot to produce, on the following evening, Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, and to show that the author was not only "not an Atheist, but a sincere believer in God and a future life." When the group of "grave and reverend signiors" heard this, they were astonished, and begged of me to tell them something more about Thomas Paine; and when I went on to tell them that Paine was one of the greatest and noblest men this country had ever produced, they began to feel a keen interest in the subject, and sat with open mouths while I recounted some of the more important incidents in his great career. I told them that Thomas Paine had taken part in two Revolutions—one which gave America her independence, and the other in France, in which Louis XIV. lost his head. Further, I told them that if Thomas Paine had not written his famous work, the *Age of Reason*, in which he tried to prove the existence of a God who was less capricious and more just than the God of the Bible, he would probably have been regarded in America as one of the greatest patriots and political philosophers in the English-speaking world. But he paid the penalty for speaking and writing what he believed to be the truth on religion by being ostracized and persecuted by all the priests and parsons and bigots of Christendom.

When the little group of listeners heard this, they, with one exception—that of the parsonic-looking gentleman who had calumniated the character of my hero—proclaimed that it was a great big shame, in a sentence in which a big D played an important part, and expressed their agreement with me that Christians never recognized talent nor nobility of character in men who were outside the pale of their narrow creed.

"Ah, but," said the Pecksniffian representative of the Christian religion, "if Tom Paine was not an Atheist, Bradlaugh was, and he believed that man died like a dog, and that there was no hope for the future for any of us."

I retorted that "at all events, Charles Bradlaugh did not believe in hell, and that if the Christian religion was true, the future prospect of most men was to pass an eternity in that warm place, where the Devil appeared to be engaged as the permanent stoker."

To this the Christian gentleman replied in one word, "Blasphemy!" which he repeated several times.

At this juncture my faithful dog came from under the seat, and that reminded me that I had something to say in reply to the statement of man dying like a dog.

"Did you ever see a dog die?" I asked of the whole group, and without waiting for an answer, I said, "Well, I have. The dog I had before this little terrier—a fine, large collie—was poisoned by some callous wretch, and I shall never forget the pathetic look he gave me just before he expired. It was pitiful to behold, and I shall never forget that look 'while memory holds a seat in this distracted globe,' as Hamlet says. Never!"

"Yes," said one of the group, who had been a sailor, "I can confirm that, for I've had several dogs in my time, and they die just like an ordinary human being—in fact, just like a Christian."

"Better than a good many Christians," I exclaimed, "many of whom die with the fear of hell before their eyes, whereas a dog goes into the everlasting sleep with no fear respecting the future."

When I said this, the narrow-minded Christian before mentioned got up and left the company, and shook off the dust of his feet in disgust. So I continued to harangue the company without further interruption.

"Yes, my friends," I said, "my little dog deserves to live again as much as any Christian; and if the soul of a dog is associated with its brain, then, I think, it can be demonstrated that the soul of a dog is just as likely to be immortal as the soul of a man."

"Indeed, in some countries, when a child dies they bury a dog with him. What for, you may ask? Well they think that when the child arises on the day of the resurrection he *will not know his way about*, will not be able, in fact, to find his way to heaven without the guidance of the dog."

"Well, I never heard that before," said one of the group.

"It's a fact nevertheless. Now, it is admitted that if a man has a soul, it must be associated with the brain—the intelligence. My little dog has plenty of intelligence and a marvellous memory. He knows Sunday from all other days, and though he never attempts to come out with me on the morning of any other day of the week, because he knows I go to business, he is always ready and eager to go out with me on Sunday for my mornings ramble in the park."

"Look at that," exclaimed one of the group, "just like my dog."

"Now memory is the basis of all reasoning."

"A man takes perception of objects about him, arranges his perceptions in his mind, and judges between two or more perceptions. A dog does just the same, but if a man or a dog did not remember their perceptions they would not be able to carry out this process of thought—in other words they would not be able to display the intelligence they do. Are we agreed on that?"

"Yes," I think so," said one of the group who had been an engine driver. "I have seen much evidence of great intelligence in dogs."

"Well, then," I continued, "most scientific men agree that the difference between the intelligence of men and dogs is only one of degree. And where are you going to draw the line and give an immortal soul to the man with a large brain, and no soul to an intelligent dog with a lesser brain, but much intelligence. No, it will not do. And, finally, think what a fine animal a dog may be, how faithful and how heroic. We have all heard the story of the dog—the noble Beth Gelert—who saved a child from the ravenous fangs of a wolf, and the pitiful look he gave his master when he slew him, because he found blood upon his mouth, and could not at first find the child, or perhaps you have read the dramatic story of a dog told by my friend Geo. R. Sims in one of his *Dagonet Ballads*, entitled "Told to a Missionary." The dog was taken down to the canal by his master with the object of drowning her, but by some accident the master fell in and would have been drowned but for the faithful bitch rescuing him just at the critical moment."

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"Yes, gentlemen, and I could tell you many more stories of noble deeds performed by dogs if I had time at my disposal.

"But do you really believe that dogs have souls and will live again?" asked one old gentleman of the group who had been listening most intently to the argument and the stories.

"No; I do not say that. What I do say is, that the same arguments that are used by Christians to show that man possesses an immortal soul, are equally good to show that a dog possesses an immortal soul also, and, in many cases, the nobility of his conduct entitles him to live again."

"Enough! I will tell you some more stories about dogs when next we meet. Gentlemen, good evening!"

Arthur B. Moss.

Writers and Readers.

"In the dazzling diadem of Freethought, which stretches from Desperiers to Remy de Gourmont, there is no jewel more glorious, more resplendent, than Rabelais, the immortal son of an obscure innkeeper of Chinon." I must hasten to assure the reader that I am not quoting from myself, but from an ingenuous young friend of mine, whose glowing enthusiasm is apt to get in the way of his critical judgment, and who, I imagine, has not always more than a bowing acquaintance with the subjects of his indiscriminating eulogy. No doubt I shall be told that there is really some excuse for an English reader's ignorance of Rabelais. Translations in a handy form are difficult to come by. There is, of course, the ill-printed, paper-covered, and bulky volumes exhibited in the window of the bookseller of malodorous reputation, usually flanked by the so-called *Complete Works* of a great Greek philosopher, and fiction of the ultramarine, aphrodisiac school. For the book-lover with the average amount of self-respect, such an edition is an eyesore, an abomination; it is much worse than none at all. I remember, as a boy, reading Rabelais for the first time in English, in an edition carefully "Bowdlerized" by that sympathetic if not very accurate scholar, Henry Morley. It has been out of print for a long time. Something of this kind, however, is needed if Rabelais is to be put in the hands of young people; and even for those of us who are familiar with the original, a purified version has a charm of its own. Obscenity is usually more tedious than amusing. Still, a Rabelais without the grossness is only half a Rabelais. You must read the whole of him if you want to get the strong characteristic flavour. The smell of him is worse than the taste, like a Limburger cheese. There used to be an edition issued by Chatto and Windus, with illustrations by Dore, but it is now out of print. Like the same publisher's *Boccaccio*, it was not a scholarly book. The version used was that of Urquhart (1653), and Motteux (1693). By the way, it is a common literary delusion that old translations are always the best; most people will tell you that the only translation of Montaigne is Florio's (1603), yet it is no more like Montaigne than Mr. Bernard Shaw is like Moliere. The best version of Rabelais is a modern one, made by a distinguished Cambridge scholar, Mr. W. F. Smith, who has the good sense not to try, as the older translators did, to improve upon the original. This version, with a companion volume, *Rabelais in his Writings*, just issued by the Cambridge University Press, will help both the student and the general reader to clearer notions on the subject.

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Like all great men who have appealed strongly to the popular imagination, and who have attracted the enmity of the malevolent, Rabelais has his myth or legend. The traditional date of his birth, although even now accepted by the illiterate, was long ago proved impossible. Instead of 1483, it was somewhere between 1490 and 1495. He was just as certainly not the son of an innkeeper. This was a lying invention of the holy and pious water-drinkers of the times, who were scandalized by Rabelais' constant association of wine and veracity, and his suggestion of a complimentary proverb, *in aqua mendacitas:* and it is not impossible that our Protestant water-fanatics are even now inventing a legendary potman for the father of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. In fact, Rabelais' father was a lawyer, a landed proprietor in Chinonais, who was the owner of a house in Chinon which was afterwards (1590) turned into an inn called "The Lamprey." But legend did not stop at his birth; it went on to the day of his death.

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The attack came from three sides; he was abused by the monks, the Reformed clergy, and the Rousard group of poets. The monks were furious with the apostate, as they called him, for exposing their ignorance and gross viciousness. In 1547, a Benedictine, one Gabriel des Puits Herbault, fell foul of him in a scurrilous pamphlet. "This plague-spreading monster," he calls him, "this art-master of every unmentionable kind of debauchery, more impious than the Genevan Atheists; this miserable wine-bibber and glutton, soiled with unspeakable vices of those filthy heathen Greeks." If the monks were inarticulate with rage, the Reformers were coldly virulent, and attacked without anger their ancient ally against Rome, monasticism, and the philosophy of the schoolmen. In 1550 he had the honour of a place in Calvin's "Index Expurgatorius" (*Tractatus de Scandaliis*), while Ramus, a Rationalist of some importance in the history of thought, denounced him as an Atheist. Robert Estienne, the Humanist, reproached the Sorbonne with neglecting to burn the atheistic creator of Pantagruel. "He often enough amused himself by throwing stones into our garden," said Henri Estienne, who thoughtfully gave him a prominent place in the chapter of his *Apology for Herodotus* that deals with "Blasphemers." For the Protestant fanatics, Rabelais and his hero were two figures of Anti-Christ. The poet Ronsard and his friends were not less bitter than the raging monks and the coldly malevolent Calvinists. Rabelais had ridiculed unmercifully these stupid, if learned, innovators, who were trying to turn the graceful French language from its natural line of evolution by overlaying it with Greek words and phrases, and so converting it into an uncouth jargon. Although an ardent lover of the New Learning, the rediscovered literature of Greece, Rabelais refused to bow down before it in abject adoration.

. . . . .

The moment the death of Rabelais had relieved them of all fear of his derision and corrosive irony the three enemies formed a sort of Triple Alliance, and at once set about the pleasant task of inventing the legend of his last hours. The holy monkish liar who received his confession, solemnly and mendaciously asserted that Rabelais had passed away in a state of drunkenness. At the very last moment, we are told, he gathered together his strength for a final sarcasm, and exclaimed: "Draw the curtain, the farce is ended!" A similar phrase, however, is attributed to Augustus; but it is doubtful if the exclamation ever escaped the lips of a man at the point of death. It was obviously a man-of-letters that invented the famous last will and testament of Rabelais: "I possess nothing, I owe much, the remainder I bequeath to the poor." This amusing witticism may be found in a letter from Erasmus to Beda written in 1527 and, no doubt, was borrowed from someone else. When he was anointed with the holy oils he said to the priest that he was greasing his boots for the last long journey. This has the authentic, the characteristic flavour; but surely there is in it nothing of blasphemy. The "Great Perhaps" is very likely a Calvinistic invention to fasten on Rabelais a philosophic scepticism. He is a Montaigne sceptic only for those who have never put themselves to the trouble of reading him intelligently. In fine, we may be pretty certain that he accepted the inevitable with the serenity born of a natural good humour, and what is more than many of his enemies had, a conscience free from all remorse.

. . . . .

Was Rabelais a Freethinker? I imagine that there is little doubt he was not, at least, not in the meaning we now attach to the word. There is nothing to show that he did not believe in God, and little to show that he did not believe in a life after death. That he could ridicule the ignorance and coarseness, the greed and lubricity of the monkish rabble, that he could denounce monastic institutions as radically unsocial, is not sufficient proof that he was not a

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believing Catholic. The Roman Church then, as now, permits a good deal of latitude in the criticism of what it considers the non-essentials of the faith. Both the Protestant and the Freethinker are inclined to ignore or forget this essential fact, and to judge the standards of an earlier period by those of to-day, with the result that many a good Catholic is made to seem either a Protestant or a Freethinker. For Prof. Lounsbury, a literary man with a bias to Agnosticism, Chaucer is a sceptic in religion; other people, with an anti-Roman bias, see in him a leader of the Wickliffite revolt which heralded the breaking away of England from Rome. Both these opinions, to my thinking, are hopelessly wide of the mark, simply because they are not nourished by what I may call the sympathetic imagination. Too much is made of Chaucer's attack upon celibacy in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, the Protestant commentators arguing as if it were a dogma of the Church, which of course, it is not. Rabelais, no more than Chaucer, attacked the fundamental dogmas of Christianity; and the more intelligent of the Roman clergy would never have dreamt of calling him an Atheist on the strength of his unseemly handling of sacred things. An Italian peasant will, in a fit of anger, couple so filthy an epithet with the Virgin Mary that even a Freethinker would be shocked. And yet he is devoutly religious. It is the Latin temperament which has in it more of Paganism than is readily admitted. Coleridge once noted a good illustration of the Latin attitude to religion:—

> This is a story from some old Spanish humourist which had by some strange oversight escaped the shears of the Inquisition. At the Sacrament, a priest gave, without perceiving it, a counter instead of a wafer. The communicant thinking it would melt, very patiently waited, but without effect. The priest seeing him hesitate, inquired what was the matter? "Matter," said he, "I hope you have not made a mistake and given me God the Father, he is so hard and tough there is no swallowing him."

Now such a story, I am inclined to think, did not "escape" the Inquisition, simply because the Spanish Inquisitors, unlike Coleridge, who, with all his philosophy, could not get rid of his Puritanism, could see in it nothing blasphemous. For the solemn Puritan type of mind God is above a joke, for Rabelais, he was probably the great Cosmic humourist—a Rabelais writ large.

* * * * *

Rabelais had no desire for the crown of martyrdom, and he was prepared to tone down some of his expressions. He felt that he would be more comfortable in his ordinary clothing than in a sheet of fire. He liked his jokes at superstition, but he was not so foolish as to pay too dear for them. As with all great creative artists, his philosophy lies deep down in his work, and the only way one can get at it is through the sympathetic imagination. Even then we may be reading our own ideas into it, as so many of us have done with Shakespeare.

Geo. Underwood.

A Building Made with Hands.

It is satisfactory to know that many State officials have a correct appreciation of their position towards the public generally; but, unfortunately, there are some who abuse their positions, and who are easily induced to figure at Christian functions. Statesmen, judges, sailors, and soldiers ought to be subject to one rule. They ought, by virtue of their offices and as servants of the State, to be debarred from appearing publicly on sectarian platforms. They must know that the country, with whose administrative interests they are entrusted, comprises thousands of citizens who do not believe in, or who are definitely hostile to, the Christian religion. Notwithstanding, several such officials have on various occasions succumbed to the persuasive blandishments of priest and parson, and thereby put an affront upon members of the community who repudiate the pretensions and presumptions of clericalism.

An example of such a lapse from official correctitude is to be found in the case of the Rt. Hon. Robert Munro, the Secretary for Scotland, who, on March 8, opened a new Y.M.C.A. building in Edinburgh. Accompanying him on the platform were divines representing the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Established Church of Scotland, and the United Free Church of Scotland; the Permanent Under Secretary for Scotland, an M.P., a Judge of the Supreme Court of Scotland, and others. At an evening meeting, the notorious Sir Arthur Yapp appeared, and sufficiently indicated the main function of the Y.M.C.A. in "that time of reconstruction towards which they were all looking forward. In that great period the red triangle might be the clearing-house—the communication trench for the Churches." We begin, pondering such an utterance as this, to see some light being shed upon the hitherto inexplicable lack of co-operation between the Scottish Churches and "General" Booth, who recently decided to make Scotland a "unit of the Salvation Army's life." The position is becoming clearer. At the function to which we have directed attention no mention was made of the Salvation Army; not a word was heard of "General" Booth's magnanimous succour for a Scotland fast falling from grace; not one humble private even of the Salvation Army was present to convey greetings to the Y.M.C.A. Is this, then, the solution? Has the Y.M.C.A., in the estimation of the clergy of Scotland, beaten the Salvation Army, in its utilization of the chances offered by the War, "to a frazzle"? Therefore, let us part company with the Band of Blood and Fire, and let us thank God for and put our trust in the Y.M.C.A.! Indeed, the Rev. Dr. Fisher, of the Established Church, recently went the length of saying that the Y.M.C.A. was just the Church under another name. At the function to which we are now referring, the Rev. Dr. Sclater, of the United Free Church, declared that suggestions of rivalry between the Church and the Y.M.C.A. were most ludicrous and fatuous, and that "the Y.M.C.A. was simply the Church in action." What, then, *is* the Church apart from the Y.M.C.A.; and what in the name of common sense must the Church have been before the Y.M.C.A. existed at all? Anyway, the parsons were unanimous in asserting that there was a "growing good understanding" between the Y.M.C.A. and the Church; and we may live to see Sir Arthur Yapp's vision of the red triangle as "the clearing-house—the communication trench for the Churches" realized. It certainly looks very much as if the writing on the wall, "*Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*," is appropriate in Scotland to the case of "General" Booth. The "General's" organization has been beaten by several heads by the old young sprinters of the Y M.C.A. The "General's" job is taken from him "and given unto another." The *denouement* is complete, and it is a staggering answer to the very much trumpeted mission of the "General" to Edinburgh but a few weeks ago.

Having gone out of his way to open this new Y.M.C.A. building in Edinburgh, the Secretary for Scotland went the whole hog in the matter of rhetorical recklessness. He "evened" (as they say in Scotland) the red triangle with the Red Cross in its works of generosity, sympathy, and mercy! He "thought he saw one of God's good gifts to us even in the midst of war." The War must needs be glorified because it has afforded opportunity for service by the clerically controlled Y.M.C.A.! "Mr. Munro," we read, "said that the War's annealing fires had cleansed and purged the world. They had burned off the dross and left us the pure gold." Can anyone conceive a statement less in accordance with actual facts than this? The War is daily impoverishing humanity in physical, intellectual, and moral respects. Are the agencies that caused or permitted the continuance of the evils which have culminated in this damnable, devitalizing, desolating, dehumanizing, demoralizing, and disintegrating War to be looked to to renovate the world—to eradicate the wrong and wretchedness of which they themselves are the authors and condoners? Are there no Freethinkers bearing arms in what they believe to be a campaign against tyranny? Are there no Freethinkers succouring the wounded and helping the bereaved? Has the Secretary for Scotland been informed that in connection with the Red Cross Department of the Army of our great Ally, America, there is an ambulance car named the "Robert Ingersoll" car? This we know with a certitude, which no amount of oratorical wealth can disprove, that it is solely because of its *secular* activities that the Y.M.C.A. has been of service. Christianity filches the virtues of humanism; but the thinking observer knows full well that they are stolen plumes.

We have no hesitation in claiming that the money spent on

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this new Y.M.C.A. building in Edinburgh is a piece of unnecessary extravagance in war time. In the issue of the *Scotsman* newspaper of March 9th, which reports the proceedings at the opening, there are ninety-nine churches advertising their "services" for Sunday, March 10. Many of these church buildings are well constructed and commodious, and scarcely ever used on six days of the week. Most of them could, at little expense, be adapted as hostels with reading, writing, smoking, recreation, and sleeping rooms. But there seems to be a section of the community which has a craving for faked shows, at which its members may have an opportunity of posing in the limelight as public benefactors, while they are really countenancing and indulging in reprehensible waste of good money. Multiplication of organizations, too, means multiplication of officials with comfortable salaries. Administration could be cheapened to an almost incredible extent if there was a central pooling of resources and energies, and if limits were put to mawkish, misdirected, and patronizing philanthropy which inevitably leads to lamentable overlapping and unhealthy emulation.

There was a glint of common sense in the middle of the address of the Secretary for Scotland—strangely at variance with the prediction of the egregious Yapp. Mr. Munro said that the service being rendered by the Y.M.C.A. "had shone like a lamp through the dark night of war—a lamp *which would not be extinguished till day broke and the world was once more fair with the sunshine of peace.*" We trust Mr. Munro does not delude himself with the idea that war in every form will cease when peace dawns on a stricken world. All mens' energies will continue to be needed in war against ignorance, disease, poverty, and cruelty of all kinds and in all places. But the signs of the times furnish evidence that in that war of the future confidence will be placed in agencies that are purely humanistic in their constitution, operations, and aims. Agencies controlled and vitiated by religion will have found their graves in a forgotten past.

Ignotus.

War.

War-correspondents and artists are often severely blamed for picturing too clearly the real horrors of the battlefield, the ambulance, the hospital tent. What, then, shall we say of the rulers and statesmen who—for the most part wickedly and wantonly, on the one side, if not on both—safe themselves, set the tremendous machinery of these horrors in motion? What of the chivalrous heroes who hire themselves out to be always ready for the human butchery, be their country's cause just or unjust? What of the pious priests and prelates who render fervent public thanksgivings to their God of Love and Mercy when the slaughter has been exceedingly great, but greater of another people than their own? We exult and triumph in national actions whose inevitable consequences we cannot bear to look upon in the dim vague reflection of pictures or words. Unashamed of the deeds, we blench from their truthful record. Tender girls and women worship the scarlet at balls and reviews, while they shrink with abhorrence from the blood of which it is the proper flaming emblem, shrink with nausea from such far faint suggestions of the blood as red ink or red paint. As for the common Jingoes (we no longer need borrow *chauvinists* from the French, having by recent vile experience gotten us so much viler a name for a so much more despicable species of the same genus among ourselves)—as for the cowardly, greedy, callous, vainboastful Jingoes, of the clubs, the slums, the Exchange, the music-halls, the press, and even the pulpit, who inflame others to the carnage to which they never expose themselves, we will not heed *their* piteous protests against the faithful record of murder and devastation, for the personal comfort of those persons that they could not see or conceive the actual state of their darlings; but it would be infinitely better if all men and women could see, or, not seeing, could conceive and *realize* in of every battle, such misery and desolation and bereavement as are the fruits of every campaign; for then war would be soon extinct, drowned and consumed beyond resuscitation in a lava flood of horror and loathing, throughout all our pseudo-civilized world. Therefore, the more plainly, the more brutally and disgustingly, because the more veraciously, the horrors and agonies of war can be depicted by pen and pencil and related by word of mouth, the better; that the poor foolish, *un*imaginative people who are fascinated by the flaunting trappings of war in peace, may be terrified into shuddering abhorrence of war in action; ravaging, burning, mangling, murdering; changing rich fields to trampled swamps, fair cities to black ruins, brave strong men to carrion; leaving parents childless, children fatherless, wives widowed, maidens frustrate of wifehood and motherhood. "*Sensational?*" Are you so imbecile as to dream that there can be one thousandth part so much "sensation" in any writing or picture as in the fever-stricken, the wounded, the maimed, the ruined, the dying, and all their afflicted families, the teeming produce of every glorious war?

James Thomson (B. V.).

Correspondence.

A PERTINENT QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—On March 29—Good Friday—a large church in Paris was struck by a shell fired from a gun about seventy-five miles away, so it was apparently specially attracted to this building. At the time it was filled with a devout congregation engaged in solemnly commemorating the anniversary of the death of their Saviour. This shell killed seventy-five and wounded ninety persons.

Jesus is reported to have said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). So, it is a legitimate inference that he was in the congregation. As, however, he was not among the casualties, it would be of great public interest if some privileged theologian—I mean one of those who is on intimate terms with God—would explain what became of Jesus. For, if he cannot, we are once more driven to believe that—

Providence moves in mischievous ways,
Its blunders to perform.

E. 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.

LONDON.

Indoor.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Self-Determination."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Swabey, and Kells.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

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Failsworth Secular Society (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth): Annual Spring Services, Mr. Harry Snell, 2.45, "Woman's Entry into Political Life"; 6.30, "King George's Day of National Prayer: Sense or Nonsense." Music by School Choir. Collection.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
What Will You Put in Its Place?—The Editor	241
"The Unashamed Church."—J. T. Lloyd	242
A Secular Teacher and His Work.—Mimnermus	243
Freethinking.—John McMillan	244
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	248
The Leicester Secular Society.—F. J. Gould	249
The Soul of Beauty.—Andrew Millar	250

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

What Will You Put in Its Place?

What, says a correspondent, is the best reply to make to a man who asks what we propose putting in the place of Christianity? Well, the best reply, and so far as we are concerned the only reply, is "Nothing." Why should we put something in the place of Christianity? If it were admittedly good and serviceable, the question would be pertinent. If one is removing the foundations of a house, the nature of what is to be substituted is of first-rate importance. But if the foundations are being weakened because water is percolating through the soil, the question of what will be put in the place of the water we purpose diverting is quite irrelevant. When it was proposed to make factories consume their own smoke, that man would have been looked on as a lunatic who had demanded, "What are you going to put in its place?" If the suggestion had been to remove the atmosphere, the question would have been pertinent. When the Germans send over the Front a cloud of poison gas, no soldier inquires of his officer what is to be put in its place if the wind blows it back from whence it came. There is no need to put anything in the place of a thing that is injurious or dangerous. Its removal is all that is needed. That is why we say that the only correct answer to "What will you put in the place of Christianity?" is "Nothing."

* * *

Begging the Question.

As is not unusual, when the Christian states a proposition, he does so in a way that begs the whole point at issue. If Christianity is useful, if it is performing some beneficial function in life, then there is need, before it is removed, that we should have some idea of what is going to take its place. But no Freethinker believes this to be so. His whole case is that Christianity is, at best, harmless, and normally it is obstructive and dangerous. "What will you put in its place?" is a question that one Christian may properly ask of another; but it is a question that a Christian is never justified in putting to a Freethinker. If a man believes that some sort of a god is necessary, he is bound to provide a new one before he destroys the one already established. And human nature is such that, provided a new absurdity is substituted for the old one, most people are convinced that an improvement has been effected. But the question of putting something in the place of Christianity does not trouble the Freethinker. It is not his concern. The Christian makes the same blunder when he asks the Freethinker to account for the existence of evil. That, again, is the Christian's concern. And the Christian has really no right to manufacture a lot of conundrums and then look to the Freethinker to supply answers to them.

* * *

Our Aim.

What is it that the Freethinker is trying to remove? Our whole aim may be summed up in a sentence. We wish to destroy the belief in, and the influence of, supernaturalism in science, in morals, in sociology. That is the negative aspect of our work. The positive aspect is that of encouraging the growth of true ideas in all these departments. And, of course, if a man believes that you cannot have a sound science, a healthy morality, or a progressive sociology without supernaturalism, he is warranted in asking for something equally effective in its place. But in that case the discussion obviously turns on whether supernaturalism is necessary or not. The Freethinker says it is not. He asserts that the whole influence of supernaturalism in all these departments is to mislead and to obstruct. It serves no useful purpose whatever. His function is not that of a surgeon faced with the problem of finding a new leg for a man after he has amputated a useful one; it is that of a physician removing a stricture in the social artery. The physician knows that when the obstruction is removed, the normal recuperative powers of the patient will do the rest. The Freethinker knows that when the poison of Christianity no longer operates, human life will freely supply all that is necessary to life and happiness.

* * *

The Persistence of the Savage.

Christianity has had a long run, religion has had a still longer one. And during its lengthy career, religion has become more or less closely associated with a thousand and one things with which it has no real connection. But to ignorance and unreflection, when things are seen together in fact, their separation in thought is almost impossible. Religion has always been associated with morality; people have expressed their ideals in terms of religion; therefore, says ignorance, without religion of some sort our morality and our ideals cannot stand. That is exactly the way we can imagine some fear-stricken savage thinking the first time someone suggested that seed should be sown without sprinkling the ground with blood as a sacrifice to his God. The two things had always been associated, therefore they could not be separated. But when courage had its way, the blood sprinkling was seen to be useless. The savage didn't have to put something in its place, he simply cancelled it, and applied his intelligence and energy to the work before him. And, as here, so elsewhere. Religion has no organic, no necessary connection with the real things of life. Its association is always accidental. Ignorance created the union between religion and life, and is still fearful that the social structure will collapse when a divorce is pronounced.

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If Religion Goes?

But suppose we imagine this country subjected to a devastating epidemic of common sense—of all things the most unlikely—and religion to disappear as a consequence, what would be the result? Would anything be lost of real value? Clearly the human relations between parents and children, husbands and wives, friends and friends, would remain. The State would remain. Society would remain. The beauties of art, the wonders of science, the glories of literature would remain. The world would remain with its problems infinite in number and seductive in character. Babies would still be born, boys and girls would grow up, men and maidens would marry, human beings would continue to laugh and cry, and love and hate, to toil, to triumph, or flounder to despair; all that is now would go on then exactly as before, save for the one thing that we should cease to squander our energy in a useless manner, and rid society of something that has never yielded real help to any human being during the whole of its history.

* * *

Human Nature Enough.

That is why we say there is no need to put anything in the place of Christianity. We do not want to take away one God and recreate another. We do not want to take away the Christian heaven and hell and give another heaven and hell in their place. Any exchange effected along that line is not worth the trouble of making. When a gardener sets about pulling up the weeds from a flower bed he doesn't put something in their place; he knows that the weeds are absorbing nutriment the flowers should receive, and that if he removes the weeds the natural strength of the plants will do the rest. Our work is to weed the garden of human nature. We realize that human nature contains within itself the potentialities of its own greatness, and that if we clean out the weeds of superstition and ignorance we may trust to the sun of reason and the pure air of human fellowship to produce a better race from the fruitful soil of human society. We do not want anything in the place of Christianity; our aim is to rid the world of a superstition that has been a canker in the heart and a cramp in the intellect of humanity ever since its inception.

Chapman Cohen.

"The Unashamed Church."

It is our contention that practically there is no distinction between Christianity and the Church. Some theologians, on the contrary, for apologetic purposes, declare that the two are fundamentally different, and that what is true of the Church is the very opposite of true of Christianity. They admit that, though the Church has often proved a lamentable failure, the Christian religion has been an unqualified success whenever people have been sufficiently courageous to give it a fair trial. Clergymen of the type of the Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, openly acknowledges that if the Church had been but loyal to her ideals the present deplorable War would not have broken out. In our judgment, however, the Church *is* Christianity in practice, organized Christianity as it has existed in the world being the only Christianity known to us. In an article in the *Christian World* for April 11, the Rev. Arthur Pringle says that "to-day the Church is much blamed or, what is worse, despised as simply not counting." In this reverend gentleman's opinion, her being despised does not matter so long as she is not despicable. Of course, being one of her ministers, Mr. Pringle cannot be expected to speak slightingly of her, much less to admit her total failure; but whatever her condition may be, it is his firm conviction that "in the fierce flame of the present tragedy one of two things must happen—destruction or purification." He is confident "there can be no middle result: we shall come out either dead or mightily alive." Then he quotes Paul Sabatier's description of what happened in France at the close of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. The famous French divine tells us how at that time the more or less superstitious crowds invaded the old cathedrals, being deeply stirred by the heart-breaking calamity that had overtaken the nation—how even "notorious heretics, members of more or less Masonic associations, contended for seats with professed devotees, and were only remarkable for their attention." But it is the following sentences of which we wish special notice to be taken:—

> The people of France were returning to their Mother, quite simply and sincerely, to sit down at her table..... Now the board was not laid. The old Mother had no fatted calf to kill, nor even energy to prepare a little substantial food for the famishing.....They went away irritated, incensed, and with bitter regret that ever they had come.

Those are the words of a Protestant in condemnation of the Catholic Church; but they are tragically true of the Church as a whole, by whatever name she may be known. Now, Mr. Pringle has the audacity to affirm that many of the Churches have no need to be ashamed of the way in which they are meeting the position that faces them to-day. He supplies his readers with the following manifesto:—

> With our own accent and significance, we have good reason to say with Paul that we are not ashamed of the Gospel, because it answers to the facts of life as nothing else does. For, so far from the Christian faith having been shattered by the War, it stands illumined and vindicated as never before within living memory. It has, so to speak, anticipated and underlined all that is happening. To put a great matter in fragmentary outline, our faith had already prepared us for the heights and depths of human possibility which the War has so wonderfully and disconcertingly revealed: how man has it in him to be less than the beasts or more than the angels. The centre of our faith has always been the Cross that is the supreme example of that "greatest love" by which men lay down their lives that their friends or their country may be saved. And, *pace* Mr. Wells, it has from the beginning been part of the fibre of Christianity that God is not a quiescent or occasionally intervening spectator, but man's fellow-sufferer and fellow-conqueror in life and death and on to all-compensating immortality. It is not our province or pretence to dissolve all difficulties; but at least we have a faith that, soberly reckoning with all that the darkness means, promises at last to turn it into light.

We have cited that long passage in order that Mr. Pringle's case may be fully and fairly before us. That it is a hopelessly bad case is beyond all possible doubt. Of all attempts to exonerate God from blame in connection with the War, or to explain away the utter failure of Christianity either to prevent or to end it, this by Mr. Pringle is surely the most glaringly and absurdly futile. It amounts, in reality, to a complete negation of the Gospel preached by St. Paul and embodied in the great creeds of the Church. Instead of being the Saviour of the world, God in Christ is represented here as a sharer in the sufferings and sorrows caused by human sins. Instead of delivering mankind from the guilt of that original depravity which is the root of all the evils and miseries which darken and curse our life, Christianity is said to promise nothing better than at last, in another world, to turn the prevailing darkness into light. No wonder the reverend gentleman confesses his inability

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to "dissolve all difficulties," when, as a matter of simple fact, he dissolves none, but creates a great host. New Testament Christianity represents God as being in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, as redeeming, cleansing, elevating, and ennobling it; but, according to Mr. Pringle, it portrays the Heavenly Father as simply "man's fellow-sufferer and fellow-conqueror in life and death." To St. John, God is light and love, St. Paul calls him the God of peace, whose supreme gift to the world is good will engendering universal harmony; but to this twentieth-century preacher, as to some Old Testament writers, he is "a man of war," "the Lord mighty in battle," "the God of Hosts." Mr. Pringle's Gospel is a new thing under the sun, of which no one ever heard the lightest whisper until now, and which pictures the Deity as anything but a Divinely beautiful and noble character. In other words, our divine has flung Christianity down the wind, and reduced God to the position of man's fellow-worker.

Can it be true that the Church has no reason to be ashamed of her record? Of what benefit have her ministrations been to the world at large? She has doubtless provided her clergy with rich and comfortable livings; but what has she done towards lifting society to a higher level of life? Mr. Pringle puts that point thus:—

> What is the Church doing? What is there to show at the end of its day's work? That the Church has failed dismally from the outwardly impressive, spectacular point of view must be admitted. It could not prevent the War, neither can it stop it; and there, in the eyes of many, lies its final condemnation. Must it, therefore, close its doors?

Should not the Church's success be outwardly impressive, seen and read by all? Will Mr. Pringle be good enough to specify some of God's providential ways which are not marked by outwardly impressive, spectacular happenings? Will he tell us what so-called "acts of God" can be clearly distinguished from "acts of man"? It is easy enough to characterize those events which are beyond human control as "acts of God"; but no such occurrences can be discovered in human life. Neither is there any difficulty in stating that there are things which even God cannot do. "Even Christ had to shed helpless tears over the city he would fain have saved. Is there no lasting significance in that"? Yes, certainly, and it is this: that neither immediately, nor yet through the Church, God either does or can do anything at all. Mr. Pringle asserts that "there are many Churches in the land that need have no shame as they meet the test of results." We admit that clergymen, not a few, have been excellent recruiting officers, and that from the Churches tens of thousands of fine young men have gone to the Front to kill Germans; but does the reverend gentleman verily believe that Christ instituted his Church to serve such a purpose as that? We hold that the Church ostensibly came into the world to save it from all its evils, and to sow therein the seed of universal peace and prosperity, and that she has lamentably failed to answer the alleged end of her existence. Great Britain is at last finding out that she owes none of her good things to the Church, and that she could and would get on much better without her ghostly ministrations.

J. T. Lloyd.

How frightened Christians are at admitting that a man of genius can be a Freethinker! Swinburne's heterodoxy is as well known as that of Shelley, but the dear *Daily News* will not admit the soft impeachment. In a review of *Swinburne's Letters*, it points out that the poet's correspondence "show him as a man with a religion; he would testify to beauty wherever he saw it." Let us hope that the *Daily News* is not so unscrupulous in its political propaganda.

A Secular Teacher and His Work.

> Spirits are not finely touched
> But to fine issues. —*Shakespeare.*
> To bear all naked truths
> And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
> That is the top of sovereignty. —*Keats.*

Letters published in the *Freethinker* from time to time show that there are many Secularists who retain traces of their early religious training. This lends point to the oft-quoted remark, attributed to a Catholic ecclesiastic, that if a child were in his care in its early years, he did not mind who had the child afterwards. Yet there have been few attempts on the part of Freethinkers to supplant the thousands of schools of the Christian majority by educational establishments in which superstition has no place. So far as I know, there were recently but two schools in the country in which the curriculum was entirely secularistic, and one of these was compelled to close down owing to the adverse conditions caused by the World-War. With this one I was well acquainted, and a few notes concerning it may be of interest to others.

My first acquaintance with Ruskin House School, Southend-on-Sea (alas! now no more), arose under peculiar circumstances. A friend showed me a beautifully written piece of dictation, in which some passages from Ingersoll were transcribed by a child's hand. Seeing my look of wonder, he informed me that it was the ordinary work done at a school conducted on Freethought lines. The next day I visited the school, and was surprised and delighted at what I saw.

There was an air of novelty about the institution. On the walls were portraits of Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, Huxley, Walt Whitman, Bradlaugh, and other intellectual worthies, and the scholars were familiarized with the life-work of these pioneers by daily talks from the principal and staff. These chats ranged over a variety of subjects, principally scientific, historic, and biographic. Birthdays of great or famous men and women were honoured. Even the school-books had a novel appearance, for they included Gould's *Children's Plutarch* and *Brave Citizens*, Dennis Hird's books, and Ingersoll's works, all being freely drawn upon for purposes of dictation. The classes were mixed, boys and girls sat together, and the tuition was precisely the same for both. Experience proved that the girls became more self-reliant, and the boys more amenable and courteous. Physical culture was in use, the rudiments of science were known to all, and every scholar had a sound groundwork of knowledge. Even the youngest children knew the star-groups and the fundamentals of science. The elder scholars were also instructed in bookkeeping and shorthand, and thus fitted for commercial life immediately on the termination of their school careers, and in many instances situations were found for them by the principal.

During the summer months weekly rambles were arranged, and the scholars journeyed to the heart of the country or the seashore, and learned to read directly from Nature's "infinite book of secrecy." A short walk or train journey was usually sufficient, but once a year the children went to London and visited the Zoological Gardens, or the Natural History Museum. On one of these visits Sir E. Ray Lankester was interested in the young visitors, and had a kindly word for the little students.

Every opportunity was given to the pupils for mental experiment, and the critical faculties were kept alert. One day the scholars would be told the story of Henry VIII., and, may be, on the next day that of Socrates. Then they were asked to contrast the per-

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sonalities. These are but instances of how unconventional was the work at this school. Another point worth noting was the entire absence of corporal punishment. Discipline was maintained by moral suasion, the principal believing that a teacher who had to rely upon a stick was unworthy of the care of the young. The whole school was simply one happy family of boys and girls, and the teaching staff foster parents. The education imparted was quite sound, and boys who left the school were enabled at once to take appointments as bank clerks and other positions of value.

The principal of this school, Mr. W. H. Thresh, made a gallant attempt to supply a long-felt want in the Freethought movement. For ten years he maintained the school in the face of enormous difficulties, which would have daunted any but the most ardent and enthusiastic Freethinker. Full of a high and unflinching courage, he was only beaten in the end by the dire results of the present World-War. Among schoolmasters of his time he was what Dr. Arnold was at Rugby in the school-days of Judge Hughes. Animated with the idea of the high nature of his calling, he threw himself into forwarding the education of some of the rising generation, free entirely from the "lie at the lips of the priest." Men and women may come after him and accomplish what he bravely attempted, but the credit will always belong to the pioneer schoolmaster, whose ten years' crusade for the young forms a high and perfect tribute to the ennobling ideals of, what George Meredith called, "the best of causes."

Mimnermus.

Freethinking.

The habit of mind engendered by Freethinking, a condition of careful watchfulness combined with patient scepticism, is one which is highly creditable to humanity, but which, in common with all things of real value, is rather rare; which rarity accounts for the slow permeation of ideas, in themselves neither revolutionary nor revolting, but which contain the germs of great progressive movements. Contrasted with the normal type of mind, it may best be described as energetic as compared with lazy, and intrepid as against pusillanimous. It is the mind of the scientist, of the discoverer, of the thinker.

Freethinking is not necessarily relative to religion, although it is in this connection that the term is mostly used—a subtle compliment unwittingly paid to those who have discarded the beliefs of savages by those who hold them. It is, properly speaking, the examination of facts urged to support a conclusion, and the acceptation or rejection of the conclusion as a result of personal decision. Among the troubles that beset the Freethinker, such as unpopularity due to heterodox opinions expressed, is this most serious drawback, which appears, perhaps, unnatural to the inhabitants of these islands, of having to exercise his mind rather frequently, instead of drifting whither popular papers decide. It is certainly much more comfortable to have one's thinking done for one; but there is just as much virtue in such ease as there is in lying abed till noon each day. The iconoclast who smashes ideas which have ruled for years, been made idols, and been expressed in maxims, does work the value of which cannot be immediately appraised, but which can be recognized as of infinite use, as it is only through keeping the minds of the people in a condition of ferment that progress is possible, and, when possible, made.

A favourite argument against the practice of Freethought is that it is destructive without being constructive; and the connection between the ideas of destruction and construction is so close that not infrequently one is tempted to launch out on a tentative scheme of construction, to the joy of the opponent, who uses the scheme to cover up the weakness of his own position. Destruction is necessary; it clears the ground. It may or may not be necessary that a substitute be provided for what is destroyed. One can scarcely imagine a farmer substituting one weed for another which he has been at great pains to destroy on his farm; and yet, not unusually, those who kill ideas are asked to provide a substitute. The crux of the question is whether the old idea was beneficial or harmful. If beneficial, the aim of the new idea is to eliminate such parts as reduced its value; if harmful, there can only be substituted the idea of abandoning the old idea, which is complete destruction. Illustrative of this contention is the existence of the office of President of the United States. When the Constitution of that Republic was being drawn up, Paine pointed out both the uselessness and the folly of having a President; but so strong a hold had the idea that construction involved the substitution of one head for another, that he was unable to convince the 1787 Convention of the value of his suggestion.

Mental laziness interferes with progress in many minor matters, no less than in large ones, and it was a matter of minor importance that first drew our attention to the prevalence of the disease. During a discussion on "Education and Social Democracy," one lady deplored the imposition of "home lessons"; and no sooner had she sat down than up sprang another lady, who held that education must be made difficult and distasteful because life itself was full of annoying incidents, and none could get his own way, and that, in short, a relatively speaking unhappy time at school inured the children to these vexations. We should not have noticed the statements so particularly had we not been amazed to find that they had considerable support from other members of the audience. Why diseases common to children should not be allowed to spread in order that we may have the survival of the fittest, in a precise biological sense, appears to us due to that reason which urges that school life ought to be pleasant. The hardships of life are to a great extent due to causes which could be removed were they to be efficiently tackled; and, in any case, school is not a training-ground for hardships; it is presumed to be a training-ground for life; or, properly speaking, the art of living.

The development of machinery has progressed in the direction of relieving man of the arduous manual labour which obtained for many in the early days of manufacture. Many things which before were only fashioned at the cost of much sweat, are now made by automatic machinery. One of the simplest illustrations of the benefits derived from the use of machinery is in the hoisting up of goods. In the days before the windlass no inconsiderable amount of effort was required to hoist articles such as stone. The windlass made the work much lighter, but now, in those places which have machinery something short of ancient, we find an electric hoist which places on man only the necessity of pulling a rope.

This is an obvious advance, and the application of the illustration to the case of education points out that the whole tendency of life and work is towards ease. This feeling of ease must be recognized by educational experts. It is useless mimicking the ostrich. Economically, work tends to become lighter; learning is work; therefore, learning ought to become lighter or easier. There is no doubt but that advance has been made in the right direction. A child is curiosity personified. It is the simplest thing in the world to encourage that curiosity. In schools more time should be devoted to the study of natural history, to botany, and kindred scientific subjects, and that study should not be of the nature of a grand assimilation of nomenclature, the which sickens whilst it stultifies, but should be the assimilation of facts, and the discussion of reasons. Nine years at school under the present methods and subjects finds a child bright and full of initiative, and leaves him a respectable ha'penny with no character. It is of primary importance that every means be taken of encouraging children's curiosity, for only by such action will it be possible to have men fully capable of being citizens in that Utopia for which pioneers work and mankind hopes; it is necessary, if progress is to be at all rapid, that children should not be so inured to vexation in school as to make them incapable of perceiving vexations in after life; it is essential that the children should think for themselves in order that they may grow up efficient in the art of living. Such a training would allow the child to retain its curiosity, to develop its confidence, to control its temper, and to appreciate the art of living; and of that appreciation springs happiness.

John McMillan.

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Acid Drops.

The Government policy in first including and then excluding the clergy from the operations of the Man Power Bill gets "curioser and curioser." Sir George Cave explains that the Government originally acted because of representations from "authorities and ministers of certain Churches, who felt it somewhat of a grievance that they were not put in the same position as the rest of the manhood of the country." Then the Government withdrew it because, after allowing for "Conscientious Objectors" and those in ill health, and also allowing for the religious needs of the country, there would not be many left. But Sir George might have remembered that it is not really a question of how many are left; it is a question of treating the clergy as a privileged body, and relieving the whole of them of an obligation that rests on all other citizens.

A still more curious sentence is that "the Government did not think it worth while to run counter to the strong feeling which existed in the matter" in order to obtain the number available. But seven per cent. is all that is reckoned on, and surely there are seven per cent. of clergymen fit for military service. And how comes it that the Government speakers, after heaping all sorts of abuse on Conscientious Objectors, go out of their way not to hurt them when they happen to be clergymen? Moreover, where is the strong current of feeling against the clergy being conscripted? If the representations from the clergy were so strong as to induce the Government to put the clause in the Bill, what becomes of the strong feeling against it which caused the withdrawal? When Sir George Cave was arguing in the Appeal Court against the Secular Society, we said he was about the worst hand at conducting an argument we had come across. What he now says, and unsays, proves it.

One other point remains. The tone adopted by some of the clergy: "I would be pleased to join the Army, but the Act does not apply to me" is sheer hypocrisy. The Act does not compel them to join, but it does not prevent their joining. It is open to any clergyman to join the Army, and there is nothing on earth to prevent his doing so. If, therefore, it be true that any clergyman feels it a grievance that he is not in the same position as "the rest of the manhood of the country," his is a grievance that can be removed at the nearest recruiting office. The whole thing seems to us, as we said last week, an elaborate piece of humbug played on a people that are becoming as subject to the hypnotic influence of an "official" statement as is any Prussia.

The Archbishop of Canterbury assured the House of Lords "that the clergy had not been exempted at their own request, and they were ready to respond to any call made on them." We presume if they had been enrolled along with others they would have had to respond. And they can still go. Sir George Cave said the number available would be very small. The Archbishop, who ought to know, admitted that had the clergy remained in the Bill "there would have been a considerable number" enrolled. Sir George Cave also said there was a strong feeling against it. The *Christian World*, again a better authority, says: "it is clear that public opinion on the whole rather resents the exemption of ministers and clergymen from national service." When placed together these statements only confirm one's opinion of the "fishy" nature of the whole business.

Then we have the *Church Times* declaring that the clergy were finally exempted owing to the opposition of the Roman Catholics and the dissenting ministry. But the *Church Times* admits that the "greater part of what the clergy busy themselves with can either be spared for a time or done by laymen." The really necessary work is "the ministration of the Sacraments, and the care of the sick and the dying." But, surely, laymen and women are as capable of attending the sick and the dying as are the clergy? And we do not think anyone will be injured if the Sacrament is not administered, or if it is passed over to the district visitor. All it means is that the clergy must stand as a privileged class. When that is said all is said.

Finally, it should be noted that in exempting the clergy we are following the example of our pious enemy—Germany. She also keeps her clergy at home in order to look after the morals of the people. France and Italy make no such exception. Somehow or other Frenchmen and Italians can keep all right without having the clergy told off to look after them. We Britons are evidently made of poorer stuff.

A Welsh Baptist minister has just been fined £40 for slandering the W.A.A.C.'s. We have often commented on the tendency of the pulpit to make statements without adequate foundation on fact, and usually these statements escape without reproof. If every Christian minister who has slandered Freethinkers had been fined £40, the total would mean a big reduction in the national debt.

Whilst waiting for a train at Oxford, the Rev. T. W. Martyn, Vicar of Aston Abbotts, Aylesbury, dropped dead. Had he been a Freethought lecturer, it would have been regarded as providential.

In shuffling off this mortail coil, the Rev. Robert Mays, of Corsham, Wilts, left estate of the value of £43,540. This sum should be sufficient to prevent the reverend gentleman from handling a harp.

The *Church Times* protests against a notice exhibited by a provincial clergyman: "A special service for men is held in this church on Sundays from 2.30 to 3.30. Subject next week: The Missing Link. The Vicar."

The announcement that the Bishop of Hereford would appear at Bloomsbury Baptist Church caused a flutter in religious circles. Apparently, Christian brotherhood is more honoured in the breach than the observance.

"St. Mark's Vicarage, Peterborough, worth £300 a year and a house, is going a-begging," says the *Evening News*, which adds: "the living has been vacant four months." The hesitating clergy should remember, prayerfully, that the founder of their religion was a poor man.

From a leading article in the *Manchester Guardian* of April 9 we gather that the endeavour to excite feeling against the Bolsheviks for dissestablishing the Church has broken down. It says:—

> Western Europe hardly noticed that the Bolsheviks, among other things, had broken up one of the oldest, closest, and as it seemed most firmly welded marriages between Church and State.....On February 3 they issued a decree separating Church and State, and prohibiting any religious qualification or disqualification for public office.....Thus Russia has with a stroke of the pen secularized education and the State, separated Church and State, and disendowed the Church (and other ecclesiastical societies) and declared it incapable of owning property. For the disendowment there is precedent in the eighteenth century, when the State took over the Church lands. The "bourgeois" press anticipated that this decree would initiate a bitter war between Church and Government. When the Government took over the great Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petrograd a monk was killed in the struggle, and an immense religious demonstration, numbering 200,000 or more persons, protested. The Patriarch, too, anathematized and excommunicated the Bolsheviks, and adjured the believing children of the Orthodox Church to have no intercourse whatsoever with such scum of the human race. Nothing serious, however, seems as yet to have happened.

In other words, the overwhelming majority of the Russian people recognize the change as for the better.

Miss Atkinson, President of the Women's League, said at the London Congregational Union meeting that the day had passed in which the Church treated women as spiritual char-

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women, fit only for cleaning and renovating. Just so! Even the Church must be polite to its only remaining customers.

The wife of the vicar of Tollerton was fined £5 at Nottingham on April 3 for stealing £12 worth of food tickets from a munition works. The vicar had previously received six weeks for the same offence. The clergy have received exemption in order to guard and nourish the moral strength of the country.

Undeterred by the Easter week of prayer, which was followed by a rapid German advance, the Wesleyan Methodists held a ten-hours' intercession service at the Central Hall, Westminster. The Rev. Dimsdale Young pleaded for "splendid tenacity" in prayer—which means, we assume, worrying the Lord until he does something. Another minister said the enemy was supernaturally checked at Mons, and prayed for the intervention of "angel hosts" to-day. But the Government seems to place infinitely more reliance on a "comb-out" and on raising the military age. Perhaps there is a strict age-limit for angels, and all are now exempt from further service.

The *British Weekly* exhorts those who are troubled and bereaved in these terrible times to go to God for the succour and comfort which they so greatly need; but they are reminded that they must repair to him along the road which he himself has appointed, which "road has two steps. *Offer unto God thanksgiving:* that is the first. *And pay thy vows to the Most High:* that is the second." Here are parents who have lost four sons in the War, whom they willingly offered up on the altar of patriotism. On what conceivable ground of reason can they be expected to feel grateful to God? Their hearts are broken; their brightly burning hopes are extinguished; a pitch-black night has fallen upon their spirits; but God flatly declines to comfort them unless they approach him with thanksgiving upon their lips. And yet the *British Weekly* is surprised that there are people who refuse to believe in such a cruel-hearted Deity!

In a case now before the Privy Council, involving the ownership of seventy-two million acres of land in Rhodesia, some interesting letters were quoted that passed between Queen Victoria. In one of them, Lobengula complains that the white men are "troubling too much about gold," and also that, after signing a document, he was told he had parted with his mineral rights. This is a trick that has been played on natives all over the world, and illustrates Christian methods of "peaceful penetration." There is also a note of satire in a reply to Lobengula, written by Lord Knutsford on behalf of the Queen:—

> The Queen understands the trouble caused to Lobengula by different parties of white men coming to his country to look for gold, but wherever gold is, or wherever it is reported to be, it is impossible for him to exclude.

The same thing may be said of rubber, or oil, or anything commercially valuable. Given a coloured race with valuable soil, and the whites become acutely anxious for his religious conversion and for his instruction in the arts of civilization. Given a country where no commercial exploitation is possible, and the natives are permitted to go to hell in their own fashion. "Blessed be ye poor"—especially when the white Christian is around.

Another letter from Lobengula to the Queen complains that white men stole his cattle, and shot thirty of his soldiers when they were sent to bring them back. And he plaintively adds:—

> The white men told my people that they had bought the country, and the people who live in it. Your Majesty, what I want to know from you is if people can be bought at any price?

But Lobengula was only a savage; had he been properly Christianized, he would have known better than to have put such a question.

A prayer offered at the annual meeting of the London Congregational Union included a special petition for the "frivolous and flighty young girls of England." This petition ought to move the heart of a bronze statue.

We can quite appreciate Sir George Cave's belief that he would be demoralizing the country by sending clergymen into the Army. We see that the Rev. J. Griffiths, of East Corwick, Yorkshire, was summoned by his wife for not providing her with a reasonable allowance. Whereupon the Southport magistrates ordered him to pay her 15s. per week. We think the Army allowance would be 12s. 6d., so Mrs. Griffiths is half a-crown better off through her husband being kept in England to keep up the moral tone of the country.

Both Lord Kitchener and Lord Roberts are dead. Religious paragraphers might, therefore, refrain from converting them into drivelling idiots. Yet the *Midland Daily Telegraph* solemnly records that when, in the early days of the War, the Germans turned back from the apparently certain capture of Paris, Lord Roberts said, "Only God Almighty could have done this." And Lord Kitchener added, "Somebody must have been praying." We know very well the type of religious liar who concocts this sort of story. Our difficulty is to mentally picture the type of idiot who really believes it.

The spectacle of Christians murdering each other by the million is not lost on, what the dear clergy call, "the heathen," and a striking instance occurred at the West Ham Police Court. A West-Indian seaman was asked: "Are you a Christian?" His reply was disconcerting. "No, sar, we quiet men."

"Billy Sunday will be heard in London soon," says a daily paper. Students of philology will be glad of the opportunity of hearing the American language in all its purity.

From the *Westminster Cathedral Chronicle*:—

> A wounded soldier who had been in a comatose state for several days told the doctor on recovery—that during all that period he thought he was dead. Whereupon the doctor asked the patient why he was sure that he was really now alive.
>
> "Oh," replied the soldier, "If I were in heaven I should not be hungry, and if I were in the other place I should not have cold feet."

The *Globe* opens one of the stock stories about the Prince of Wales offering an umbrella to a man during a storm, thus: "During his recent stay in London an American officer found himself in a severe storm. One afternoon a young man in civilian clothes was passing," etc. Now we wonder how long that storm lasted? For "one afternoon" while he was standing there the incident happened. And one wonders how many afternoons he stood there in the rain waiting for the Prince to pass.

"The following is an extract from a Palestine officer's letter: On the day after the official entry I got leave to go into Jerusalem and have a look round, to see some, at least, of the places with whose names I had been familiar. I particularly wanted to find the Mount of Olives. Seeing one of my own platoon, I walked up to him and said, '——, where's the Mount of Olives?' He looked at me in a puzzled way for a moment, and then blurted out, 'Dunno, sir! I don't know wher' any o' the pubs. is.'"—*Daily Chronicle.*

The editor of the *Daily News* was fully justified in stating, in one of his Saturday articles, that "what the War has revealed is the inadequacy of organized Christianity as it exists in the world to deal with a moral question when it is complicated with political interests." In an article, entitled "The Great Problem of God," which appeared in the *British Weekly* for April 11, Sir William Robertson Nicoll furnishes a striking illustration of the truth of that statement. The reverend knight—like the Kaiser—claims God as the avowed Ally of his side in the bloody conflict. Each is equally certain of Divine approval and support; and yet the War, a purely political concern, goes on exactly as if no God had any share in it at all. Sir William lays great stress on God's promised deliverance, while the facts of the battlefield give that promise the direct lie every day.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—April 28, Nuneaton.

T. Fowler.—Pleased to hear of your son's distinguished career in the Army. As he has been through all the heavy fighting since 1915, and remains unscathed, it is evident that brains, good physique, and "luck" does quite as well as much prayer. We hope his good fortune will continue to the end.

E. A. McDonald.—We agree with you as to the stupidity of much of the writing on Nietzsche. As you say, "it is ridiculous to interpret his Zarathustrian discourse on war as giving sanction to the present kind of warfare. If he had lived to-day, he would have dreaded the triumph of 'Kultur.'" Sheer ignorance is, we think, the best explanation of the newspaper writing on Nietzsche. We are glad to know that we have your "fullest confidence in piloting the dear old paper through present difficulties."

A. Radley.—D.O.R.A.

E. Harvey.—Too late this season, but if all goes as we anticipate, we hope to do still greater things next autumn; we also anticipate seeing a number of new centres of activity opened. We have set ourselves the ambition of planting a Society in all the big centres, and we shall not rest content until it is done.

E. Ilsley.—We hardly think that a lengthy discussion on the subject would be justified with the restricted space at our disposal. We can only say that "abstraction" is not identical with "unknowable." An abstraction is a generalization based on sensible qualities. An "unknowable" cannot be a concept, since that implies something positive, and "unknowable" simply means the absence of everything knowable. It is a pure negation, and an absence of anything to think about cannot well provide the material for thinking.

J. McKenna.—We do not think the Salvation Army ever attempted a reply to Mr. Manson's exposure of its methods. It probably judged silence, and reliance on the forgetfulness of the public, the wiser policy.

H. Dawson.—Closed for the present. We quite appreciate your comments, and we know that your interest in the Cause is sincere. The length of your letter needs no apology; a letter is never too long when there is nothing superfluous.

Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—N. S. S. Benevolent Fund: Chingford, 5s.

T. Courden.—If the conditions for printing were more favourable we should have no hesitation in reprinting the "Views and Opinions" of last week for distribution as a leaflet. We are flattered by your opinion of the notes as a "biting exposure" of the "Black Army."

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 Goldthorpe "saints" were highly delighted with the success of Mr. Cohen's meetings on Sunday last. These were the first Freethought meetings held in Goldthorpe, and the attention given to the lectures was all that could be desired. The interest of the audience was indicated by a good sale of literature, and an accession of members is anticipated. Visitors were present from Sheffield, Barnsley, and other localities. As the restricted train service involved a walk of from four to five miles from some of these places, their interest in the Cause was manifest, and augurs well for future operations.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (April 28) at Nuneaton. This is Mr. Lloyd's first visit to the new Branch, and we hope the meetings will be worthy of the lecturer. We are quite sure the lecturer will be worthy of the meetings, however large and enthusiastic they may be.

It is not easy to get printing orders undertaken or executed nowadays, and the state of the labour market is the cause of the delay in publishing the report of the Bowman Case. However, it is now ready, and we publish this week a verbatim report of the House of Lords' Judgment. The speeches of the five law Lords give between them a full and interesting account of the law of blasphemous libel, and so constitutes a volume of first-rate importance. It is one that every Freethinker should have as reference to a long-maintained injustice, and of a great Freethought triumph. The volume, issued by the Secular Society, Limited, is published by the Pioneer Press at 1s., postage, 1d. An introduction is contributed by Mr. Cohen, who gives a brief history of the Bowman litigation, and a summary of the present legal standing of Freethought.

The Pioneer Press is now offering for sale at a reduced price a limited number of copies of *Mary Wollstonecraft*, by G. R. Stirling Taylor. The life of Mary Wollstonecraft will always be of interest to Freethinkers, and her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" gave a great and genuine impulse to the movement for the legal equality of the sexes. As Mr. Taylor says: "The advanced women of to-day are saying and thinking, with very little change, what was so brilliantly put down" by the subject of his memoir. The book is handsomely produced, and is enriched with fine portraits of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin—two Freethinkers too little known to the present generation. The volume wa published at 7s. 6d. net, and is being offered at 3s., post age, 5d.

A Leeds correspondent writes: "It is nothing short of a scandal the way in which the black Army is singled out fo special treatment. I consider now is the time for Free thinkers to let their voice be heard." So do we, and if all Freethinkers would speak up some people in the country would be greatly astonished. Their exemption is a manifest injustice. And to be told that grown-up men and women require a body like the English clergy to look after them is a downright insult.

Mr. F. Norman Crosby, Secretary of the Federation of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors, writes:—

> I see in this weeks "Acid Drops" a report has reached you that religion is a feature of our Federation. May I point out that although I am Honorary Treasurer of the above Branch it has not prevented me undertaking the organization of the Portsmouth Branch of this Society, and also that the Chairman is one of our most esteemed members.

We are glad to have the above note, and hope that it expresses a truth over a wide area.

Progress is Secular not Christian. The true Christian ages were "the Dark Ages" when men lay prone at the foot of the altar and the throne. The light of Arabian science flashing upon Europe was the daybreak of our modern era. The infidel Mohammedans had homes of science and seats of learning when the Christian prayed and hymned in mental darkness, and the Mosque had its school when the Church had none. Science lifted her head in Christendom, and the Church crushed her down. It made Galileo recant what everybody now knows to be true; it burnt Bruno at the stake; it plucked out the tongue of Vanini before reducing his body to ashes. It fought against reason with the ferocity of a tiger. It revelled for ages in blood. It broke men on the wheel even in the days of Voltaire. The world grew pale and breathless at its crimes. But that stupendous genius, the greatest Freethinker of France and of the world, challenged its pretensions and impeached it at the bar of humanity. And the peoples have gathered round the tribunal, marvelling at the great indictment, and still more at the weak defence.—*G. W. Foote.*

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The Mechanism of Man.

III.

(Continued from p. 233).

The skeleton is built up by an architecture of osseous substances. These solid bony structures are animal tissues which have become petrified. There are over 200 bones in the human framework, but this number is not constant. Various bones that are distinctly separate in youth and early manhood become compacted together in old age. There are, for instance, thirty-three separate vertebræ in the spinal column in the young, and the upper twenty-four usually remain distinct during the whole course of life; but five of these bodies unite at an early period to form one large bone, the sacrum, while four other vertebræ usually run into a single bony structure, the dwindled tail, or coccyx. In the springtime of manhood the skull is composed of twenty-two distinct bones, but in childhood the number is much greater, and in advanced life considerably less.

The bones serve to support, protect, and move the body. The anatomical mechanism is constructed by long, flat, and irregular bones. Thick and solid bones provide support. Broad and flat bones furnish protection; while long and straight structures are the instruments of manipulation and locomotion.

The femur, or thigh-bone, is an elongated hollow shaft of solid, compact bone. Its cavity is occupied by yellow marrow. This marrow consists of fat and blood-vessels, and assists in nourishing the bone. Long bones, such as the femur, are confined to the upper and lower extremities of the body—the arms and the legs. Ribs and other flattened bones possess no yellow marrow; they are spongy internally, and hard and dense externally. A red marrow is found in the cavities of the spongy parts of bones. In this special marrow red blood corpuscles seem to be developed. Vascular vessels and connective tissue unite to form a closely adhesive covering for the bones. This substance is termed the periosteum.

Bones are composed of animal and mineral matter. The organic matter is gelatine, and the mineral substance which comprises about two-thirds of the weight of bone is mainly lime. In later life and old age the organic gelatine decreases; the bones consequently become light, and are more susceptible to fracture, and hey heal less easily than in earlier life.

The mammalian organism, including man's, is composed of head, trunk, and limbs. The spinal or vertebral column forms the axis of the skeleton, and with this column all the other bones of the body are immediately or mediately connected. The trunk is divided into the thorax or chest, and the abdomen or belly, and its leading bones are those of the shoulder-blades, hip-bones, collar-bone, chest, and spine. The vertebræ of the spinal column are arranged in a series, one above the other, and their three projecting processes serve for the attachment of ligaments and muscles. The main body of each vertebra, however, serves to sustain the weight of the upper column of bones. At the dorsal or rear side of the thick region of a vertebra is an orifice, and each opening, situated as it is in succession, in the chain of bones, forms a long canal for the spinal marrow. Proceeding along the channel of the vertebral column, the spinal cord ultimately enters the cavity of the skull which houses the brain. The brain may be regarded as an enlargement of the spinal cord, and the two together constitute what is known as the cerebro-spinal system. Between the vertebræ thick gristle pads are interposed. These cartilages function as cushions, and thus prevent jars, while their elastic nature permits the easy bending of the bony column.

Attached to the rear of the vertebral column there are twelve pairs of ribs, which extend round the ventral or front part of the trunk in hoop-like fashion. The true ribs—the first seven pairs—are directly attached to the sternum or breast-bone. Each of the three succeeding pairs—the false ribs—is attached to the pair above it. Beneath these, again, there are the two pairs of floating ribs, which, unlike the others, do not form a girdle, but remain free in front. Then we possess the collar-bones, the shoulder-blades, and the pelvic girdle. The hip-bones and the extremity or base of the spine combine to produce a bowl-like structure termed the pelvis. To this structure the lower limbs are attached.

The skull consists of the cranium or brain cavity and the bones of the face. In the progress of evolution the skull has assumed an arched form, and this modification is well adapted for opposing pressure, and mitigating the effects of blows. All flat bones are furnished with a spongy layer which is placed between the harder layers of bone composing the inner and outer surfaces. The flat bones forming the skull are thus protected, and their elasticity helps to shield the skull from serious injury when struck. The eye is guarded from danger by the nasal organ, the cheek bones, and brow. The spinal cord is safely secluded within its osseous covering.

In all the higher mammals the bony structures of the fore and hind limbs are fundamentally the same, and the modifications undergone in these organs have all been effected through functional and anatomical adaptation to changed conditions of life. In that upright mammal, man, each extremity is provided with thirty bones. The upper arm bone (humerus) corresponds to the thigh bone of the leg (femur). The bones of the fore-arm (radius and ulna) correspond to the shin bone and splint bone (fibula and tibia). Of wrist bones there are eight, and there are seven ankle bones. There are respectively five bones to the palm and instep, and fourteen finger and fourteen toe bones. No bone is present in the elbow which corresponds to that of the kneecap, but the wrist possesses one bone more than the ankle. Each arm and leg consequently consists of thirty osseous structures.

The junction of two bones forms a joint. The joints of the pelvis, and of the various bones which compose the skull, are so firmly interlocked that they are immovable. On the other hand, movable joints possess a couple of cartilages which enable the bones to turn. The most important mobile joints are those of the limbs. Coleman thus describes the ball-and-socket and hinge joints:—

> When one end of the bone is rounded and fits into a cuplike hollow, the joint allows motion in all directions, and is known as a *ball-and-socket* joint. The hip joints and shoulder joints are examples. A *hinge* joint allows motion in only two (opposite) directions; for example, the to-and-fro motion of the elbow.

Pivot joints permit of rotary movement, while gliding joints possess the power of sliding one upon another.

Movable joints are held in position by the ligaments which bind the bones together. Bones are safeguarded from injury by means of a coating of cartilage lying at their terminals, while friction during the bending of a joint is lessened by the synovial fluid which lubricates the cartilages. The escape of this fluid into the adjacent tissues is prevented by the collar-like capsule which embraces the joint. The free surfaces of bones upon which they glide over each other are coated by a delicate membrane and this membrane secretes the lubricating liquid scientifically known as the synovia.

The blood channels enter the bones from the periosteum. The bone's life is maintained by its supply

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of blood. With the removal of the periosteum, the larger vascular vessels are eliminated, and when this happens the adjacent bone perishes. But the bone itself may be removed, and if the periosteum be permitted to remain, the bone will be restored. Experiment has proved that the circulation of the blood throughout the osseous structures is surprisingly rapid:—

> A curious proof of the active circulation in the bone is furnished when madder is mixed with the food of pigs. In a few hours the bones become a darker pink than usual; and if the madder is fed to the pigs for a few days, their bones become red.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

The Leicester Secular Society.

A Few More Notes.

The friendly hand of "Mimnermus" has given an interesting account of the Leicester Secular Society (*Freethinker*, April 21). As I was Secretary and Organizer of the institution, 1899-1908, and am still a member, though located in a very churchy London suburb, perhaps I may be allowed to add a few more notes. So long ago as 1883, when the chair was taken for me by Thomas Wright (son of Michael Wright, one of the founders), I gave my first lecture on its platform, and, the year after, George Jacob Holyoake presided when I lectured the second time. And as, only a few months ago, I had the pleasure of talking to the Sunday-school, as well as speaking to the adults, in the old familiar hall, the reader may agree that I ought to know something of (as Patrick Geddes would say), the Place, the Work, and the People.

I doubt if any hall in Europe, or America, or elsewhere, quite fulfils for its social environment just such a function, both intellectual and municipal, as this at Leicester. Perhaps it would be difficult now to establish another of like pattern. When it was founded (1881), movements which are now strong—labour, free libraries, Sunday lectures, and the non-theological press—were then relatively weak, and eager spirits discovered in the hall at Humberstone Gate a unique centre for learning and discussing new ideas on religion, history, literature, economics, and the rest. Leicester has since developed a big Socialist activity; it has a fine Shoe-trades hall; it possesses some thirty Council schools, a group of free libraries, and a good museum—open on Sundays. This social and civic life has been all the time, and for nearly forty years, leavened with a wide-viewing Freethought. There are churches and chapels in the town quite juvenile compared with the Secular Hall, and the present generation, accustomed to the sight of this Rationalist cathedral, only smile at the recollection of the orthodox groans that greeted the opening in 1881.

I have used the phrase "wide-viewing Freethought," because I had in mind the five busts which adorn the front of the building, and which were selected by the Father of the place, Josiah Gimson. The five busts represent Robert Owen, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Sokrates, and Jesus. When the bust of Jesus appeared, and smiled engagingly at Leicester's priests, Nonconformists and shoe-hands, the local clericalism passed many sleepless nights. But time heals all, and I remember that a distinguished Baptist of the town attended one of our Secular bazaars, and handed me, as Secretary, ten pounds; and, to make the gift more golden, his mace-bearer accompanied him. Often, as I have passed those five remarkable busts, I have spiritually saluted Josiah Gimson for his choice. To me, they symbolize Socialism, English Common-sense, French wit, Greek Philosophy, and Catholic Poetry; though I rather fancy that, to Councillor Gimson (Josiah was a member of the Town Council), the figure of Jesus would have stood for what he called Christian Secularism. Yet "Mimnermus" will agree, if no one else does, that Poetry and Secularism ought to go well together. And this reference to poetry calls to mind the fact that a portrait of the poet Thomson, B.V., hangs in the Hall. It was given by Mr. John Barrs, with whom Thomson lived once as guest at Kirby Muxloe, near Leicester, and who, as "Jack," appears jocularly in Thomson's lines on "Belvoir Castle."

As descriptive reporter, I might fill columns with tales of the Debaters, Co-operators, Socialists, Individualists, Critics, Artists, Scientists, Clergy, and Cranks, who, as members, or lecturers, or visitors, have fluttered in and out of Larner Sugden's red-brick temple for more than a generation, and helped to preserve the soul of Leicester from decay and dulness. Many I have only heard tell of; many I have known face to face; and at the graves, or the cremation-rite of many, I have uttered a serious, but never gloomy, farewell.[1] Some brisk young veterans (if the term may pass) still recall the early and stormier days of the Society. Such a one is William Lee, whom I lit upon in a remote Nottinghamshire village recently, still permeating his neighbours with progressive notions, and thrilling the local Adult School with sensible questions.[2] Another such is William Wilber, who never forgets the Bible which he studied in Christadelphian days, and who can make excellent use of Scripture in discussion. Long would be the list if I named the sons and daughters of the hall who are worthy of honourable remembrance. Such, for example, was William Holyoak, the ancient bookseller, who was born in the time of George III., whose soul was staunch as granite, whose manner was simple and gentle, and who cheered us with his quavering ballads. And another was Mrs. Perkins, who, unskilled in book-learning, possessed vigorous common sense, and an extraordinary spirit of devotion to the Society. For bazaars, "socials," teas, operetta-preparations, excursions, and the like, she had a genius of resource, enthusiasm, and good temper, and no saint of the Middle Ages surpassed her genuineness of service.

I would sooner not say anything at all about the Leicester Secular Society if I had to omit the name of Josiah's son, Sydney, the President for many years past. When I was an officer of the Institute, a sort of etiquette would have prevented my praising him. But now that I am removed from his immediate circle, I trouble not to ask his august permission, and I affirm here that he is a most honest and just man, a capable and straightforward administrator; and, as a Town Councillor (though I am sorry he does not belong to the same political party as I do), he is respected and valued by people of all varieties of opinion. He can give you his reminiscences of William Morris, who lectured at the Hall some thirty years ago or more. If he wrote a book of anecdotes, he could enliven it with little tales of visitors to the Hall platform—Holyoake, Foote, Watts, Touzeau Parris, Joseph Symes, and many others, over whom now hangs the purple banner of death; and I am glad that so many co-workers still live to lend his Society the aid of their voices. As he sits in his well-stocked library, and conjures up the faces of living or dead comrades in the great Thought Exploration, to which Leicester has so richly contributed, he must have a large vision of fellowships,

[1] Yes, but it perplexes one why Freethinkers should approve (and rightly so) of funeral addresses, but attempt little or no provision for ceremonial at marriage, or for the welcoming of infants.

[2] Mr. Lee is father-in-law to Mr. Joseph McCabe.

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and behold a gallery crowded with brave and genial figures. Yet none is more brave and genial than himself. I know that I speak for a multitude when I express the wish that he may, many and many a time, still preside at the Sunday evening meetings in the Secular Hall, and look down with joy at the people who come to listen, to criticize, to appreciate, and to applaud.

F. J. Gould.

The Soul of Beauty.

How wonderful is a tree—as wonderful as a man, and as likely to have a soul, and with as much need for it. Soul is but the abstract essence of the ideal, the mystery, metaphysic, or romance with which the natural psychology of the rational being invests the objects, etc., of experience. Man, for instance, thus transforms his environment, or his environment transforms him.

How beautiful is night—still, quiet, dusky night, lustrous with the stars. Orion blazoning himself abroad in the heavens, the Pleiades overhead, and near these, a solitary blazing orb, the brightest of all. But we are no astronomer, much less astrologer, or dealer in mystery or magic of any kind, however "orthodox"; the natural interpretation sufficeth us, the monistic soul of beauty in the quiet country road, under the trees, under the stars; nor do we, in cant phrase, look through nature up to nature's God; it were as legitimate to look through nature, down or up, to nature's Devil; for there are good and evil, more or less evenly balanced, and apart from the idiosyncrasies of mannikin himself; good and evil sufficient to prove, or disprove, either, but between the two is the soul of beauty and the compensation of life.

It was a mild, clear, night in mid-winter, more like Spring, or early or late Summer, on the winding way the trees almost met overhead, all jewelled with the stars! Never had jewels such a setting, and never was setting adorned with such perfect gems. The tall trees with their lofty brooms swept the skies, and the star dust on the floor of heaven sparkled the brighter. Notwithstanding, the road was dark below, and lonely, and, resting in the grateful gloom, we only feared we frightened the passing woman with the lamp, timid and brave, bent on some errand of duty or mercy, so we lit our pipe to reassure the solitary maid, or matron, as she might be, but, to us, the Lady of the Lamp. The footsteps died away, and we lingered still. Seeing and feeling, thinking and imagining, are sometimes eerie occupations. Frankly, we grew afraid. Of what? Nothing! we thought of "the child in the world," and feared—everything. We had been reading *L'homme que Rit*, "The Man who Laughed," that amazing production of a gigantic and exuberant, often extravagant, genius, re-reading it, and pondering its purple passages, its significant sentences; its lurid light on English history; its terrors of legal and religious ghouls; its poignant glances into the deepest deep of human psychology. To think deeply is to be alone. To know is to be armed—or defenceless—against a thousand dangers, Concentration, says Victor Hugo, is solitude. How well our author loved, how completely he understood, children.....The philosopher had fed and bedded the foundlings:—

> The little boy and girl, lying naked side by side, were joined through the silent hours, in the seraphic promiscuousness of the shadows; such dreams as were possible to their age floated from one to the other.....Such innocence in such darkness, such purity in such an embrace, such foretastes of heaven are only possible to childhood, and no immensity approaches the greatness of little children.....Innocence is higher than virtue.....They slept. They were in peace. They were warm.....They were there as in the nest of the abyss.
>
> Their lips were four red roses on a stem,
> Which in their summer beauty kissed each other.

Frankly, this is a digression. Up from the sylvan valley came the music of a stream, filtered, diffused, making the "hush" audible. We thought of Byron's Bonnivard and his prison floor, "worn until his steps had left a trace": and also, in a psychological sense, of this narrow environ of our own, but made beautiful and boundless in the subtle chemistry of habit, time, and reflection. From the printer's "Mercury" to the Prime Minister, a rut of habit and custom awaits us all at last; but—

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage.

The mind is the monarch always.

> Eternal spirit of the chainless mind!
> Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art!
> For there thy habitation is the heart.

And has not Scotland's own beloved bard said:—

> The heart, aye's, the part, aye,
> That mak's us richt or wrang?

But these are matters too high for the humbler muse..... Not by night alone, in this denizen, is the soul of beauty found. Here the day also has its riches, that grow more alluring with every fresh experience, every supreme psychological moment of deep sadness or great joy. Shakespeare, we said, as we walked by the stream, on its fantastically rooted banks of brown mould carpeted with living green, with its cascades, and sermons in stones; Shakespeare, we mused, and Burns, were vastly over-rated persons. Why, they were merely natural and truthful, as most other men were false and artificial. Thus the great men are little; thus only they are great. Such is the great idea of a little man. It is simple—and profound. The vast learning of a Victor Hugo is forgotten, and out of his rational, humane, simple, loving touches is formed the enduring statue of his fame—or, perhaps, the one may breed the other.

But great learning, it seems to us, while not to be despised, is often mere sophistry—a middle flooring, too high for earth, too low for heaven—a wondrous new heaven and new earth, but in the midst of which its creator, self-exiled, dwells, unhappy and alone, and only its shadow falls on those below. .....These were night thoughts, of the midnight of the year; as we recall them it is April, and Winter lingers in the lap of Spring. Cold is the passing wind, reminding us of the passing years, but most of wasted time and mistaken efforts. However, it is our —th birthday. One cannot *begin* life with the wisdom of fifty years!.....The further bank is hung with tattered fern, and ivy tendrils, pendant, stray and swing, and the glade beyond is brown with littered leaves, and all but the winds and the waters are still; the soul of peace and beauty and music broods and mingles in the scene.

The birds are silent. Only the winds and waters make perpetual sound. From whence to where those winds of yesterday and to-morrow? To what and whither blowing us on their constant, austere, inexorable, viewless wings? Ah! ask the inexorable—and incorrigible—War Lords; supplicate the jack-boot and the iron heel. *Davus sum non Œdipus.* Nor are we Alexander the Great.....Underneath are the roots of memory! Growth in the soil, gravitation in the water, sculpture in the stones; in all, health, hope, happiness, peace, content, the soul of beauty; and we would not gain the whole world and lose this, our own soul. No, a thousand times, no!

Andrew Millar.

A Christian's Prayer.

(When duty calls him to cross the ocean in war-time.)

Oh, thou who once on stormy Galilee
Did'st bid the mighty billows "Peace, be still";
Who hushed the raging of the angry sea,
And walked upon the waters at thy will,
Forgive me if my faith be cold and mean,
But canst thou circumvent a submarine?

Two thousand years ago thou could'st do aught;
E'en mountains would remove if thou decreed so:
But hast thou kept apace with modern thought,
And made innocuous the Hun torpedo?
The Galilee of which thou wert so fond
Is somewhat shallower than the Herring Pond.....

Dear Lord, I hesitate to hint a doubt
Of thy goodwill or power to succour me,
But sons of every Church go daily out,
And daily their dead bodies mar the sea.
Oh God, until the day of peace shall come
I'll praise thy saving grace—and stay at home.

G. H. Bosworth.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "The Vitality of France."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Swasey, and Kells.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, Members' Meeting. Important Business.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting. Conference Business.

NUNEATON, GEORGE ELIOT BRANCH (The Palace, Queen's Road): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Secularism and Social Reform"; 6.30, "Self-Reliance v. Trust in God."

SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. H. Snell, "The New Religion for Democracy."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
The New Education Bill.—The Editor	253
The Defeat of the Cross.—J. T. Lloyd	254
Browning as a Religious Teacher.—Mimnermus	255
A Farewell Sermon.—A. Millar	256
Amang the Lasses O!—Ignotus	257
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	260
N. S. S. Annual Conference—Agenda	261

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

The New Education Bill.

The new Education Bill of Mr. Fisher has not yet been brought before the House of Commons. Education can always wait, although in this case the plea of military necessity has some justification. Still, with a Government in which a Minister classifies books as "luxuries," and which sees in an educational scheme little more than a possibility of turning out more efficient human adjuncts by way of creating more trade, one cannot expect the task of education to be undertaken with a due sense of the importance of the question. In this, at least, the Government may be said to reflect the nation. The bulk of the English people never have taken education as they ought to have taken it. After lagging far behind many continental countries, a few ardent reformers, in 1870, forced a general Education Act on the country. It was agreed to by the people, mainly on account of the docility of the general public—a docility which in this case made for good. Since then, people have sent their children to school mainly because there was an Act of Parliament which said they should do so. But large numbers of the working classes have always regarded schooling as more or less of a nuisance, as is shown by their readiness to get their children away from school as soon as possible; and others have treated education as a sort of introduction to the "upper classes," to reach which the average Englishman will make any and every sacrifice.

* * *

A Probable Policy.

The new Education Bill does not deal with the question of religion in the schools. But it would be folly to assume that it has been either overlooked or forgotten. Too great a vested interest is involved for that. The question has really been more or less under discussion all the time. The upholders of religion in the schools have been busy, and unless the friends of Secular Education are on their guard, they will find, almost before they are aware of it, that the clergy have scored another triumph. And this Government of tricks and traps will be equal to the occasion. It is clearly its intention to get its Education Bill without touching the religious question at all. And if it is not raised on the discussion of the Bill, it will be because an agreement to that effect has been reached behind the scenes. Conferences between the various religious denominations have been going on all the time—some public, some private. It was because we were aware of this that we urged Freethinkers all over the country to get resolutions passed in favour of Secular Education, and to see that they were sent on to the Minister for Education. And when some kind of a bargain has been struck between the sects and the Government, and the Education Bill passed, we may expect to see a small Bill, dealing specifically with religion, rushed through the House of Commons and placed on the Statute Book. And that will mean the establishing of religion in the public schools on a firmer foundation than ever.

* * *

A Warning to Freethinkers.

The danger of this is real. And to leave it to the existing House of Commons is quite useless. The present House of Commons will submit to anything; it will agree to anything. The Government can order it to do as it pleases, and it will obey—unless it receives a more imperative order from without. That is the vital thing to bear in mind. As the majority of members do not appear to have any convictions of their own, it is well that those who elect them should make them feel that *they* at least possess opinions, and are determined that those opinions shall receive attention. There are, there must be, some millions of Freethinkers in this country. There were seven millions in France at the last census, and we refuse to believe that Britain is so far behind her in mental development as not to have at least two-thirds of that number. And, beside avowed Freethinkers, there are large numbers of people who sufficiently recognize the justice of Secular Education as to support it. Let, then, the friends of Secular Education get everywhere to work. See that resolutions in its favour are passed wherever and whenever possible, and that these are sent to the proper quarters. See that members of constituencies are written to, let them know the opinions of at least some of their constituents; that strong opinions are held on the subject, and that voters will act on them when the time comes for recording votes. It is really time that Freethinkers aimed at making their existence felt as Freethinkers. If churches and chapels organize for a purely sectarian advantage, there is no reason whatever why Freethinkers should not also organize to secure an act of justice towards the whole of the nation.

* * *

Justice for the Child.

An Act of Justice! That is the strength of our position. We, at least, are not out for a sectarian advantage. We have no desire that children shall be taught in the public schools, at the public expense, our particular views on the nature of religion. That would be to take the same advantage of the child that the religionist takes, but in the other direction. We aim at justice for the adult, and freedom for the child. It is little short of an outrage that generation after generation the childhood of the nation should be exploited in the interest of a selfish sectarianism. Not even the parent is justified in forcing upon the child as absolutely true, religious doc-

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trines which he knows are probably false, and which are, at any rate, questioned by the leading thinkers of the civilized world. The political injustice of compelling all sections of the community to pay for the religion of a selected few is manifest—so manifest that on that ground no one defends it. But the moral injustice is greater still. We want the child to grow up mentally fitted to select any religion it pleases, or able to intelligently reject them all should it feel so inclined. Childhood has one clear demand from the adult—the right of protection. And the adult fails conspicuously in that when he does not protect the growing mind of the child from the machinations of an interested priesthood.

* * *

The Flowing Tide.

The secularization of life is one of the chief signs of advancing civilization. All over the world we see the growing separation of the life of religion from the life of the State, and, in some instances, as in France, the process is complete. The life of the State is common to all, that of religion is an idiosyncracy of the individual. Even where the Church is still part of the State, sheer force of circumstances prevents the State forcing a particular religion on the individual. And in ceasing to force religion on the adult individual, the State, surely, surrenders all right to force it on the child. The only reason why the child is forced to have religion is the reason why a man beats a child—it is not big enough or strong enough to hit back. It is the child's weakness, its ignorance, its trustfulness, that is being exploited, and through that there goes on the exploiting of civilization. Freethinkers know this to be the case, they should see to it that others recognize it as well. In this matter a more militant policy is needed, and we, for one, hope that it will be pursued.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Defeat of the Cross.

IN the *Times* there now appear weekly articles on the Christian religion which, though ably written, are characterized by tantalizing vagueness. What the real theological position of the writer is no one can tell. The title of one of the latest is highly significant, namely, "Preaching the Gospel: the New Evangelism"; but it is impossible to discover from it what the Gospel or the New Evangelism stands for. The opening sentence is of a perplexingly ambiguous nature: "At the heart of Christianity there is unchanging truth"; but as to what that truth is the article does not furnish us with the faintest glimmer of an idea. We are assured that "it is truth which matches the needs of all men," and that "every one may understand it and respond to it"; but such an assurance conveys no enlightenment whatever. We do not even know what the heart of Christianity is, much less, what truth, if any, is deposited therein; and to assert that an unspecified, undefined, truth "matches the needs of all men" is to be blindly dogmatic. The next sentence is a veritable glorification of vagueness: "But Christianity is not merely truth; it is also life." Christianity is here stated to *be* what in the former statement it was said to *contain*. As a matter of fact Christianity, as described in the New Testament, is neither truth nor life, but a system, device, or power whose supreme object is to remove guilty but believing sinners from under the wrath of God. We are now confronted by the most astounding claim conceivable:—

> The Gospel is the proclamation of this Truth and the gift of this new Life. It thus transfigures those who accept it, conferring on men powers by which sooner or later they recreate the world in which they live.

The distinguishing mark of that extract is its untruth. St. Paul defines the Gospel as the power of God unto the salvation of those who believe and put their truth in it; but the *Times* reduces it to a mere proclamation. And yet it is alleged that those who accept it as such are transfigured, becoming new men and women under its moulding influence, charged with "powers by which sooner or later they recreate the world in which they live." Those who are fairly well versed in the history of Christendom, if not dominated by prejudice, know how absolutely false that allegation is, the truth and the life which Christianity is declared to be having produced, on the one hand cruel tyranny, and, on the other, abject slavery. Popes and emperors were invariably jealous of one another, and for ages each fought with all his might to gain ascendancy over the other, while the subjects of both were trodden under foot. The amazing fact is, however, that after making such great claims for the Gospel, the writer of the *Times* article, in the second decade of the twentieth century of Christianity, is obliged to make the following humiliating confession:—

> Organized Christianity is under a cloud; the Church does not attract the great mass of the people, who, failing to gain from it what they need, have either abandoned all spiritual effort, or have turned for the inspiration of great ideals and the challenge of strenuous service to trade unions and friendly societies, the labour and women movements, or religious cults such as Theosophy and Christian Science. The Gospel is not attracting men and women to-day.

Now, had Christianity, particularly in the Ages of Faith, transfigured its professors, conferring upon them powers by which they could recreate the world, such a passage as the one just cited could not have been written to-day. We would have been living in a transformed, regenerated world in which such a calamity as the present War would have been an impossibility. The mass of the people are now alienated from the Church simply because it has at last dawned upon them that its Gospel is a sham, and that its claims for itself have been completely falsified. The writer of the article is wholly mistaken when he affirms that "the great mass of the English people are Christians in feeling, sentiment, and desire," and that "nothing is farther from their thought than to reject Christianity." Has he never heard of the propagandist activities of the Ethical Societies, the Rationalist Press Association, and the National Secular Society with its numerous Branches? Has he not learned that modern science is non-Christian, and in some instances anti-Christian? Does he not know that in all sections of society, specially among the workers, unbelievers in their tens of thousands are to be found? He is evidently under the delusion that churches and chapels are being deserted solely because the clergy have lost the art of preaching. As to the mass of the English people, we are informed:—

> Nothing is farther from their thought than to reject Christianity. Too often, however, it is presented to them in a jargon they do not understand. The forms of worship to which they are invited offer them rites and ceremonies which are meaningless to their minds. The sermons they hear take for granted views about which they have grave doubts, and the preachers, if they do not discuss topics of minor importance, use arguments which bring no conviction. The official representatives of the Church seem to live in another world than that of the average man's experience. Consequently, many are "Gospel hardened," while others are puzzled if not chagrined by a presentation of a religion from which they know they can derive no benefit.

In that extract there is considerable truth, but its main contention is contradicted by the facts. It is incontestable that the majority of the clergy do their

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work as well as it can be done. No remissness of any kind can be laid to their charge. In intellectual calibre and loyalty to duty they compare favourably with those of any past age. Their non-success is due to no professional fault of theirs, but to the fact that the Gospel which it is their business to preach has lost is hold upon the minds of the people, because its central message no longer appeals to them as true. It is true that "men do not ask for a new Gospel," but that is no proof whatever that they would welcome the old Gospel if only it could be differently presented to them, the truth being that they desire no version whatever of a supernatural Gospel. Such a Gospel cannot be expressed "in terms level to their experience and needs," because experience and observation combined have convinced them that supernaturalism in all its forms is powerless to deliver the world from the evils which darken and befoul its life.

What is needed to-day, therefore, is not a new statement of the old Gospel, or a reconstruction of the theology of the Cross, but a vivid realization of the truth that the Church's teaching as to the power and glory of the alleged supernatural factors in human life is but the baseless fabric of a dream. With the honest historian's eye upon us, we are driven to the conclusion that in conflict with the world's forces the Cross has been totally defeated. Dr. Fort Newton recently preached an eloquent sermon on "The Victory of the Cross"; but on his own showing, a more appropriate title for his discourse would have been "The Defeat of the Cross," as we hope to prove in a future contribution.

J. T. Lloyd.

Browning as a Religious Teacher.

Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher. By Professor Henry Jones. (Nelson.) 1s. 6d.

Robert Browning will live as a poet, but his attitude as a philosophical thinker was unimpressive. In fact, his intellectual position was simply that of acquiescence with current theology and codified morality. His situation in regard to the thought of his age was paradoxical, if not inconsistent. His admirers counted him as a second Shakespeare, but he sentimentalized where Shakespeare thought; he stammered where Shakespeare sang. Browning was less in touch with the intellectual movements of his own time than Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, or George Meredith. He was content, in his own peculiar fashion, to fight during an exceptionally long life in the ranks of religious conservatism.

Browning was obsessed with theology, and wrote much on theological subjects. His early Nonconformist education, his serious cast of mind, the very character of his genius, all tended to make religious matters interesting to him. In *Saul*, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, in *The Ring and the Book*, and many other poems, he has attempted to depict the heart of the Christian superstition. Truly, he had a robust faith. He was as anthropomorphic as any half-lettered tradesman who sat at the feet of the Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle, whose passport to remembrance is that he was the last of the notable preachers of the doctrine of eternal damnation. Browning was a poet, and Spurgeon was the prosiest of preachers, but they had too much in common. Here, for example, is Browning's poetical way of expressing his childlike belief:—

'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek, and I find it! O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me
Thou shalt love, and be loved by, for ever: a hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

Browning was quite certain about immortality. He apostrophises the dead Evelyn Hope:—

So hush! I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet, cold hand!
There, that is our secret; go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

With blithe, critical assurance Browning expresses the cheap, current ideas regarding Rationalism:—

What can I gain on the denying side?
Ice makes no conflagration.

Browning did not lack critical acumen, but, like Pascal and Newman, he chloroformed his intellect with the supernatural. As Joubert says, wittily, it is so easy to believe in "God" if one never troubles about definitions. In *Christmas Eve* the poet listens to the theological professor, who, after demolishing the divinity of Christ, tells his audience that the myth thus destroyed still leaves a man. The poet goes on to say, with a plainness which leaves no room for quibbling, that if Christ were not God he was nothing. He cannot even find him a place among the great ethical teachers. The same idea occurs in *A Death in the Desert*:—

If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men
Mere man, the first and best, but nothing more—
Account him, for reward of what he was,
Now and forever, wretchedest of all.
. . . . .
Call Christ, then, the illimitable God, or lost!

So often called a profound thinker, Browning's conclusions, which harmonize too well with popular religious prejudice, are dangerously facile and commonplace. The wish is too frequently the father of the thought, and the grandfather of many dogmas. It is this which vitiates his claim to be considered a philosopher in verse. Truth may ring regnant in the lines of *Abt Vogler*:—

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days?

But, unfortunately, the conclusion is in itself illogical. Browning's optimism was as robust and as impertinent as that of Doctor Pangloss, so brilliantly satirized by the great Voltaire. To read Browning in sickness, or in great sorrow or physical suffering, in that dire resort to which men are pushed often, "with close-lipped Patience for their only friend," would be well-nigh impossible. There are moments when the statement, "God's in his heaven," seems very questionable to the staunchest believer. And there are frequent moments when "All's right with the world" is a gratuitous insult to common sense and ordinary eye-sight. Optimism is well; but, pushed too far, it becomes, not optimism, but sheer callousness and insensibility.

It is all of a piece, like the all-embracing faith of the complacent Bishop Blougram;—

I hear you recommend, I might at least
Eliminate, declassify my faith,
Since I adopt it, keeping what I must
And leaving what I can—such points as this:
I won't—that is, I can't—throw one away.
Supposing there's no truth in what I hold
About the need of trial to men's faith,
Still, when you bid me purify the same,
To such a process I discern no end,
Clearing off one excrescence to see two,
There's ever a next in size, now grown as big
That meets the knife: I cut and cut again!
First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last
But Fichte's clever cut at God himself?

Note the lame and impotent conclusion:—

Experimentalise on sacred things!
I trust not hand, nor eye, nor heart, nor brain,
To stop betimes; they all get drunk alike.
The first step I am master not to take.

Christian apologists never tire of speaking of Browning as a typical Christian poet. They are justified in

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making the most of a man of real genius when they possess one. We do not quarrel with them for that. It is perfectly plain that if Browning were not a Christian, his language is elaborately adapted rather to conceal and misrepresent his mind than to express it. His was a religious temperament. About that, at least, any doubt is impossible to any reader of his poetry, and his letters to his wife show it almost on every page. He always writes as an apologist for the belief in God, in free will, and human immortality, the "three buttresses of superstition," as Haeckel has termed them, happily. In all Browning's voluminous writings there is only one utterance in which he really runs counter to the current views on the Christian superstition. In his powerful lines, "*Apparent Failure*," describing the tragedy of the old morgue at Paris, he almost forgot his orthodoxy. For a few fleeting minutes he realized that there were more things in heaven and earth than he had dreamt of in his pietistic philosophy.

All his life long Browning went on repeating, with inexhaustible fertility of illustration and ever-changing choice of language, the old shibboleths. The old leaven worked furiously in his veins, the cherished superstitions clung like mandrakes to the soil of his mind. Intellectual timidity runs through his work, bounding his outlook, shortening his hands, cramping the effort of which, had it been backed by more mental courage, such a genius as his might have been capable. Some of his poetry will survive, but his excursions into theology were belated when he wrote them. The orthodoxy of the Victorian era is to-day but a feast of husks, "vacant chaff well-meant for grain." Browning was too near, in his theological standpoint, to the clever, shifty Bishop Blougram. In religious speculation, Browning never launched out into the deep. He hugged the shore, never directing the prow of his ship towards the illimitable ocean, but ever seeking safe shelter under the shadow of the land. It was the safe rather than the heroic course that he exalted. For this reason, Browning, as a philosophical and religious teacher, can never give the full satisfaction to intellectual minds which they can derive from those who have gone forward wherever their intellect may have led.

MIMNERMUS.

A Farewell Sermon.

AND OTHER MATTERS.

MY friend from the city was having a week-end at the coast. Said friend is, mentally and physically, built on large and generous lines—a man, in fact, of astonishing mentality—and a serious, imperturbable cheerfulness radiates from his ample Ingersollian countenance; he is, moreover, a "saintly" person, in the secular sense; a self-made saint, withal, for when very young he scrambled into the light from the most inner crypt of the Catholic Church. His brother, by the way, who was being educated for the Jesuit priesthood, much later in life, learned to laugh, and more derisively, at his sacred Alma Mater.

When I mentioned to my broad and genial visitor that the Rev. Trumbull Stipend would that Sunday preach his farewell sermon, on leaving the pulpit's narrow curve for the arena of Labour politics, he was at once interested. It came to pass that three or four of us drove up in a cab, as became a matter of so much moment; and, being late, we waited by the church plate—carefully emptied—while a lugubrious prayer was being said, and the minister and congregation pretended to abase themselves before the Most High. "Is this the rebel?" said my friend, as his face assumed a troubled expression very unusual to it. We were finally ushered into the very front pew, and literally sat under the pulpit, but with the compensation of being within "kissing distance" of the very pretty young ladies of the choir. They were irresistible. We stood or sat, at hymn or prayer, and patiently awaited the *denouement*. It never came. My friend seemed sad, but observant, and oh! so thoughtful. It was his first experience in twenty-four years, and he bore it like the stoic philosopher he was. The preacher was young, almost boyish-looking, with fresh, full voice, but only half used, in the subdued, submissive whine of the pulpit—that very language of slavery. There was not one spark of vital fire. Was this the man that was to head the revolt of the oppressed? His face was full and fair, and all unlined—the constant enemy, it would seem, of famine and thought. He spoke prettily and emotionally of Christ washing the disciples' feet to teach them humility. One reflected that "the Master" might have begun at the other end of his disciples, and taught them sense. The preacher, faithfully following his "Master's" example, traded—perhaps quite sincerely—on the emotions and superstitions of his hearers. Young ladies wept outwardly at his final words. The stranger crowd of Atheists, Agnostics, Socialists, Unitarians, Trinitarians, Nothingarians, etc., wept inwardly. (The church will be duly fumigated.) For the matter stood thus: the Rev. Trumbull Stipend was coming *out* of the Church to do the larger work he was not allowed to do *within* the Church; and the preacher gave the Church not even a parting rebuke, much less the wholesale condemnation it deserved. So much for the Church. The question now is: Will the politician be any better than the preacher? In Paine's phrase, Will the representative be any better than the man?

. . . . .

A few weeks ago the writer attended a patriotic temperance demonstration in the local town hall. The audience was small. The large platform party was composed of parsons and pious laymen. Prayer opened the proceedings. A benediction closed them. The speaking was of the most mediocre kind. Even the "orator of orators," a certain Dr. Poling, a new great "Ingersoll" from America, spoke only the common press gibberish about the War in crisp epigrammatic nasal phrases. He was refreshing, but not convincing, even of his own sincerity. The whole exhibition was futile, effete, and pathetic; and the platform party inevitably suggested flotsam from an ancient wreck slowly breaking up in the winds and waves of time. For at that very moment Britain's "drunken soldiers" were opposed to the full fury of the German War machine. And these pitiful moralists would dictate to these men their parsonic idea of perfect conduct—men living—and dying—at their country's command, in such a hell as the world has never known before.

They would "reform" us these people. We would reciprocate, and reform them. A journalist, at the local "Literary," commenting on a paper read by the present writer, said he had "put his Foote in it," but was not without hope that essayist would yet return to the fold. "God forbid!" What! Exchange for a mouldy superstition the sublime certainties of a lifetime? Turn my back on the modern spirit, and return to the shadow of the Middle Ages? Come down from the mountains of vision and live a mole's life, blind, underground? No, thanks; and no fear. Besides, it is impossible.

. . . . .

One turns from these puerilities to the battlefield and the question of war itself. In those torturing "night thoughts," when the mind, strained and sensitive, lies awake, and the last big German offensive bulks in the foreground, and the facts have filtered through, and we see all too clearly, with the eye of sympathy and understanding, reason, and humanity, those soldiers disputing every inch of blackened soil, or in confusion firing on one another, perishing in myriads by wounds, poison, hunger, and sheer exhaustion, in the awful exigencies of the great retreat. And then we think of our Christian journalist, suggesting a change of menu, or a return to his muddled piety, and we can only ejaculate: "Good God!" For why, the thing itself is there, staring in the face all who are not blind and idiotic, or merely bestial.

A. MILLAR.

Philosophy can add to our happiness in no other manner but by diminishing our misery.—*Goldsmith*.

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Amang the Lasses O!

There are three leading reasons why the clergy should exercise all their ingenuity to obtain the support of women. *Firstly*, male church adherents are a dwindling band; *secondly*, women are more directly in contact with the rising generation at its most impressionable stage than men are; and *thirdly*, women now have the Parliamentary vote, which enables them to share in the control and direction of the national economy, and incidentally to help in deciding a question that we may be sure will arise in the not distant future, namely, whether the Established Churches are to remain in their present position with relation to the State, or whether that position is to be modified.

In view of these newly acquired rights and responsibilities, we are somewhat surprised to learn that Scottish Suffragettes should have given the clergy a gratuitous and wholly unearned advertisement by assisting at the performance of a farce, in the shape of a "United Thanksgiving Service," which was held in the Synod Hall at Edinburgh on Feb. 16, 1918. The Christian Suffragette has apparently, by the exuberance of her feelings, placed herself in a very invidious position (to say the least) with reference to her unbelieving sisters and brothers. Her participation in a "Service of Thanksgiving" for the Parliamentary vote betrays ignorance or misconception of history, which it is hoped cannot be laid to the charge of the majority of women voters. But, of course, it gave the D.D.'s and a group of clerically minded laymen an opportunity of posing as friends of freedom and reform. Such individuals are always to be found vociferously cheering the winners; and in these trying times the Churches cannot afford to neglect any opportunity of making a bid for popular patronage.

The newspaper report of this "Service," which has just been brought to our notice, states that the Societies *represented* were the National Union, the Women's Freedom League, the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise (where were the Radical and Socialist women?), the United Suffragists, the Northern Men's Federation, the University Graduates, and the Churches League. We cannot believe that, with all its capacity, the last-mentioned organization managed to gobble up all the rest! Nevertheless, it is an imposing show—on paper—and Freethinkers will do well to recognize that if the Churches can succeed in nobbling the bulk of the Suffrage and Socialist organizations (which is patently their objective) they will be doing extremely good business for themselves. But we reserve our opinion as to the significance of the term "represented" in this connection. One may represent a thousand (to an extent) just as the other 999 or any other one of the 999 may. Freethinkers have ever been consistent advocates of safeguarding the rights of minorities as well as majorities, whatever their opinions. Even one solitary Freethinker who is a member of a society composed of 999 Christians and himself (or herself) is entitled to have his (or her) opinions represented and respected. And we venture with confidence to assert that the proportion of Freethinking members of Suffrage Societies (meaning thereby members who are definitely hostile to Christianity and every other species of supernaturalism) is much larger than one in a thousand. It is impossible to commend the manners of Christian Suffragettes who, ignoring all that has been done by Rationalistic agencies *in the teeth of the bitter Christian opposition* to secure emancipation for women, are foolish enough to represent organizations of which Freethinkers are members as mouthing thanks to the Christian deity for a boon that his principal and most influential representatives have strenuously striven to have withheld.

The Apostle Paul was very much in the background at this remarkable thanksgiving service. Indeed, his name does not seem to have been mentioned once in the course of the proceedings. A quarter of an hour of his presence would have given some spirit, and, probably, added considerable liveliness to the service, because, besides being an authority on woman's proper sphere, we are given to understand from the report of a conference at Jerusalem that he was remarkably tenacious of his opinions, and was not easily sat on or put down. But the twentieth-century parsons may breathe freely on this score, for the Apostle Paul, like Queen Anne, has gone over to the majority. And the worst that poor Paul can do is to writhe in his grave.

We regret that the newspaper report of the service does not give a sample of any of the "Special Suffrage Hymns" stated to have been rendered. As the service was held on a a week day why were the songs of Robert Burns all excluded? People will be getting the idea that the Scots are progressing—backwards. "Green Grow the Rashes O"!

Ignotus.

Acid Drops.

Says "The Rambler," in the *Daily Mirror*: "A Frenchman who knows General Foch tells me that he is an ardent believer in the power of prayer. 'We shall yet be saved by it,' he says, 'and it will not be the first time in this deadly struggle.'" There it is! An unknown person tells an anonymous writer that General Foch said something—which he probably never said at all—and some of the public will no doubt take it for "Gospel." We believe it is an offence under D.O.R.A. to do anything that will discredit his Majesty's Allies. Doesn't that apply to making the French Commander appear on the level of an evangelistic idiot straight from some chapel meeting?

We have considerable sympathy with a case of exemption granted at the Southwark Tribunal the other day. The applicant was a maker of padded rooms for lunatic asylums, and it was explained that if he were taken, the work would have to stop. The Tribunal decided that the work must not stop, and granted three months' exemption. With Europe in its present state, we incline to the opinion that the fitting up of lunatic asylums is really an "essential" industry.

A pocket Testament and a watch in his tunic pocket saved the life of Private Crouch, of Rotherham, by intercepting a German bullet. The watch was badly damaged, and some leaves of the book nearly destroyed. It thus appears that the secular watch did more than the sacred volume to save that soldier's life.

Over 350 nurses have fallen in the present War. This is a nobler record than that of the clergy, who have been exempted from military service. There are 50,000 parsons in this country, and the Army Chaplains receive officers' pay and do their work at a safe distance from the fighting fronts.

It looks as if the long-promised revival of religion will not come after all. A Church of England committee, which has been inquiring into the Evangelical work of the Church, reports that "public worship is on the decline," and that attendances at Sunday-schools are in a similar plight. This state of affairs may explain the bishops' anxiety for unity with other Christian bodies. What they are losing on the swings they hope to gain on the roundabouts.

We do not know who edits the *Efficiency Magazine*, but, judging from a page sent us by a correspondent, it looks as though it were edited by someone qualifying for an idiot asylum. A large type, extra leaded paragraph runs, "Darwin studied earthworms for twenty years, and then wrote a book; but what a pity that no earthworm studied Darwin." Judging by this paragraph, the editor's desire has been realized. A worm *has* been studying Darwin, and the product is worthy of its origin.

A meeting of the Newport Corporation, several members of which are clergymen, was recently converted into a prayer meeting. Several ministers engaged in prayer and hymns were sung. The Rev. A. A. Mathews moved that a united service of intercession should be held in the town. It was generally felt that we had arrived at a crisis in the War, and that, unless the Almighty was specially, and by a united town, besought to intervene in our favour, the biggest battle in history might go against us.

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Driven by the dread of defeat, the Newportians, at two crowded gatherings, bombarded the Throne of Grace with passionate appeals for direct aid from on High. The mayor was present, "in scarlet robe and chain of office," supported by members of the Town Council; and many overflow meetings were held. One disadvantage was that the rules of his Church made it impossible for Father Hickey to be present, much as he desired to be. But the mayor even made a speech which was brimful of valuable information to the Deity. These meetings were held on the Wednesday, and on the Friday and Saturday the War news was much more favourable.

Following the appointment of General Foch as Generalissimo of the Allied Forces, a paragraph has been going the rounds of the press that the distinguished French soldier has given his testimony of the value to prayer. The statement is made on the authority of "a Frenchman." It would be far more interesting to hear the General's own version of the matter.

The clergy are slim! A similar statement to that put into the mouth of General Foch went the round of the papers recently, and was given to General Robertson. Then the Bishop of Birmingham writes to the *Daily Post* (Birmingham) suggesting that as these two Generals believe in prayer, might it not be well to organize daily prayer from 12 o'clock till 2 o'clock, etc.? Now, we are wondering! Who sent these paragraphs to the press? Did they really suggest the Bishop's advice, or were they intended to prepare the road for it? Decidedly, the clergy are slim!

Mr. Robert Blatchford, writing in the *Sunday Chronicle*, hits the nail on the head regarding the Irish question. He says that "the Irish difficulty is a religious difficulty," and that "if every man in Ireland were a Roman Catholic, or a Protestant, a Hindoo, or an Agnostic, or a Quaker, the Irish difficulty would be settled as early as daylight-saving or woman's suffrage." Politicians would do well to ponder these shrewd words.

In weak moments even the men of God tell the unvarnished truth about their own cause. The Rev. J. E. Roberts, of Manchester, on being elected President of the Baptist Union, confessed, as reported in the *South Wales Daily News* for April 24, that the Churches are a lamentable failure; that Tommy's invective about them was "hair-raising in its directness and its shattering simplicity"; and that at last "the men of Britain are ripe for a real religion," the only possible inference being that hitherto they have never had such a religion. What this journal has been saying for over twenty years is thus verified from an unexpected but welcome source.

The Bishop of London says the Christian Church is the "Oldest fighting regiment in Europe." As it has been responsible for many of the wars in Europe, it is only natural it should do some of the fighting. At present the officers of "the oldest fighting regiment" have decided to do their leading from behind, and the Government has acquiesced.

The Bishop says: "the first thing is to appeal to Almighty God. Well, they have been doing that ever since the War commenced, and the result is before the world. It was the Bishop of London who said of the War that there had not been such a day of God for a thousand years. A man who can say that can say anything. And the people who can put up with balderdash deserve anything.

But sometimes even the Bishop blunders into saying something that is sensible, as in the following: "Labour had gradually fought its way from serfdom, with little help from the richer classes, and less than no help from the official Church." The last, certainly, is saying no more than the truth—even if not all the truth.

Every one in the United Kingdom between the ages of eighteen and fifty-one are "deemed" to be in the Army Reserve—except women, the physically unfit, the mentally defective, and the clergy.

Professor Spenser Wilkinson, the famous military critic, has some pertinent remarks on religious ideas concerning the War in a recent issue of the *Daily News*. Speaking of a lady who had remarked that "if there is a God in heaven we must win," the Professor says "it expresses the instinct of many good women and of some good men, but it involves a view which I cannot make my own. My friend's view implies a miraculous intervention on behalf of righteousness. The nature of things is never modified for the convenience of mankind, still less of any fraction of mankind."

Saint George's Day was observed with becoming solemnity at Windsor and many other places. Is this because "the saint" was a successful army-contractor?

The dear *Daily News* is supposed to know something of religious matters, but a cryptic utterance appeared in its severe pages recently. Referring to a political rival, the *Daily News* said that it was "the paper which once used to talk blasphemously about 'Uncle Five Heads.'" Presumably, the reference is to Mr. Asquith, but why call it "blasphemous"? Has this Liberal politician been deified?

Principal Forsyth tells us that Christianity acts on the principle that cure is better than prevention, which is sheer nonsense but sound theology. The Ven. C. A. H. Green, Archdeacon of Monmouth, is equally certain that prevention is better than cure, which is good sense, but bad theology. Dr. Forsyth advocates orthodoxy at the expense of morality, while the Archdeacon sacrifices orthodoxy in order to be loyal to truth. According to Christianity, God allowed sin to enter the world when he could have prevented it, that he might enjoy the luxury of bearing it away himself, which makes an essentially immoral being and the Gospel a wicked farce.

In spite of Government appeals to save money and to find men for work of national utility, there is an obvious waste of clerical time and Church income, particularly in the City of London. A case in point is quoted in the *Daily News*. The living of St. Mary Woolnoth is now vacant, and the patronage falls to the Crown. The living is stated as £1,100, with a parsonage-house. The resident population is 125, mostly caretakers of offices.

What infinite nonsense is being talked by the clergy just now about the alleged life beyond the tomb. Some of them pretend to know all about it, exclaiming: "Death is naught and love is all." The Rev. A. W. Anderson, B.A., of Newport, Mon., speaks of "a saintly mother who still loves and influences from the unseen world" all those for whom she cared when on earth. Even her minister-son might be unconscious of that continued love, but he is being moulded and helped by it all the same. A widow is mentioned who kept on praying night and day until she gained absolute assurance that her dead husband still lived and loved her in the Unseen Holy. This is what Mr. Anderson calls the "deeper knowledge based on something greater than the intellect." How the ignorant multitudes love to be gulled by spiritual charlatans!

"Here God comes in," dramatically exclaims a well-known divine. We should like to see that spot or that moment; but, unfortunately, our divine is unable to identify it. Like Job of old, he cannot find God anywhere, nor can anybody else. He is, indeed, a God that hideth himself from all alike. They say he is in this awful War, but the Kaiser is the only one who is quite sure of him.

"The War has made me think," cried a layman the other day; "and thinking has caused me to doubt." That is the case with thousands to-day. No wonder the Church thunders out "Believe, only believe," for thought, given free course, kills belief, and puts Monarch Reason on the Throne."

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—R. Terroni, 5s.; James Davie, £1 10s.; J. L. Vickery, 10s.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.—Received with thanks, and shall appear. Glad to hear you are well.

WILL correspondents please note that we cannot undertake to deal with unsigned communications. A pen-name may be used for publication, but the name and address of the writer must be supplied to the Editor.

H. BUSH.—Pleased to have been of use. Glad to see you at any time.

W. J.—No other *class* of the community is exempted from Military Service as the clergy.

W. ROSCHER.—*Buddhism*, by Rhys David (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), will probably give you what you require.

F. C. WYKES.—What you say quite bears out our statement. Selfishness, and want of a sense of personal responsibility towards the rest of the community, are responsible for many of the greatest evils around us.

MR. A. ALDWINCKLE writes from Paris suggesting the reprinting of our notes on "Man Power and the Clergy," and the distribution of the leaflet "by millions." He also offers to contribute towards a special fund to defray expenses. A similar suggestion has reached us from other quarters. Perhaps the better plan would be to write a leaflet dealing with the clergy generally. We will take the first opportunity of doing this, and we think it can be done without any appeal to readers for help—beyond that of their aiding in distribution.

TRUTH-SEEKER.—We cannot publish letters that do not bear the name and address of senders.

A. G. LEWIN.—It is not difficult to deceive "hard-headed" men of business on such a matter as Spiritualism. The subject is out of their line, and your "practical" business man often fails through sheer want of imagination. He is so practical that he cannot see beyond the tip of his nose.

MR. JACK BARTON asks: "Why don't you double the price? We would all pay it, and still have the greatest value for 4d. that the literary world offers." Naturally, we agree; but we are looking ahead, and the larger we can make our circulation *now*, the better prospect when the War is over. So we stick to our plan in spite of the difficulties, and we do so cheerfully, as we know we have the support of all our readers, including Mr. Barton himself.

R. CHAPMAN.—Please tell your friend we will deal with the subject when occasion offers. Hope to see you in good health by the time of the Conference.

W. MACFARLANE.—Pleased to learn that the *Freethinker* "helps to cheer the boys in Italy." Shall be pleased to send a parcel of literature for distribution.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—West Ham Branch, 10s.

W. ROWE (Johannesburg).—Sorry, but we are unable to find out anything of the person about whom you enquire.

H. O. BOYER.—We hardly think there is the one per cent. of disagreement between us on the impersonal side of war. With religion we are on different ground. The good which you and others attribute to religion, we should say, resulted from the operation of those social forces with which religion has been associated. Thanks for sending quotation which is interesting, and may be useful.

JOSEPH BRYCE.—Thanks. As early as possible. We appreciate your sympathy with us in what you call our "herculean struggle."

J. FOTHERGILL.—Crowded out of this issue. Shall appear next week.

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 lectures in the Tillery Hall, Abertillery, Mon., afternoon and evening. He has been asked to lecture in the afternoon on "Freethought and Economics," and has agreed to do so. A lively discussion is anticipated. In the evening he lectures on "The Savage in Our Midst."

We print this week the Agenda of the N. S. S. Conference, which will be held in the Queen's Hall on Whit-Monday. Some of the resolutions thereon are of far-reaching importance, and there promises to be a larger attendance of delegates from all over the country than has been the case for some years. This speaks well for the revival of interest that has taken place of late. Generally speaking, we can safely say that the Movement is fuller of life and activity than it has been for some time.

From one of *our* men serving with the British Army in Italy:—

> Very glad to say I have not been bothered yet for Church Parade. Three days after I enlisted a corporal came in our hut and informed me that the officer wanted me to go on Church Parade, but I declined. He asked me what was my religion, to which I replied "None." The corporal left remarking that he would tell the officer, but I have heard nothing of the affair since. The thing that I mostly object to is that when anyone reports sick the ridiculous question is asked, "Your religion?" I had a good mind to answer, lumbago. When will there be an end to such nonsense?

This letter bears out what we have said, that the majority of officers are gentlemanly enough to be without desire to force upon soldiers a duty that has no real connection with their military efficiency.

On the other hand, another soldier writes:—

> When I first enlisted I was accepted and affirmed as an Atheist, and was given [conditional upon my doing some light fatigue] complete exemption from Church Parades by my C. O. For the last seven months I have been on Class W. A. Res., and joined up here a week ago. Last Sunday I tried to get permission [whilst on Church Parade] to "break off," but there seemed to be the usual prejudice, and I was refused permission; the "orderly sergeant" telling me "it was time I b—— went." My only way out was to refuse, and I was arrested. I have been under "open arrest" until to-day. I was tried by the O. C., B. Camp. He commenced by abusing Atheism, and used his authority to prevent my making an adequate reply. Then he gave me a lecture, and told me that he thought I was acting foolishly. His manner was now so conciliatory that when he asked me whether I would take any punishment from *him*, I said "*Yes; conditional upon my being exempt from Church Parades in future.*" He told me "alright, he would see," and then awarded me six days C. B.—no mean punishment here. Apart from that, I am "up against it" in every sense. Both M. O., S. M., and a host of smaller fry rub it into me.

These two letters make plain two things. First, that compulsory Church Parade is a very real grievance amongst the men; second, that where the officers are at all bigoted, those who make a stand for their opinions are apt to have an unpleasant time. The moral is, that in the Army, as out of it, whether a man attends Church or stays away, should be decided by himself alone.

We are tempted to make one more dip from our lucky bag:—

> You will be gratified to know that the free parcel of literature sent has been the final means of securing two converts to our cause. Religious discussions often take place among the men, and the pamphlets sent have been used with good effect. Religious literature is sometimes sent round also, but it does not seem to have near the same effect on the men; perhaps because it is too well known. We ought to have reserve dumps of literature at the base.

Well, we have a small reserve dump, and we shall be pleased to send free parcels of ammunition so far as we can. And we are careful to send out no "dud" shells.

We are glad to learn that the Swansea Branch, one of those opened by Mr. Cohen last year, has had a highly suc-

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cessful winter season. The lecturers included Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, Snell, McCabe, "Keridon" (J. Thomas), and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. Two clergymen were also invited to address meetings, and consented to do so. The Secretary, Mr. B. Dupree, writes that the attendance, interest, enthusiasm, and support have been a source of inspiration to the "saints" responsible for the meetings. The Branch closes its season with a small, very small, balance on the right side. The Secretary properly says that the fact of "so much having been done, with so few, prompts us to speculate as to what might be done if all sympathizers lent a hand." We sincerely hope that these will take the hint.

The Manchester Branch is arranging a series of Sunday "Rambles" during the summer. The first one will take place on Sunday next (May 12). The party will leave the Chorlton-Cum-Hardy tram terminus at 10.30; Sale friends at Jackson's Road 11.30; by river bank to Northenden lunch, 2 o'clock; return by meadows to Didsbury, etc.

East End Freethinkers will please note that the Bethnal Green Branch commences its out-door propaganda in Victoria Park (to-day), May 5. Mr. Storey is the speaker.

A very "straight" letter appears in the *Evening Express* (Cardiff) of April 22 on the exemption of the clergy, and we are pleased to see that it is leading to a correspondence on the topic. The writer says that a deputation of Welsh Nonconformists went to London specially on the matter, and that the exemption has brought "relief to the distracted." We are pleased to see this discussion in the press, and we hope one day to see full advantage taken of such opportunities by regular press representatives of the N. S. S.

The Mechanism of Man.

IV.

(*Continued from p. 249.*)

ALTHOUGH the bony framework is bound into a united mass by its ligaments and cartilages, the joints enjoy so much freedom of movement, and the centre of gravity of the erect structure is so highly situated, that the skeleton cannot be made to support itself in the upright posture. The erect position so easy of attainment in living man results from the contraction of various muscles which resist and balance one another. The foot provides the surface of support, and the muscles of the calf contract to prevent the lower limbs and body from falling. This contraction tends to bend the leg, and then the thigh muscles operate to sustain the limb in its upright position. But the action of the thigh muscles inclines to curve the body forward, and if the corporeal structure is to be maintained in the erect position, these muscles must be counterbalanced by the muscular influences of the buttocks and the back.

The muscles are more numerous than the bones, and those muscles that control the movements of the skeletal system number 526. All muscular activity is directed by the nervous system. Muscular contractions are frequently initiated by the conscious animal, but many result from nervous changes which never ascend to the realm of consciousness. Those muscular organs which are usually governed by the will are termed the voluntary muscles, although even these occasionally act automatically. These muscles regulate the movements of the bones, and they are seated in the limbs and trunk. The inferior muscles never respond to the will, and are termed the involuntary muscles. The involuntary muscles are situated in the internal organs, mostly in the cavity of the trunk. Over their activities the superior nervous centres are precluded from exercising any control whatever.

Butcher's meat is composed of fat and lean, and the latter is formed of voluntary muscle. In a piece of stewing steak, the cordlike muscle bundles may be easily identified. With a needle, these muscle structures can be separated into their constituent fibres. Examined under the microscope, these fibres will be seen as delicate strands termed fibrils. These fibrils are muscle-cells, and are characterized by many dark lines. Voluntary muscles such as these are therefore called striated, or striped, muscles. When dissected, muscle is shown to be surrounded and held together by sheets of connective tissue.

The fibrils of involuntary muscle, on the contrary, are spindle shaped, and are devoid of lines. Thus they are known as smooth, or unstriated, muscles. The fibres of the heart, however, provide an exception to this rule, but they are the only involuntary muscles that are striated.

The more active a muscle, the more lavish is its blood supply. The blood-vessels enlarge, and the flow of blood increases. Then the muscles increase and multiply. Owing to the oxidation which occurs, an active muscle has a higher temperature than it possesses when at rest. Constant muscular labour leads to the development of larger, firmer, and healthier muscle, while the absence of exercise causes the muscles to deteriorate in size and to become flabby and pale. Immoderate muscular activity is to be deprecated, particularly in the immature organism, but a fair amount of activity is essential to bodily health.

When taking deliberate aim at an object, nearly every organ in the body co-operates in the action. Our eyes, spine, limbs, lungs, and heart, all become modified. When we decide to perform an energetic action, such as felling a tree or leaping a fence, then nerve impulses travel to all the organs involved, and these are excited to the degree necessary for the accomplishment of the projected deed.

The nerves which direct the muscles are composed of many fibres. On entering a muscle, the fibres of a nerve separate, and ramify in all directions throughout the muscular tissue. Each muscle fibre thus becomes the recipient of its own special nerve fibre. All the fibres peculiar to a muscle possess the property of contractility. When contracting, muscles shorten or widen; but it is well to observe that when a muscle decreases in length, it increases correspondingly in width, so that its volume really remains constant. As a muscle consists of a multitude of fibres, it follows that when its fibres contract the whole muscle contracts. Consequently, it becomes shorter and thicker, and draws its two ends together, and whatever organ is attached to the muscles participates in this change. Thus muscular contraction sets up the motion of the organs to which the muscles are attached, and such motions are the antecedents of locomotion.

The contraction of a muscle fibre through the passage along a nerve fibre of a nervous impulse consists in a modification of nerve matter which is conveyed along the fibre. Hence, such a nerve fibre is termed a motor fibre, because through its action on a muscle it propagates the impulse which induces motion. But the nerve functions as an accessory factor only. It cannot furnish the energy which the muscle expends when it contracts. As a matter of fact, the cells of the muscle itself have previously accumulated energy from the food and oxygen supplied to them by the nutrient materials of the blood, and in reality the process known as oxidation liberates the energy displayed. It is noteworthy in this connection that muscular activity may increase the production of carbon dioxide fivefold, while intellectual labour produces no such result.

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After contraction has taken place, a muscle immediately relaxes. If the muscle is to be maintained in a state of contraction, a rapid succession of nerve impulses is demanded. But a continued contraction is really the consequence of many contractions, and this is occasionally made manifest by the vibratory movement of the muscle.

Work is for life, not life for work, remarks our great philosopher. Reasonable exercise promotes digestion and sweetens sleep. It assists in the excretion of waste and poisonous matters from the body, and helps to furnish that certain index of fitness, a healthy appetite Moreover, active exercise serves to consume the oxygen and promotes the well being of the lungs, while, above all, every contraction of a muscle helps the circulation of the blood stream. The reason of this is perfectly simple, for when a muscle contracts it exercises pressure upon the blood vessels and lymphatics, and thus propels the vascular and lymphatic fluids onwards.

Many of the chemical phenomena of muscle are still imperfectly understood. Some physiologists hold the view that muscular contraction is explosive in character. The explosive materials appear to be generated within the muscles themselves. We may conveniently regard muscle as the residence of stored explosive material of relatively small amount, while muscle also contains the mechanism and fuel for its development, and the structural materials which form its seat of manufacture. This structural substance is considered to be of the nature of protein, while the other accessories are regarded as non-nitrogenous. As rapidly as the muscular energy is expended, new explosive material is evolved through the active oxidation of other substances of which sugar appears to be the most prominent. The oxidation of the muscles is shown by their consumption of the sugar stored *in* the blood, and by their absorption of oxygen *from* the blood, as well as by their excretion of carbonic acid *into* the blood, and in the muscular evolution of heat.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London, W. 1.
Whit-Sunday, May 19, 1918.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.

   (*a*) Motion by Manchester, Glasgow, West Ham, Bethnal Green, Kingsland, and Birmingham Branches:—

   "That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President."

   (*b*) Motion by South London Branch:—

   "That Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., be elected President."

5. 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, 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.; 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.; Whitewell, C. J.; Williams, E. Clifford; Willis, F. E.; Wood, Frederick

6. Election of Auditors.
7. Motion on Reconstruction by Mr. C. Cohen:—

   (*a*) "That the Executive consists of ten members elected at the Annual Conference. Not more than one member of a Branch to be eligible for election. Anyone not belonging to a Branch must have been a member of the Society for at least three years before being eligible for election on the Executive. The names of all candidates for election, with the Branch—if any—to which they belong, shall appear on the Agenda, which shall be issued one month before the Conference."

   (*b*) "That the present Conference (1918) nominates and elects the Executive."

   (*c*) "An Annual Report and Balance Sheet shall be issued to all members of the Society."

   (*d*) "Each Branch shall appoint a Corresponding Member of the Executive, who shall receive a report of all business done by the Executive, and be advised of any special and important business coming before the Executive."

   (*e*) "In places where no Branch of the N. S. S. exists the Executive shall have power to appoint a representative who shall keep the Executive informed of all events touching the work and welfare of the N. S. S."

   (*f*) "Branches to be grouped over given areas and an organizing secretary appointed as early as possible."

   (*g*) "There shall also be appointed, as early as possible, an organizer for the whole of the country, with such duties and on such terms as shall be afterwards decided."

   (*h*) "Either in conjunction with, or separate from, other officials there shall be appointed local press representatives, and a general Press Representative at headquarters, his duties to consist in watching all matters connected with Freethought work which may arise in the public press."

   (*i*) "That it shall be an instruction to the Executive to appoint a Finance Committee and a Propagandist Committee."

   (*j*) "That in place of the Interim Conference ordered by the Conference of 1917, the Executive be authorized to call an annual meeting of members and unattached Freethinkers for the discussion of such subjects as are of general interest and importance."

   (*k*) "That the place of the Annual Conferences shall be determined by a vote of the Branches, the Executive having first ascertained what places are prepared to receive the Conference, and that the Conference shall not be held in the same town more than once in four years."

   (*l*) "That whenever possible the Executive shall require a prospective member to be proposed and seconded by two members of the Society."

8. Motions by South London Branch:—

   (*a*) "That the first duty of a Society being to furnish rules for the acceptance and guidance of its members, this Conference instructs the Executive to print and circulate forthwith the Revised Rules which were approved and adopted by the Annual Conferences of 1916 and 1917."

   (*b*) "That this Conference desires to enter its protest against the publication of the President's Scheme of Reconstruction without the knowledge or consent of the Executive, and feels that in these circumstances the scheme as published in the *Freethinker* should be referred to the Executive."

   (*c*) "That this Conference is of opinion that an Executive consisting wholly of members elected at the Conference, and not removable by the Branches, is practically an irresponsible body; and that a body consisting of ten members only would mean an average attendance so small that it would become an autocracy, and therefore totally opposed to the spirit and traditions of the N. S. S."

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(*d*) "That the decision of the House of Lords in the Bowman case having made it clearly legal for the N.S.S., in its present unincorporated state, to receive gifts and bequests for the furtherance of its objects, there is neither use nor sense in its becoming an incorporated body."

9. Motion by Mr. Victor Roger:—

"All Delegates to the Executive residing more than twenty miles from the place of meeting of the Executive shall be termed Corresponding Members, and all business of which notice has been given shall be printed and sent to the Corresponding Members, who shall be allowed to vote on it by letter."

10. Motion by North London Branch:—

"That this Conference instructs the Executive to prepare a revision of the 'Immediate Practical Objects of the Society,' and that a sub-committee be formed from the Executive to secure this end. Further, that the recommendations of the sub-committee be submitted to the forthcoming interim conference."

11. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—

"That at an early date steps be taken to (*a*) combine the N. S. S. and the Secular Society, Limited, under the general title of the National Secular Society, Limited, or (*b*) convert the N. S. S. into an incorporated body."

12. Motion by Manchester Branch:—

(*a*) "This Conference strongly supports the suggestions for reorganizing the N. S. S. as outlined by Mr. C. Cohen in the *Freethinker* of April 14, 1918."

(*b*) "This Conference regrets the absence of all reference in the Government Education Bill to the position of religion in the schools, and is strongly of opinion that adequate educational progress is impossible until the education given in State-supported schools is confined to secular subjects, leaving the inculcation of religion to parents and ministers of religion."

(*c*) "That arrangements be made by which the N. S. S. may take a more active and prominent part in the promotion of such social reforms as are outlined in its 'Immediate Practical Objects.'"

13. Motions by Birmingham Branch:—

(*a*) "That the Chairman at all Public Freethought Lectures of Branches be instructed to read 'Our Immediate Objects,' and then press for membership."

(*b*) "That the time is now ripe for presenting in definite form the constructive side of our work, and that the Executive be instructed to prepare a statement of our position and its various aspects as embodied in 'Our Immediate Practical Objects.'"

14. Motion by Glasgow Branch:—

"That in order to promote a complete representation of Branches at the Annual Conference, all railway fares be pooled."

15. Motion by Swansea Branch:—

"That steps be taken to open shops in various parts of the country in connection with Branches of the N.S.S. for the sale of Freethought literature."

16. Motion by West Ham Branch:—

"That this Conference affirms the justice of equal pay for equal work regardless of sex, and sympathises with all organizations throughout the country that are endeavouring to establish this principle."

17. Motion by Kingsland Branch:—

"That an annual balance-sheet be sent by each Branch to the Executive each year, giving an account of work done, with income and expenditure, so that the Executive may issue a complete statement of the Society's work; and that the sending of such a report shall be a condition of granting any financial aid."

18. Motion by Manchester and Birmingham Branches:—

"That this Conference protests against the practice of compelling freethinking soldiers and sailors to attend religious services, and is of opinion that, in the interests of justice and freedom, members of the Army and Navy should enjoy the same freedom of conscience as obtains in civil life; it therefore urges upon the War Office the necessity of abolishing compulsory Church Parade as adding nothing to military efficiency, while inflicting a serious injustice upon those who place a real value upon mental freedom."

19. Motion by Birmingham Branch:—

"That this Conference protests in the strongest possible manner against the action of the Government in exempting the clergy from the operation of the Military Service Acts (1916-18) as being entirely without justification."

This Conference will sit in Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W. 1. Morning session, 10.30 to 12.30; afternoon session, 2.30 to 4.30. Both are purely business meetings, and are open to members only. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 6.30 o'clock.

By order of the Executive.

C. COHEN, *President.*
E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

Correspondence.

CONSCIOUS VILLAINY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I thank Mr. W. O. Parker and Mr. Chester Keith for their letters in the *Freethinker* for April 14. Possibly what I had in view was a kind of villainy lower, more cowardly, and more despicable than villainy, generally speaking, appears to them to be, *e.g.*, the secret taker of backsheesh who becks and bows and grins and winks and leers behind his unconscious victim's back. I was thinking, perhaps, of the most sordid kind of villainy, which has no adventurous vein in it at all; which contains no redeeming, romantic streak, which cannot claim the slightest merit of courage—of piracy, whose flag, whatever other adjectival adjunct may be suitable to describe it, is at any rate emphatically *not* the "*Jolly* Roger." I have been engrossed, probably, too much in studying the psychology of the Fagins.

And yet your correspondents will have it that I am more generous than they to the social plunderers of our day! But am I? On this point I am not just sure that Mr. Parker and Mr. Keith are at one. They are, however, at one in this: that what I claim to be conscious villainy they hold, in the main, to be self-deception. Let us see.

I must remind your correspondents that even I have only contended that it is a small minority in the community who practise conscious and deliberate villainy. But it is the *power* of that minority that perpetuates the unconscious folly of the mass which allows them that power. Villainy I am unable to imagine as ever having a moral basis. After all, the test is whether a thing advances or impedes Truth. Applying that test to the powerful minority of conscious villains, can it be maintained that these narcotic manufacturers and dispensers are the "lesser evil"?

Maybe I should not have written "legal" penalties. What my object was, was to show that the villain conscious of his villainy may also be a very recreant. If he knows that he need not apprehend any evil results to himself from practising his villainy, he will practise it; otherwise, in 99 cases out of 100, he will avoid personal risks by refraining or (playing the parasite) he will hang on to the coat-tails of some more powerful villain or coterie of villains, who can afford protection even should disaster ensue. But, then, disaster is so very remote and unlikely when you have the huge majority effectually narcotized!

Unconscious villainy *may* have as a basis moral courage, conscious villainy, I hold, never. The heroes of Freethought were not always right; but they always had courage of that high order that personal consequences did not enter their calculations. On the contrary, the prospect of persecution was often a spur—not the fashionable kind of persecution that involves a brief incarceration in comfort and a place in the limelight and the picture papers. No!

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After all, I may be more generous to the minority of social tyrants than your correspondents. Still "I hae ma doots." I may concede the clever cunning of that minority, but I fear that is only at the same time proposing their gross abuse of their mental enlightenment! May I suggest to Mr. Keith that it is quite possible for a villain to *find* justification for his villainy without himself believing it *to be* justification? It is the easiest thing in the world to cite with effect to the unthinking mass traditional authorities well established by time, custom, and usage, though, to the Freethinker, these authorities are worthless and, perhaps, worse. And I might not be so sceptical about the conscious virtue of the unconscious villainy of many of the villains who burned men and women for a difference of opinion if it could be shown that their villainy involved them in personal danger. Such extremes of brutality are not possible to-day, because Secularism has provided restraints. If, in face of the opposing humanistic forces of the twentieth century a committee of Churchmen kidnapped a few heretics and burned them on Ben Nevis, I might almost be persuaded to concede a measure of "moral courage" and "conscious virtue" in that committee. But though such a thing be impossible now, we know perfectly well that religionists have several other shots in their lockers for the hated heretic. And it is "all-my-eye and Betty Martin" to tell me that the great majority of religionists who have had the advantage of a first-class, all-round Secular education do not clearly *perceive* and are not *conscious* of the villainy—ay, *cowardly* villainy if you will—implicit in the employment of vindictive and socially-protected indignities against unbelievers.

In conclusion, I wish to say to Mr. Parker that I do not appreciate the existence of a moral "sense" apart from the reason. "Sense" is the sole guide of primitive man. Sense governed by reason is the guide of civilized man.

IGNOTUS.

THE LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY.

SIR,—I would like to thank "Mimnermus" for his very friendly and appreciative article on the Leicester Secular Society.

In one statement there is a possibility of misunderstanding. We recently celebrated the thirty-seventh (by an error in our announcement we said thirty-sixth) anniversary of the opening of our Secular Hall, *not* of the birth of the Society itself. We are much older than that. Since Mr. Gould wrote his little History of the Society, we have found the original Minute-book, showing that the Society was formed as the "Leicester Secular Society" in 1851 or 1852 (I have not the book by me as I write), so we are now at least sixty-six years old. Quite aristocratic! In the early days there were breaks in the continuous existence of the Society, but there has been no break since 1867. It would be interesting to see the story of other Societies in the *Freethinker*. I believe the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school has a particularly interesting history, which ought to be recorded.

If "Mimnermus" will visit Leicester, and will look me up, or any member of the Society, we shall be delighted to show him around, and talk over the stories of the past and hopes for the future.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON.

National Secular Society.

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 25.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Brandes, Braddock, Eager, Gorniot, Leat, Lazarnick, Neate, Neary, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Spence, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

New members (twelve in all) received for Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, and South London.

The Executive's Annual Report to the Conference was discussed and adopted, and the various notices of motion for the Conference Agenda also discussed and remitted to the Agenda Committee for preparation and insertion, in accordance with the usual custom, in the current issue of the *Freethinker*.

The Secretary received instructions on minor matters connected with the Conference, and thus the final business of this year's Executive closed.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Society News.

Our London out-door work, which commences to-day, is hampered, unfortunately, by the absence of so many of our speakers, who are engaged either at home or abroad in the present unhappy struggle. But we hope to "muddle through," and keep our flag flying as heretofore.

The Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham Branches report good meetings. Manchester is in a flourishing financial position, and well equipped for carrying on future work. The Branch has decided to hold a series of monthly Sunday rambles during the summer, commencing in May, and asks members to watch the columns of the *Freethinker* for further announcements.

The provinces generally are preparing to reap the harvest we see maturing before us.

The arrangements for our Annual Conference are now complete, and a full list of speakers will appear in next week's issue.

Delegates from the provinces who desire information and assistance as to accommodation during their stay should write to me *at once*, mentioning the class of accommodation they require, and for how long.

The food question gives one to think, but some provision, though probably not an ideal one, will be made for "a snack" during the luncheon-hour for delegates only. Those who wish to partake of this must please let me know.

All who are attending the business meetings please note that admission is by production of the card of membership, *for the current year only*, at the door. Those who have not yet renewed their subscriptions for 1918 should remit to me at once. Branch members obtain their cards from their respective secretaries. Delegates are admitted on their credentials.—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.

LONDON SOCIETY, *Morality based on the Laws of Nature* (West Central Hall, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, M. Delchevalerie, "L' evolution morale d'un poete contemporain: Emile Verhaeren." Lecture in French.

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

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, Mr. F. Shaller, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. H. V. Storey, A Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley Road): 11.30, Mr. J. W. Marshall, "God's Omnipotent Impotence."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Mr. J. B. Johnson, "To Those in Doubt."

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.15, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Shaller, Swasey, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ABERTILLERY (Tillery Institute): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Freethought and Economics"; 6.30, "The Savage in Our Midst."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Conference Business.

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Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—*i.e.*, South African Information Department.

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Professor of Philosophy in the University of London.
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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Design in Nature.—The Editor	265
The Defeat of the Cross.—J. T. Lloyd	266
Mary Wollstonecraft.—Mimnermus	267
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	268
N. S. S. Conference.—Chapman Cohen	272
Materialism.—E. Egerton Stafford	272
The Blank Wall.—Arthur F. Thorn	273
The Sinner.—W.	274

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Design in Nature.

A correspondent who was present at one of my recent lectures asks whether I will be good enough to explain precisely what I meant by saying that the argument for and against what is known as "Design in Nature," usually moves along the wrong lines. It is not possible to deal adequately with such a request in a few sentences in "Answers to Correspondents," and, in addition, the subject itself is of quite sufficient importance to warrant a fuller and more careful treatment—fuller than it is possible for me to give even in this place. But I believe that the argument from design in nature is not only the most popular of the arguments for belief in God, it is also the strongest. Other pleas, such as that of causation, of consciousness, etc., are not really arguments at all. They are excuses that have been evolved by theological philosophers and metaphysicians from their own inner consciousness. If there is a God this world is his handiwork, it is in this world that proofs of his existence and character must be found. If the argument from design is not so universal as it once was, it is because reflection and criticism have shown how weak it is. But it remains the strongest argument, and yet it not only fails in its purpose, it is simply impossible for it to succeed. It is not that the argument is inconclusive, *it is absolutely irrelevant*. It does not prove design, for the simple reason that it cannot. It is not, as Mill thought, that the evidence is not strong enough, but that it is the wrong kind of evidence altogether.

* * *

"Directivity."

What is the argument from design? The Paleyan form is simple, but there are other forms which, while having no greater logical value, are more impressive to many because less clear in their outlines. Prominent among these is the argument, so beloved by Sir Oliver Lodge, of "Directivity." "We have overwhelming proof," says Professor Fleming, the eminent electrician, "that in the manufacture of the infinite number of substances made in Nature's laboratory there must be at all stages some directivity." Now this is a new name for an old thing; but, unfortunately for Professor Fleming, to call an onion a rose has not the slightest effect on the perfume. When Kepler, having determined the laws of planetary motion, tried to account for the existence of the planets keeping to their orbits, he fell back on "angelic intelligences" as the cause. The true explanation came with the physics of Galileo and Newton, and, then, good-bye to the angelic "directivity." But taking away separate supernatural beings, each having charge of his own department, like so many government committees, and substituting a single controlling mind, makes no substantial difference. It is the same thing revised, and it is essentially an argument of ignorance. The only reason for Kepler's angels was his ignorance of the causes of planetary motion. When Professor Fleming says that the atoms "have to be guided into certain positions to build up the complex molecules," he is like a modern Kepler faced with something, the cause of which he doesn't know, and lugging "God" in to save further trouble. "God" is always what Spinoza called it—the asylum of ignorance. The gods rule over the regions where knowledge holds no sway.

* * *

A Suicidal Argument.

But the weakness, if not the absurdity of the whole argument is, that it is simply suicidal—it destroys itself. In the act of proving that "God" is essential to natural combinations, it is forced to admit that these combinations are possible of themselves. "Directivity" adds nothing to the qualities or capacities of the materials employed. When a man puts a lighted match to a train of gunpowder, he adds nothing to the qualities of the match or the powder; he merely places them in juxtaposition. And unless heat was capable of exploding powder, all the direction in the world would not do it. Thus, alcohol is composed of one atom of oxygen, two of carbon, and six of hydrogen. Alcohol is the product of these elements in combination; but unless the power to produce the result was inherent in the quality of the constituents, no amount of "Directivity" could produce it. Directivity cannot alter the qualities of things in the slightest degree. If it could, there would be no certainty in Nature. H_2O might form water to-day, and whisky to-morrow, and something else the day after. Thus the argument from "Directivity" is bound to admit that all Nature is assumed to do with God, it is able to do without him. It concedes all that Atheism has ever asked for—namely, that Nature is capable of producing all its phenomena without the help of any extraneous agency. As Laplace said, God isn't necessary to the hypothesis. He is pushed on to the stage, and paraded before the audience, only to be dismissed a few minutes later with the assurance that he isn't at all necessary to the performance.

* * *

The Order of Nature.

Sir Oliver Lodge and his followers see proofs of design in "Directivity." Others find proof, not in the "direction" of certain special combinations, but in the maintenance of a balance of forces which emerge in a given result. Thus, they say, we have a balance of forces which preserve life; we have another which preserves a structure such as a crystal, another which preserves a chemical compound, etc. There is an orderly

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adaptation of means to ends, of processes to results, which argue a controlling intelligence. This argument proves on analysis to be really no more impressive than that of the preacher who saw design in the fact of death coming at the end of life instead of in the middle of it. The "adaptation of means to ends" is not a singular, but a universal, fact in Nature. And the quality of adaptation remains the same throughout. The relation of means to ends is the same in quality in the case of life as death. It is the same in the case of a child born a marvel of grace and beauty, and one born deformed and diseased. The end must be related to the means, the result to the process, because the one is the expression of the other. Twice two equal four; but no one dreams of praising God because they don't sometimes make four and a half. The sum is the expression of the factors. That is not only true of arithmetic; it is a universal truth. There is nothing else than "adaptation of means to ends" in Nature, however displeasing some of these ends may be to us. Beauty and ugliness, order and disorder, perfection and imperfection, perfect adaptation and imperfect adaptation, are not things that we find in Nature—all that is there are processes and results, consequents and antecedents—they are conceptions introduced by us, because we create ideals, and then measure Nature by them.

* * *

Order and Necessity.

Regularity in Nature is not proof of the control of Nature by a Divine intelligence; it is rather the reverse. If something—call it matter, or ether, or x—exists, it must operate in accordance with its innate qualities; and so long as this x remains uncontrolled, its manifestations will continue unchanged—in other words, there will be "order." The same causes, the same effects; the same processes, the same results. That is the manifest signs of a natural "order" that knows nothing of God. But if the "order varied," if Nature only functioned, D.V., then we should have variations, and these would indicate the presence of a controlling mind in the same way that the human mind controls forces to its purpose. So, when Pope asks the sceptic, "Shall gravitation cease when you pass by?" the sceptic might reply, "Certainly." If there is a God, he ought to show that he exists by occasionally doing something; and to arrest the local operation of gravitation, say, when a rock is falling on an innocent person's head, would not be at all a bad manifestation of "Providence." The existence of a natural "order" proves nothing. It is only another way of saying things exist. The existence of a natural disorder, a state of things in which the same processes did *not* always issue in the same results, would prove a deal—for the Godite. The Nature we know is such a nature as one would expect without God. And a Nature with God would be anything but an unmixed blessing.

* * *

Next week we will deal with the more popular presentation of the Design Argument.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings, live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.—*Shelley.*

The Defeat of the Cross.

II.

IT is an undeniable fact that theologically the Cross has always served as the appropriate symbol of the way of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The late Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, in his once famous work on the Atonement, described it as the external condition of acceptance with God and full forgiveness of sins. This is the view expressed in all the great creeds of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, and it is a view for which there is abundant Scriptural warrant, especially in the Epistles of Paul and Peter. Christians are said to be people who "by grace have been saved through faith, and that not of themselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Even their character is theirs only by imputation, not as the reward of successful struggle. Paul says: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 8, 9). The Apostles were ambassadors for Christ, whose message was this: "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 20, 21). The New Testament summary of the doctrine of the Cross is as follows:—

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. 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.....He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him (John iii. 16-18, 36).

Primarily, then, the death of Christ, rendered effectual by his resurrection, is the sacrifice, or propitiation, which satisfies the demands of Divine justice, and makes it possible for God to accept and forgive all who repent and believe. In other words, Christianity is a religion which enables lost and guilty sinners to get into harmonious relations with God, and so escape the wrath to come. It is only secondarily that it undertakes the task of doing anything for the life that now is. Indeed, the reorganization of society is not, strictly speaking, one of its aims at all, society in this world being practically of no consequence. Here we are to regard ourselves as but strangers and pilgrims, whose destination is the world to come. On this point Paul is most emphatic. Believers are in Christ, united with him both in his death and resurrection, and this is how the Apostle addresses them:—

> If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Col. iii. 1-4).

It is only those whose ambition is to be known as social reformers who even dream of representing Christianity as a religion for this world. Our point, however, is that in the latter capacity the Cross is the most gigantic and tragic failure in all history, while its alleged power to

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deliver believers from the wrath to come is absolutely outside the sphere of practical verification, the deliverance being as purely imaginary as the wrath itself. Realizing the truth of this statement, the Rev. Dr. Fort Newton, in a sermon preached in the City Temple on Good Friday, and published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for April 24, ignores the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement altogether, and speaks of Jesus, not as Redeemer, Deliverer, Saviour, or Lord, but as partaker of the human struggle, with all its ghastly horrors and moral atrocities, sharing it without ridding us of it. He says:—

> To-day we read the stately stanzas of the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah with a new vision, a new wonder; and the Figure that moves through those lines—gentle, heroic, silent, haunting, despised and rejected of men, smitten of God and afflicted—seems a living Presence by our side, looking at us with all-pitying, touching us with hands of healing. Truly he is the Suffering Servant of God, revealing the redeeming truth that, as there is a law of the survival of the fittest, so there is a law of the sacrifice of the best. To-day is this truth fulfilled before our eyes, and we realize as never before that not only the death of Jesus, but his life, was one long atonement, just because his love made him one with humanity in its sin, its woe, and its destiny..... Outwardly the Cross was an utter defeat; inwardly it was the ultimate victory.

What the reverend gentleman means by the outward failure and inward triumph of the Cross the present discourse does not help us to discover. For systematic theology he has nothing but withering contempt, but strangely enough he has a theological system of his own, the chief characteristic of which is looseness, vagueness, or ambiguity, and in defence of which he waxes absurdly dogmatic. His laudation of Jesus is grotesquely extravagant, particularly as he treats him as a member of the human category, saying: "God eternal, God paternal, in that faith Jesus lived, in that faith he died, testing it to the utmost. *Father!* that was his own word, his key to life, his first truth and his last; it was his religion." Jesus was a man specially commissioned to make God known to the world; not a Saviour who became the propitiation for our sins by dying on Calvary, but a real Brother or Champion who came to sympathize with and inspire us in our desperate conflict with malign forces by revealing a Heavenly Father who shares our sufferings and sorrows, and so heartens us for our never-ceasing warfare. We agree with Dr. Fort Newton when he says that "outwardly the Cross was an utter defeat"; but we are equally convinced that even inwardly it was by no means a victory. That is to say, Jesus neither said nor did anything that might legitimately be looked upon as in any sense or degree a revelation of a Friend behind phenomena, who is yet a partaker of our multifarious combats with the evils of life. Nothing can be more certain than the futility of the Cross from whatever point we may view it, while the Church founded upon it has done incalculably more harm than good in the world. Where is the Fatherhood of an Almighty and all-merciful Deity to be seen shining forth in all its glory? Can we honestly face the fact of the present War and believe that a God of love sitteth as king for ever? Has it never occurred to Dr. Newton seriously to consider how what is outwardly an utter defeat can be inwardly an ultimate victory? We unhesitatingly declare that in every intelligible sense, save one, the Christian Cross has been and is a fantastic fiasco. The Church, professedly its instrument, has been a stupendous success ever since its establishment as a department of the State under Constantine the Great; but its success has been due exclusively to the fact that it has always ingeniously played upon the ignorance and superstitious credulity of the masses of the people. In other words, the Church has prospered alone by pretending to be what it is not and cannot be, or by sailing under false colours. As a moralizer of life's great problems, as a factor in the establishment of just and fair conditions in the social organism, as a friend of the weak rescuing them from under the heels of the strong, it has been an absolute failure; and the failure of the Church signifies, not the ultimate victory, but the continuous defeat of the Cross. There is no possibility of separating the one from the other. Supernaturalism is a discredited dream, and all interpretations of existence based upon it necessarily fall to the ground. Is it not high time to let Humanism have its innings?

J. T. Lloyd.

Mary Wollstonecraft.

A Brave Woman and a Broken Career.

> We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions.—*G. W. Foote.*

Some innocents imagine that men and women of letters exert little or no influence in politics and upon politicians, in statesmanship and upon statesmen. It is a fond illusion. What far-reaching influence did not Jean Jacques Rousseau exert in world-politics? Instead of being a mere voice crying in the wilderness, his was the most potent voice in Europe of his day. Who heeded Thomas Paine? Yet his was the hand that first wrote the arresting words, "The United States of America," and the great Republic owed as much to Paine's live pen as to Washington's sharp sword. These questions are suggested by reading Mr. G. R. Stirling Taylor's excellent book on *Mary Wollstonecraft*. It is a handsome book, finely illustrated with photogravure portraits, and should adorn every Freethinker's bookshelf. For Mary Wollstonecraft may be fairly described as the chief founder of the modern Woman Movement, and she has many other claims on the attention of reformers and lovers of literature.

It is impossible to deny that the prevailing impression left by the records of Mary Wollstonecraft's life is one of pathos, the pathos of a brilliant and beneficent career, frustrated, at the height of its power, by an untimely end. And the emotion aroused by the record is accentuated, rather than shared, by the frank and open fashion in which Mr. Stirling Taylor has told the romantic story of her life. The book reveals a story of inevitable disappointment, of exceptional abilities heavily handicapped by a woman's physique, and, by way of compensating contrast, the pages bear witness to the determination of a brave woman using broken opportunities to the best advantage. The very courage of such an effort is touched to pathetic issues, and the partial success with which it was crowned is a tribute to the recuperative power of an eager and indefatigable temperament.

The triumph of the modern Woman's Movement is a victory for Rationalism, and the belated recognition of the rights of women is a tribute to the pioneers from Mary Wollstonecraft to John Stuart Mill. Mary Wollstonecraft was, if not actually the first advocate of women's rights, at any rate the first of her sex to give public expression of her views, and to have the courage to live up to her convictions. Sharing the usual fate of pioneers, she was reviled as "a hyena in petticoats" and a "philosophizing serpent." Her book, *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, was mainly a plea for the universal education of both sexes, and from the seed she sowed sprang the goodly fruit of a free national education for boys and girls, and a larger and broader freedom for her sex.

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It is not alone her message that now interests us, but the woman herself, her desires, her aspirations, her struggles, and her love. Pathetic and lonely, she stands out in the faint mists of the past, a woman who will continue to arouse sympathy when her books are no longer read, except by students in the bye-paths of literature. And of the woman no more complete revelation could be desired than the pathetic letters she wrote to Captain Imlay, who used her so harshly. Other writers have been unhappy, and have known the anguish and terrors of unrequited affection; but Mary Wollstonecraft addressed these letters with a breaking heart to the man whom she adored—the most touching and tragic love-letters in our literature.

Later in life Mary Wollstonecraft was united to William Godwin; and their daughter, Mary, married the poet Shelley. This largely intensifies the interest of Mary Wollstonecraft's association with English literature. For Shelley was a disciple of William Godwin, and the great poet adopted his philosophic ideas from Godwin. So much is this the case that it may even be said that Godwin explains Shelley, and it is equally true that Shelley is the indispensable commentary to Godwin. It is no paradox to add that Godwin formed Shelley's mind, and that the *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas* were the greatest of Godwin's works.

Nor is Godwin's daughter undeserving of notice. Although overshadowed by the greatness of her husband, Mary Shelley had literary gifts of her own which commanded attention. It was while staying at Byron's villa on the lovely lake of Geneva that she conceived the idea of her famous novel, *Frankenstein*, a grim and powerful work, which made an immense and deserved sensation. None of her other novels, including *The Last Man* and *Lodore*, had the same success. She contributed brilliant biographical sketches of foreign authors and artists to Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopædia*, and edited her famous husband's poems. She survived Shelley nearly thirty years, and latterly made her home with her son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, at Boscombe Manor, Bournemouth. There William Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft, and their daughter, Mary Shelley, are buried. It was the intention of Sir Percy to erect a monument to his illustrious father in the adjoining church, but the then vicar, a Mr. Bennett, refused his permission on account of the poet's Freethought, and the splendid memorial had to find refuge at the more hospitable Christchurch church, where it is regarded as one of the literary shrines of England.

It will be seen that Mr. Stirling Taylor's book is full of interest, and turns the handles of many doors. There is not a dull page in it from the start to the finish. We began by saying that Mary Wollstonecraft's career was one of pathos, and so, to a certain extent, it unquestionably was. And yet, perhaps, the last word is one, not of pathos, but of strong human encouragement. For the woman who can in large measure live down disaster and shipwreck of hope, and rise triumphant over the fell clutch of circumstance, may justly be acclaimed as the victorious mistress of her fate.

MIMNERMUS.

I have every possible reverence for the much talked-of world beyond the grave, and I wish that which piety believes, and virtue deserves, may be all matter of fact. But in things belonging to, and terminating in this present scene of existence, man has serious and interesting business on hand.

—*Robert Burns.*

"Mors" means death, and delaying; and "vita" means life, and growing: and try always, not to mortify yourselves, but to vivify yourselves.—*Ruskin.*

The Mechanism of Man.

V.

(Continued from p. 261).

THE cells of the living body are bathed by a fluid. This fluid is the lymph. Unlike a unicellular creature, such as the amœba, which is compelled to search for its food, the cells which form the multicellular animals are nourished by the nutrient materials contained in the blood. These exude through the vascular vessels into the lymph channels adjacent to the cells. The amœba excretes its waste substances into the water in which it dwells, whereas the higher mammalian cells expel theirs into the lymph to be whirled away by the circulation. The blood fulfils two offices. It conveys nourishment to the tissues, and removes waste matters from them. Or, as Professor Bayliss puts it in his elaborate *Principles of General Physiology*, 1915: "The object of the circulation of a fluid through the larger organisms is to supply food, especially oxygen, to the tissues, and to bring about effective interchange of chemical products."

The organs of circulation in vertebrate animals are the heart, which drives the blood into the arteries, and the capillary vessels which restore the blood to the veins. The human heart is about the size of a man's closed fist, and is placed diagonally behind the breast-bone, with its pointed end projecting towards the left. The smaller termination of the organ beats against the wall of the chest between the fifth and sixth ribs. The heart is safeguarded from external injury by the breast bone and ribs, and its encircling membrane—the pericardium—secretes a fluid, and eases the friction arising from the heart-beat.

In the superior backboned animals the heart is formed of two pumps in series. One of these pumps functions to propel the impure blood towards the lungs to obtain oxygen from the air, while the other pump operates to return the aerated and therefore purified blood from the lungs to the body. The heart contains two great cavities which are divided by a partition which separates one from the other. Each of these chambers is again divided by a movable partition. The upper chambers or cavities are the right and left auricles, and the two lower the right and left ventricles.

The heart, then, is composed of two pumps united together which pulsate in succession. The beating of the heart is caused by the contraction of the walls of its two auricles, which is immediately followed by a simultaneous contraction of the walls of the two ventricles. As Huxley said: "The contraction of the heart is rhythmical, two short contractions of its upper and lower halves respectively being followed by a pause of the whole, which occupies nearly as much time as the two contractions."

The blood's movements may be traced by observing the fluid flowing in its vessels of smallest calibre—the capillaries. From the capillaries of the skin or muscles the blood stream widens out into ever larger channels as its approaches the heart. From the capillaries small veins emerge which eventually unite into two great veins which conduct the blood to the right auricle. The blood then passes through the tricuspid valve into the right ventricle, and then travels through a valve into the pulmonary artery which proceeds towards the lungs. The lungs are abundantly furnished with capillaries, and while coursing through these channels the blood becomes purified, and it then resumes its journey through the pulmonary veins to the left auricle, and from thence through the mitral valve of the heart to the left ventricle. Then the blood is driven through a semi-lunar valve into the great artery of the body, the

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aorta, and from this vessel it proceeds to the lesser arteries, and onward to the capillaries distributed throughout the tissues, thus completing its circuit round the body.

Veins and arteries are composed of three layers of tissue. One of these layers serves to lessen friction; the second, formed of connective tissue, renders the vessels elastic, while their middle layer of muscular tissue permits them to expand or contract. All the structures function mechanically as agents in that constant circulation of the vascular fluid which maintains the organism as a living entity.

The capillaries into which the larger vessels break up are finer than a delicate hair, and are formed of a single layer. This is the inner lining of smooth cells which promotes the easy passage of the vascular fluid. The minuteness of the capillaries enables them to pass among the cells of the tissues, while the delicacy of their walls allows their nutrient liquids to enter the tissues, and readily absorb their exhausted materials into the blood. Through these microscopic capillaries the blood flows very slowly. But, minute as the capillaries are—and they vary in diameter from 1-2,000th to 1-1,500th of an inch—their multitude is so vast that their total volume is hundreds of times larger than that of the arteries which feed them, or that of the veins which arise from them. In reality all the great blood-vessels, including the heart, act as instruments of pressure to compel the blood to circulate through the capillaries. The blood is renewed and the tissues are renovated through the agencies of the capillaries alone.

The red corpuscles give the blood its ruddy appearance. Examined under the microscope, however, the blood liquid is nearly transparent. This vascular fluid is known as the plasma. But suspended in this plasma are immense numbers of blood-discs containing a pigment—the hæmoglobin—and this pigment colours the blood. Larger white corpuscles also inhabit the blood. But the red corpuscles never leave the blood-stream, and are carried by the circulation to all parts of the body. The white corpuscles, on the other hand, are not restricted to the vascular vessels, but pass through their walls into the neighbouring tissues.

The plasma sustains the blood in its liquid state, and as it flows the plasma carries with it nutrient particles supplied by the digestive system. It also conveys carbon-dioxide to the lungs, and various waste body-products to the kidneys.

When the blood issues from the heart, some of it proceeds to the stomach and intestines through arterial vessels which branch off into capillaries. These capillaries take up all the food-stuffs from the intestinal system, the fats alone excepted, and then they combine to form the portal vein which pours the absorbed nutrient substances into the liver. This important organ burns up a part of these blood impurities, and transforms them into bile. The blood, thus purified, and freighted with food, is then conveyed from the liver to the heart, and is again restored to the general circulation. The foregoing phenomena constitute the portal circulation.

Arterial blood is carried to the kidneys, in which organs the waste matters are eliminated, and then the renovated blood returns along a vein which runs to the heart. This is known as the renal circulation. There is also the circulation through the lungs, during which the blood is purified and renewed. This forms the pulmonary circulation.

When we compare the arteries and veins of the body, we discover that the former possess thick, tough, muscular walls, while the latter are provided with thin, soft walls. Like a river that is fed by springs and brooks, the veins derive their blood from the countless capillaries distributed throughout the human organism. Small veins arise from the capillaries, and these vessels grow larger and larger as they journey to the heart, where they discharge their contents into the auricles. The arterial vessels commence at the ventricles of the heart, and pour their blood into the capillaries, and from these small channels the blood returns by way of the veins to the heart. The veins, therefore, lead to the heart, whereas the arteries proceed from the heart. When the venous blood, which is charged with impurities and is dark purple in colour, passes along a large blood-vessel to the lungs, it there undergoes a remarkable transformation. While in the lungs, the venous fluid gives up its carbon-dioxide, and replenishes itself with oxygen. Its colour then changes to a bright scarlet. Thus is venous blood transformed into arterial blood, and it now flows towards and through the heart, and recommences its journey along the channels of circulation.

In 1628, Harvey published his small work of 76 pages, announcing his discovery of the circulation of the blood. As Gregory says in his *Discovery; or, The Spirit and Service of Science*: "In this treatise Harvey established absolutely the fact of the circulation of the blood, and the fact that the muscular action of the heart causes this movement."

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

This War has shed many a searchlight on matters religious, and, among other things, the question of the Pope's infallibility. The Pope is in a tight corner, for the Allies include four Catholic nations: France, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal, and there are millions of Catholics in America. The only Catholic power on the other side is Austria, but she is regarded as "the eldest daughter of the Church." There are also very large numbers of Catholics in Germany. Hence, Papa has to use many voices. The attitude of the Catholic Cardinals in England is patriotic, but the Irish priests are "agin the Government." In Italy, the Vatican has never protested against conscription of the clergy, but France has protested against their employment as combatants. The poor Pope must feel like Blondin when he crossed the Niagara Falls on a tight-rope.

Close students of history and of the Irish Question will not be surprised at the action of the Irish priests. Home Rule always represented a threat to their supremacy. It is the identification of the Nationalist aspiration with religious belief, brought about by English rule, which has given the priest his sustained power. Once that union is broken, and the divorce of the secular from the religious interest effected, there would be seen in Ireland what is seen elsewhere, that is, the growing restriction of the priest to the sphere of religion. That is the tendency of things elsewhere, and there is no ground for anticipating a different consequence with the Irish people. The moral is that while the Irish priesthood dare not oppose Home Rule, they do not desire it. And if the present agitation were to wreck it they would not mourn.

The Irish Catholic bishops advise resisting Conscription "by all the means that are consonant with the law of God." Not many generations ago burning people alive was thought to be "consonant with the law of God."

Lord Bryce's Committee has issued its report on the reform of the House of Lords, and its publication has caused some caustic comments in the press. *Reynolds' Newspaper* says "the history of the House of Lords has been one long tale of resistance to the will of the people." As the Church of England Bishops sit in the House of Lords, this is not a compliment to the Black Army.

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Christianity runs in double harness with commercialism, and it is not surprising to read that "merchandise now goes direct by rail from Cairo to Jerusalem." Those enterprising tradesmen will sing presently, "Jerusalem the Golden."

A special service for War-workers was held at St. Paul's Cathedral, which the obsequious press described as a "Labour service." Among the distinguished "Labour leaders" present were Mr. Winston Churchill and Sir Francis Lloyd. The address was delivered by that quick-change artist, the Bishop of London.

Expensive advertisements have appeared in the London press stating that the Church Army has 800 recreation huts for the soldiers, and asking for subscriptions for their maintenance. It would be more to the purpose if the Church authorities forced the able-bodied clergy to take their proper places alongside the other soldiers.

For ten hours without cessation prayer and intercession was conducted recently by the Wesleyans at Central Hall, Westminster. We suggest that Oriental praying-barrels be used in future, and, if necessary, they could be worked with a motor.

Christians are very fond of annexing men of genius. The Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Right Rev. James Cooper, preached the sermon at a special service arranged by the London Burns Club in the Caledonian Church, Holloway. Do these professional admirers of Burns ever read his works, or only talk of him? What sort of Christian was the author of the defiant lines: "The Church and State may go to hell, but I'll go to my Anna"?

The Bishop of London declares that Londoners can "do with fewer sermons." The people in the pews will echo Shakespeare: "For this relief much thanks."

It is quite all right. We have received a four-page leaflet, issued from North London, proving that the British really are the chosen people. And it is all backed up by exact references to Biblical texts. Whatever we do, or don't do, proves the writer's theses. Above all, we note that God promised Abraham the gates of the world, and the British possess these in Aden, Malta, Gibraltar, etc. There is no more to be said.

And then we turned to a report of the Rhodesia Land case, now before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. And we find that when Dr. Jameson led his men into Matabeleland, it was with the arrangement that each one was to be allowed "3,000 morgen" of land belonging to the Matabele—the British Government retaining the right to purchase at £3 per morgen. "The loot" was also to be divided between the British South African Company and the officers and men. We daresay there is Biblical warranty for this, if only "Ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

The late Rev. Arthur Gamble, of Bradbourne Vicarage, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire, left estate to the value of £59,056; and Canon Pepys, of Torquay, died worth £20,062. "Blessed be ye poor."

The Church Army advertises for a hundred "keen young Churchwomen," over twenty-one years of age, to take the place of evangelists gone to the Front. The proviso is made that they need not be experienced or highly educated. We should imagine that not being educated would be a distinct advantage.

"The Passer By" of the *Birmingham Gazette* is responsible for the following:—

> In a certain town there were two prominent men of the same name. One died and the other is with the Army in the Holy Land. The latter sent a telegram to his wife. It is said that it was delivered to the widow of the other man.
>
> The contents of the wire were: "Having a hot time; absolutely fit."

The fatherly attentions of Providence are not entirely absorbed by the World-War. Earthquake shocks have been felt at Milan and Bergamo, and Mount Stromboli has been in violent eruption.

The *St. Mark's, Noel Park, Parish Magazine* cites an unnamed Birmingham business man as saying: "On reflection it will be found natural for the business community to afford support (to missions). The circulation of the Scriptures transforms savage tribes into civilized nations, with resulting commercial needs." On which the writer of the article comments: "It is doubtless due to the influence of Christianity that honest trading among the infant nations of Africa and elsewhere has been rendered easy." Well, we have pointed out that the missionary is the agent in advance of the merchant, and we are pleased to see it frankly recognized. As to honest trading, it would be interesting to get the opinion of some intelligent members of these "infant nations" on some of the trading that goes on *here*—particularly on the numerous fortunes made during the War. And a little attention to the plunder of the poor Matabele by the whites, some particulars of which are now being made public before the Privy Council, are also enlightening on the "honest trading" introduced among the "infant nations."

The *Star* asks, "Is the Kaiser mad?" because it is alleged he believes himself to be an envoy of God. Personally, we believe the Kaiser is suffering from religious mania; but the evidence of the *Star* is not conclusive. Look at the clergy in this country who believe themselves to be envoys of God. Look, too, at the people who believe that Great Britain is picked out by God to do this or that. Being an envoy of God—in the case of individuals or nations—is too common a form of stupidity for it to be classed as insanity.

Mr. Hall Caine asks, in the *Sunday Herald*, "Why does God allow the War to go on?" And, after an avalanche of commonplaces, replies: "I do not know; I do not see; only God knows and sees; and before his awful Will I bow and wait." In that case it would have been more sensible to wait in silence. To believe it will be all right when one's reason tells one it is all wrong, is as near the ridiculous as one can get.

"I should have been better pleased if clergymen had been made liable for combatant service," declares Lady Eden. The dear clergy will not like this voice from Eden.

"I would rather live in the next ten years than in any time I have ever read of," says Dr. J. R. Mott, of the North American Young Men's Christian Association. Many thousands of Christian soldiers will echo the sentiment.

A provincial paper asks its readers for suggestions for cutting down the gas-bill. We suggest that the dear clergy be placed on half-pay.

The clergy have rare noses for business in spite of their professions of indifference to mundane affairs. The *Evening Standard* prints a spirited protest against charging for admission to parts of Westminster Abbey, and adds that the clergy have "no shame, no compunction." The remarks would apply with equal force to St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Irish Catholic Bishops would resist Conscription "by all the means that are consonant with the law of God." That is precisely how the Kaiser wages war.

The dear *Daily News* considers that the poet Swinburne was a "violent-mouthed Republican." The poet was not so "violent-mouthed" as some of the Free Church evangelists who are so admired by our contemporary.

The National Free Church Council is arranging for a special united intercession service on Whit-Monday. Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity!

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To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—May 26, Maesteg.

M. R. Hunter.—There is a prepared form of Burial Service, which could be obtained of the N. S. S. Secretary. We believe Mr. F. J. Gould has also prepared forms suitable for other ceremonies.

"Beatrice."—Pleased to hear from you. Will publish as early as possible.

A. E. Maddock.—Received. Thanks.

H. Dawson.—Thanks. Owing to the position of affairs in the printing trade, and over which we have no control, the paper is a few hours later in being published than it used to be. *When* the War ends that delay will be removed.

T. M.—Rather too technical for our columns although highly interesting. The only criticism we care to pass at the moment is that you appear to have overlooked the consideration as that natural selection must be chiefly—if not entirely—operative during the period of procreation.

C. Murray.—Go ahead and write us again when it possible to fix something definite.

H. Motte.—We appreciate your remark that our great fault is that we do not write more. But as we are already at it all day and every day, we do not see our way to remedy it. Glad to know of your interest in the "best of all causes."

D. Keir.—Shall be pleased to see you when you have time to call.

W. H. Hunt.—Mr. Manson's book was published originally at 6s. Subsequently a sixpenny edition was issued. But we cannot say if either are still in print.

R. Mitchell.—Thanks. Shall be able to use one, if not both.

G. E. Fussell.—Your MS. is in type. Pressure on our space has hitherto prevented its appearance.

J. W. White.—Glad to hear there is a resolve to form a new Branch at West Stanley. Let us know if we can be of any assistance?

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 brought his lecturing season to a close with two addresses at Abertillery on Sunday last. The afternoon meeting was a good one, and very animated. In the evening the hall was crowded. A number of friends had come in from surrounding districts, and we were pleased to learn that endeavours are being made to commence work at Pontypool. Next autumn, if not earlier, we hope to have work going on in Aberdare, Pontypool, Pontypridd, and Cardiff. These, in addition to the places now active, will give South Wales a good place in our Movement.

Since last September, Mr. Cohen has spent few week-ends in London, and he will not be sorry for three or four months free from provincial lecturing. Travelling nowadays is costly and uncomfortable, and as provincial lecturing means about three days out of London, this, with running a weekly paper single-handed, looking after business details, attending to correspondence, etc., a promised slackening becomes attractive. The compensation for all the work is that meetings during the winter have been invariably successful. They have been good—sometimes better than good, and all witness to a real revival of interest in Freethought.

We publish this week a new pamphlet by Mr. Cohen, *God and Man: an Essay on Common Sense and Natural Morality*. The pamphlet has been written with an eye to the questions that are under discussion between Freethinkers and Christians, and will, we feel sure, prove useful. The price of the pamphlet is 3d., postage ½d.

There are several other things by Mr. Cohen in the press which we hope to issue shortly. Among others, there are two of a series of four-page pamphlets, which we think will be ready in a few days. They will be sold at as low a price as possible, in order to secure a large circulation.

The *Freethinker* was first issued, as a monthly, in May, 1881, so that we celebrate this month our thirty-seventh anniversary. No other Freethought journal in this country, or, we believe, in Europe, has ever existed for so long a period. And it is pleasing to record that this thirty-seventh anniversary finds the paper in perfect health. In spite of the War, the circulation is better than ever. We believe its influence is increasing, and, thanks to its many friends, there are few papers in the country that have undergone less change during this very trying war period, and we think we may safely say that without the *Freethinker* our Movement would not be to-day where it is. On the death of G. W. Foote, we assured everybody concerned that the *Freethinker* would weather the storm. So far, at least, that assurance has been justified. Many things we should have done have remained undone owing to the War, but these plans are delayed, not abandoned. We are dreaming big dreams, and, with the help of our friends, we hope to see them one day materialize.

We see that a regulation is to be issued forbidding the return of unsold copies of papers. Until that is the case we shall continue to send out the *Freethinker* on the old conditions. When the regulation is issued we shall be compelled to rely upon our readers for all help in improving our circulation. Perhaps it will then be advisable to revise the *Freethinker League* which worked so well in the earlier period of the War. We allowed that to lapse because we were so full of work in other directions, but it was a fruitful plan, and contained great possibilities.

Mrs. E. Palmer will lecture to-day (May 12) for the Southampton Branch of the N. S. S. at the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road, on "The Endowment of Motherhood." The lecture commences at 7 o'clock. We hope there will be a good attendance.

The New York *Truthseeker* reprints from these columns, with suitable acknowledgment, a recent article by Mr. A. B. Moss, in its "Children's Corner." Editor Macdonald has a keen eye for a good thing when he sees it.

All Things to All Men.

How cunningly are Christian teachings planned
By him above,
For if I gain I praise thy bounteous hand,
O God of Love!

And if perchance stands still my natal star,
Or downwards moves,
I recollect how strictly chastened are
Those whom God loves.

And though with God to jest I do not choose
— 'Twere grievous sin,
'Tis surely like the vulgar "Tails, you lose
And heads, I win"!

G. H. Bosworth.

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The N.S.S. Conference.

THE National Secular Society's Annual Conference meets in London on May 19 (Whit-Sunday), and this is practically the last opportunity of calling attention to the fact.

The Conference promises to be well attended, and I personally hope that every Branch of the Society will see that it is represented. Being democratic, in fact, as well as in words, I believe in settling a Society's affairs by an appeal to *all* concerned, and by seeing that all express an opinion on the conduct of affairs.

The published Agenda shows that matters are to be decided which will vitally affect the Society and its work. I refer specially to the motions on re-organization which stand in my name. These have not been drawn up without careful consideration, and I am gratified to know that they have commanded general approval. While this is gratifying, it is not surprising. My twenty-eight years' experience in the N.S.S., as speaker and writer, has given me a wide and intimate knowledge of the opinions of Freethinkers all over the country, and I knew that in setting down those resolutions I was only putting into words what was a general feeling.

The great thing to be done was to give members all over the country as direct a voice as present circumstances permit over the Society's affairs. As will be seen by reference to the Agenda, I propose doing this by asking the Conference to elect an Executive of ten members direct, and, which all business people will agree, is quite large enough for effective work. The present method of an Executive formed of perpetual vice-presidents—is itself a practical negation of democracy—and delegates from Branches means, in practice, delegates from London Branches only. And when, as is actually the case, there may be five or six vice-presidents belonging to one London Branch, with a delegate added, it will be realized that government by Branch delegation becomes pure sham. In such circumstances it is small wonder that provincial Branches have complained for years that the Executive's view of affairs became parochial, that the operations were conducted with too great an eye to London alone, that the provincial Branches lost interest, and that many have died out in consequence.

Direct election will, I feel sure, create a greater sense of responsibility on the one side and increased interest on the other. I do not claim anything new for this. The Secular Society, Limited, Committee is elected by the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting elects the Executive of the Malthusian League, of the Secular Education League, and of the R.P.A. So large an organization as the National Union of Teachers, with its 100,000 members and its control of very large funds, elects its Executive by direct appeal to the members. Many other Societies adopt the same policy. It is the only genuine democratic plan. It will be observed that in my suggestions *all* Branches, London and provincial, are placed upon an equality. Any Branch may nominate one of its members for election on the Executive, and it will be possible to elect any member or members of the old Executive; but when he is elected he will represent the Conference—that is, the whole of the Society whose affairs he is helping to conduct. It need hardly be said that if my proposal is adopted care will be taken by the Conference to elect only such delegates as are certain to attend; there will thus be guaranteed a regular and full attendance at all meetings of the Executive. To prevent misapprehension, I may as well say that, as President, I should abstain from nominating any candidates. The choice should come from the Society itself.

I am aiming not only at making progress, but in seeing that the progress made is conserved. The inadequacy of the old plan is shown by the shrinkage of the Society year after year. The number of Freethinkers was growing, but the N.S.S. was not reaping the fruits of the growth.

Since I threw myself, at the end of 1915, with extra energy into the work of reviving the Movement, I think it may be fairly said considerable progress has been achieved. The work has been re-established in Manchester and Liverpool —where it was in a state of suspended animation; and new Branches have been opened at Nuneaton, Southampton, Portsmouth, Falkirk, Swansea, and Goldthorpe, with two new Branches in London. Application is also being made for new Branches at Coventry and Maesteg (S. Wales); and there are other Branches in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and South Wales in course of formation.

I have only one desire in this matter, and that is to see a Society built up that is worthy of our Cause. I think my long services—freely and ungrudgingly given to the Society—is evidence that I am no self-seeker in any direction. Seeking office or distinction is not in my line. The office of President of the N. S. S. brings me nothing but work and responsibilities. It carries no salary, and I have not charged, nor do I intend to accept, the value of a postage stamp from its funds for any expense which the office involves. But having taken the office of President, I should be unworthy of the post did I not act as I think best for the interests of the Society. It might have been easier to have sat still, said nothing, done nothing, and just let things drift. But that is not my conception of a President's duty, and I have the best reasons for thinking that I have the appreciation of all real friends of the N. S. S. for what I have done, and their confidence and good wishes in what I am now proposing in order to place affairs on a really business-like footing.

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President, N. S. S.*

Materialism.

MATERIALISM is the philosophy which recognizes and insists that, in the light of human experience, all emotions, feelings, and thoughts are nothing more than the products of the functioning of a material organism. It denies that there is any truth in the supposition that human beings possess a soul which is considered to be a spiritual entity, distinct from the body.

As a world-philosophy, it reduces everything to matter in motion, and claims that everything is a product of matter in motion. It recognizes that, so far as science is concerned, matter has always existed, and has always been in motion. Consequently, it refuses to acknowledge any necessity for postulating the existence of a being called "God," in order to account for or interpret the existence of the universe.

To the Materialist there is no need to postulate a creative mind, either external to, or immanent in, the universe, in order to bring about a unification of human knowledge. The unification of knowledge, if it is ever to be accomplished, will have to be brought about by the gathering together of all the available facts of the universe. These facts will have to be honestly acknowledged, and from them we shall have to make our deductions, if knowledge is to be made more and more reliable. That we shall some day fully understand the universe is not a claim put forward by Materialists. Materialism is not a philosophy which professes to explain everything. It is an attempt to describe the various processes which can be observed as taking place in the universe; and it is an endeavour to give accurate expression, so far as possible, to our conception of the relativity of those processes to each other, and more particularly to human life. With regard to the unification of knowledge, Materialists only hope to bring about that unification in the sense of eliminatiug from our ever-increasing stock of knowledge all false theories and all contradictions. Human knowledge will, no doubt, always be incomplete; but, even so, that is no reason why it should not become more unified, or more harmoniously wrought together, so far as it goes. But we must be ever on our guard against filling up the gaps with false theories, even when we find that such theories may be very pleasing.

Modern Materialism is essentially evolutionary. It recognizes that the various entities which we see around us have been formed by the perpetual rearrangements of the elements of Nature, which take place everywhere. There is no such thing as perfect rest, or a perfect static

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state; all rest is relative. Consequently, as all matter, so far as we know, is in a state of perpetual motion, new combinations of the various atoms of matter are bound to take place, and produce entities in unnumbered varieties. Hence, we may conceive of the universe as consisting of matter manifesting itself in its various states of motion, from the motions which take place in a nebula to the movements which are known to occur in the highest forms of life.

The origin of the universe is a question that has vexed the mind of man in almost every age. One theory or another has been put forward in order to explain to us how the universe came into existence. But the Materialist is unable to discover that the universe ever had an origin, so far as matter in motion is concerned. Matter in motion being the fundamental reality of the universe, it is correct to speak of the origin of the various parts of the universe, such as the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, or any particular entity with which we are familiar. But it must be remembered that it is an origin with regard to form, or structure, and not of the matter which manifests itself in certain forms or structures. For instance, the earth, as such, was at one time non-existent, but the matter of which it is composed has always been in existence; consequently, when speaking of the origin of the earth, we should mean the origin of the earth's form, and not the origin of the matter in motion out of which the earth has evolved.

Perhaps we had better take a more simple illustration of how we may speak of the origin of a particular entity, and yet admit that the matter out of which that entity has been formed has always been in existence.

We are justified in speaking of the origin of a table, because we know that men do make tables. But the wood out of which the table has been made existed before the table came into existence. Before being cut, and carved, and put together in the form of a table, the wood was to be seen as planks and logs, of certain shapes and sizes, which had their origin at the saw-mill. Yet these planks and logs previously existed as the trunks and branches of trees; and the trees had their origin, not in newly created matter, but in matter which already existed in the forms of various chemical and physical elements, which combine together in order to produce trees. The elements from which our trees have evolved can be traced to the soil in which the seeds have been nourished; to the rain that has watered the soil; to the atmosphere surrounding the trees; and to the rays of the sun, which have given their light and heat. Thus we are able to strengthen the evidence that matter has always existed, but is ever manifesting itself in new forms, owing to its being in perpetual motion, and we are forced to the conclusion that the idea of a divine origin of the universe is a myth.

So far as we know, every process that has contributed to the evolution of the inorganic parts of the universe has taken place in a purely natural way. But, interesting as a review of the evolution of inorganic processes would be, it is not necessary to enter into such detail for the purpose of the present essay. The anti-Materialist is usually more concerned about the questions of the origin of life and consciousness. He considers that the views which he holds regarding these questions form the bulwarks of his position as taken up in opposition to the Materialist. We must, therefore, discuss the position of the philosophy of Materialism concerning life and consciousness.

From the standpoint of science, there is no strict line of demarcation between the inorganic and organic. Matter in the inorganic state seems to imperceptibly merge into matter in its organic state. The same elements are to be found in inorganic as in organic nature; but, in the latter, certain processes can be observed to take place which cannot be observed in the former. These processes are bound up with the fact that living matter is more highly evolved than non-living matter; and the combinations of the elements are more complex in the former than in the latter. In view of this, and in absence of proof of the special creation of living matter, we are lead as a logical necessity to conclude that it has evolved, by natural processes, out of inorganic matter.

Knowing that microscopic particles of matter are capable of effecting continual recombinations, the difficulty of grasping the idea of the development of the living from the non-living should be greatly minimized.

It must be remembered that the earliest forms of life were not so complex as the highly developed forms of life which we see around us to-day. The simplest living entities would, comparatively speaking, be only a step or two in advance of inorganic matter so far as the combination of their elements is concerned. It is, therefore, a mistake to argue against the idea of the evolution of the organic from the inorganic, as if it implied the immediate development of even a lowly multi-cellular animal from non-living matter. Yet this idea seems to be at the back of many minds.

The formation of life-substance, or protoplasm, was, we are informed by scientists, dependent upon the combination of carbon with such elements as oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and sulphur. All these elements are found in inorganic matter; and, as metabolism, or the rearrangement of the elements of nature, is one of nature's essential processes, it is reasonable to expect that such a combination of these elements, as would produce living matter, should occur. That such elements, as are required to make possible the evolution of life, did happen to come together, at a time when the earth had cooled sufficiently to allow water to form on its surface, is matter of fact. And, the conclusion that this took place, without the influence of a designer operating upon nature, is supported by the fact that no elements, apart from those found in the inorganic world, are to be discovered in living matter. While the various processes—such as response to external stimuli, respiration, digestion, etc.—which occur in living matter, bear the mark, as it were, of having been evolved by a series of improvements, often tediously and painfully brought about, which give no evidence that they are the products of an all-wise being. But, if life started as protoplasm, unconsciously produced by nature, we can to some extent understand the imperfections of organic evolution; as, indeed, they are what might be expected in the circumstances. To assume the existence of a perfect, divine being, as the creator of living beings is to make the problem of the origin of life more difficult of solution; as we have then to reconcile the existence of a perfect being with that of his imperfect creations.

E. Egerton Stafford.

(To be concluded.)

The Blank Wall.

XII.

The complexity of human life, its infinite paradoxes and bewildering inconsistencies, must impede and divert the Rationalist stream of thought and criticism. It is, indeed, debatable whether life is anything more than a deliberately organized evolution of mistakes, errors, and tragedies—domestic, commercial, racial, national, and even international. As Freethinkers, we may be quite certain that there is no "All-powerful," "Almighty God," or "Devil"; that these conceptions are primitive in origin; but, at the same time, we must acknowledge the very real and material existence of

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a universal ignorance which works "evil" miracles of misery, insanity, and stupidity beyond the most extravagant dreams of "Gods" or nightmares of "Devils."

"God" quite obviously does nothing, because there is no such creature. The "Devil" does nothing, because he, too, is a myth. It is Man who is "God"; it is Man who is "Devil." It is man who does a little good when he can if he is so disposed; it is Man who makes manifest the stupidity which devastates Humanity as a whole. We have removed from our brains the primitive offal of anthropomorphic conceptions of "God" and "Devil," but we have to acknowledge the reality of Man; and this is the first positive step towards our hope of Progress; it fixes the focus of sanity upon the central and fundamental fact about human life. It is better to shame a bad man than to "shame the Devil"; it is more beautiful to praise a good man than to praise "God." Religion "passes things on." Religion creates a vacuum in the common sense of man; it throws the onus upon the alleged reality of "something" outside the normal life of man; it befuddles the intellect and drugs the consciousness with illusion. Religion, like all superstitious elements in the primitive mind, side-tracks the seeker after truth; Man is decoyed from the realization that he, and he alone, can alter his life and make it exactly what he desires it to be. Do men want Peace? Do men desire the destruction of brute force and War?....."Pray," says the Church. "God can do all things. God is Almighty." But Man is slowly learning better than this; he is learning that "God" does not exist, and that man is greater and lesser (as he chooses) than "God" or "Devil." This is the death of Religion, and the birth of Light.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

The Sinner.

SHE came into the cafe three days of every week. And always about the same time. Her mien, contrary to that inaction so perceptible in the average cafe patron, was aloof and decisive. With marked persistency she went direct to one table, whenever vacant, not far from where we, a small coterie of business fellows, usually sat.

For almost twelve months her consistent appearance had gone on, until the regularity of her habit gradually evolved a certain pleasure for us. We eagerly anticipated her arrival, and looked forward to her stately deportment as a relief from the daily worry of business exactitudes.

She *was* stately, and superbly reserved. The continuous curves that gave shape to her wonderful form; the delicate lines of her distinctive features; the simple taste and rare quality of her apparel, all went to make up the fine commanding air that coerced a clamorous, yet distant, praise from all. One of the fairest flowers in nature's glorious garden, she was sent to gladden the heart of man.

It was grand how she kept the baseness of men at bay; kept them from wantonly crushing the delicate petals that formed the beauty of her being. We watched, and rejoiced when she cut dead the intended advances of would-be philanderers. And yet how strange! It was a discreet commonplace with us that her association with a certain city merchant could be "explained." In the ordinary course of things this information would have left us unmoved, such affairs were merely items "en passant." But this girl's position seemed anomalous, and it was difficult to reconcile our idealistic appreciation with the somewhat ugly fact. Yet we never dragged her down to vulgar censure. We wanted to think she was different from the coarser vassals of her class. She *was* different. She possessed a dignity that kept her freedom out of the mud-rucks of lust, and we often wondered what casuistry could be at work. But our speculations met a blank wall, so we accepted facts with a gracious leniency.

Our jurisdiction was influenced by the philosopher who, in spite of a strenuous business career, had been able to fortify his intelligence by an extensive field of reading. We reaped the benefit from controversial combats he had with another member of our party—a Churchman.

The girl figured prominently, many times, in these debates. From them, our hereditary ideas of morality slowly became obsolete, and our admiration for the girl rather increased than lessened. For she had a champion in the philosopher. This was why the Churchman called him a Positivist; which, in our limited opinion, seemed an honour to Positivism.

Perhaps we were not competent judges, for we were not initiated in the mysteries of theological paradoxes. But the philosopher's creed appealed to our world-worn experience; an experience untrammelled by the vagaries of artificial premises. To submit ourselves to feminine admonitions, we were certainly "shamefully" materialistic in our conclusions; yet they were healthier, and more natural, than the absolute moralizings of the Churchman. And so the Colossus, Sin, dwarfed before our analysis. The girl was just a child of Nature, and a victim of an emaciated society.

One day a wounded sergeant limped his way into her reserve, and we watched, and wondered. Weeks dragged into months, till at last the sergeant came, shorn of the hospital blue, looking magnificent in a perfect civilian cut. And well it fitted his splendid frame; perhaps just a little spoiled by the familiar limp; and there was a refinement, somehow overlooked before, which glowed from his face.

Who was he? What was he? We were not prompted by petty inquisitiveness; but this man had trespassed upon our preserve, and, with a sense of egotistical proprietory, our mental interrogations demanded satisfactory credentials. That he was respectable in worldly possessions seemed certain, for one of us had seen him drive up in a neat two-seater, a car that had many times of late been seen standing at the cafe door.

But our curiosity was never satisfied, for they both suddenly ceased to keep their *rendezvous*. We did elicit certain information (which was as startling as it was meagre) from the waitress who had generally served them. They had married, and left the town!

And so jurisprudence was overtaxed. The Churchman gasped, pitied the man, and reviled the girl. Poor atom! That she should have dared to make a bid for happiness; dared to stretch forth and pluck the solitary flower by the wayside, to grasp it eagerly, ravenously inhaling its glorious fragrance. It was the one cheering emblem along the barren road—and she stole it. Still sinning? What alchemy is this? Is happiness distilled only in the crucible of prudery?

The philosopher quietly said:—

"Nature, in her wondrous way,
The laws of man derides;
Herself the arbiter of sin,
A sense supreme provides."

The Pantheist!

W.

Correspondence.

WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN ITS PLACE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With your kind permission, I would like to offer a word or two anent your "Views and Opinions" of April 28. At the outset, I beg leave to differ as to "Nothing" being the best answer to the above question. I would prefer to answer the question by submitting that an appreciation of life in accordance with the explanations given by human knowledge rather than dogmatic assertions. In place of Christianity, I would offer a discovery of the world and its wonders. This seems to be rather more than weeding; it is rather, I would say, reconstruction. In "Our Aim" you say: "Of course, if a man believes that you cannot have a sound science, a healthy morality, or a progressive sociology without supernaturalism, he is warranted in asking for something equally effective in its place." Is this not giving your whole case away? Doesn't this apply to Christians generally? You say that the Christian blunders when he asks the Freethinker to account for the existence of evil. You say that is his own concern. In my humble sphere, I am glad when Christians ask me such a question, because it gives me an opportunity to try to disabuse their inherited barbaric conceptions. At the same time, I admit that the question of evil is important. We point to the evil in the world as a disproof of a ruling benevolent intelligence, but we must remember that the meaning of evil is entirely

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different to the Freethinker and the Christian. The Christian accounts for evil by assuming a wilful personality. The Freethought conception is more in accordance with the facts of life; the chief trouble being the want of congruity or agreement among mankind. While Freethinkers do not see in Nature any specially favourably disposed intelligence, neither do they see any specially evilly disposed intelligence apart from this world. In making my little effort, I might say that I have never been satisfied with the answer that Freethinkers in the past have given to this question. The answer is best given in the work of Freethinkers; and in this respect, Mr. Editor, I hold you second to none. Our storehouse is so richly endowed that it is not at all necessary to give such abrupt answers as "Nothing" and "Common sense." I hold this to be the most important question of all. It is a real revolution for anyone to view life without God rather than with God. I have Christian friends with whom I have discussed this question for very many years; and although they may continue in the Christian fold to the end, still I believe they are better humans for our fraternizing. But if they should change their persuasion, I would suggest that they should be helped to feel that the great bosom of Humanity is ever ready to welcome them. If they ask for bread, we should not offer them a stone and say, "Nothing."

J. Fothergill.

[We do not see in Mr. Fothergill's letter any point of vital disagreement. Our whole case was that all that is valuable and makes for good in life is already here, and more or less active, apart from Christianity. Consequently, the removal of Christianity is no more than the dissipation of an illusion.—Editor.]

A WARNING TO FREETHINKERS.

Sir,—May I support your advice, given in the last issue of the *Freethinker*, for Secularists everywhere to take instant action to resist further encroachments upon civil liberties by those who want their religion taught in the public schools at other peoples' expense? They may take my word for it that the danger is real, and that, like the prophet Habbakuk, the present Government is "capable de tout." Any day may give us a rude surprise, and if we are unprepared some secret, wretched compact will be embodied into an "agreed" Bill and rushed through the House of Commons before any action can be taken. The matter is, therefore, urgent; and it should be remembered that when once a measure is on the Statute Book, it is the Devil's own business to get it taken off again. Once let the ecclesiastics gain the strategic initiative and dig themselves in and the difficulty of dislodging them will be increased ten-fold.

Secular Education will not be won without an organized fight for it, and every Secularist should feel it a matter of personal honour to take his part in the struggle. How can he do this? By speeches, by papers before literary and debating societies, by constant correspondence in the newspapers, by organizing special meetings in its support, and perhaps, best of all, by becoming a member of the Secular Education League, which badly needs new friends at the present time. Its membership should be doubled within the next few months, and I hope that hundreds of Freethinkers will apply for membership without delay. I shall be glad to send information to anyone desiring it.

H. Snell.

19 Buckingham Street, W.C. 2.

Sir,—Thanks for last week's article on the new Education Bill. Acting upon your suggestion, I have posted a copy to the M.P. for North Salford, and the object of this letter is to appeal to all friends of the *Freethinker* to do the same to their Parliamentary representative. An organized action of this kind will have far-reaching effect, but it should be done at once. I will also see that a resolution in support of the Secular Solution is sent to the Education Minister from our Branch without delay.

H. Black, Hon. Sec. Manchester Branch.

Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.

—*Pope.*

Obituary.

North and West London Freethinkers will hear with much regret of the death, on April 26, of Mrs. Theresa Cottrell, the wife of Mr. E. Cottrell, at the age of sixty-five. Mr. and Mrs. Cottrell have both been intimately associated with our Society for over forty years, and for more than half this period were regular attendants at all Freethought meetings, and were among the founders of the old Paddington Branch. Mrs. Cottrell was a most zealous supporter of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and a reader of the *Freethinker* from its inception. She was buried at East Finchley on May 1, and a Secular Service was held. We sympathize deeply with Mr. Cottrell in his sad bereavement.—E. M. Vance.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Democracy and Foreign Affairs."

Outdoor.

Battersea Branch N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, G. Rule, A Lecture.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, E. Burke, A Lecture.

Kingsland Branch N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley Road): 11.30, Mr. F. Shaller, "Why I am a Secularist."

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, H. V. Storey, A Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 3.15, K. B. Kough, A Lecture.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., A Lecture; Clapham Common, 6.30, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., A Lecture.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Storey, A Lecture.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Dales, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, "Some Remarks Concerning Hell."

Southampton Branch N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): 7, Mrs. E. Palmer, "The Endowment of Motherhood."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. First Sunday Ramble.—Meet Chorltum-cum-Hardy Tram Terminus 10.30; Jackson's Boat 11.30. Will members coming please send card to Secretary, or leave their name at 68 Tib Street, Manchester, not later than Saturday morning.

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OF THE
National Secular Society
ON
WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1918.

Chairman - - CHAPMAN COHEN.

SPEAKERS:

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Deity and Design.—The Editor	277
A Popular Delusion.—J. T. Lloyd	278
What a Deaf Girl Did.—Mimnermus	279
Materialism.—E. Egerton Stafford	280
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	284
At the Vicarage.—Beatrice	285
Christian Modes and Morals.—Ignotus	286
What is Nature?—The Owl	286

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Deity and Design.

Last week we dealt with the more metaphysical aspects of the design argument. This week we purpose dealing with the more popular form—the one that is associated with the name of Paley, chiefly on account of his having popularized an argument that belonged to his predecessors. Paley's statement has all the merit of simplicity. We see objects which we know proceed from the work of man. We infer a maker from the thing made. In nature we see objects presenting similar marks of design or adaptation. And, again, we are equally warranted in arguing back from the thing made to the maker. So many parts are brought together in the case of a humanly produced object that it would be folly to ascribe such a combination to chance. Must it not be equal folly to ascribe to chance the bringing together all the parts that go to make up an animal or an organism? That is the argument reduced to its simplest terms, and, under one form or another, it is still the most widely used of all theistic defences.

* * *

A False Analogy.

The weaknesses of this are manifest and manifold, and these have been often pointed out, although the fundamental flaw appears to have generally escaped notice. It is not a true analogy at all. The inference that a watch or a machine is made is not based upon an examination of the parts. It is based upon previous knowledge that such things are made. Without that knowledge a watch would carry no more marks of design than a caterpillar. The steps are from the known maker to the known manufactured article, and then from a known-made article back to an assumed maker. In the case of the world or an animal the only likeness between that and the machine is that both exist. But we have no previous knowledge of world-makers upon which to build. Or it is pointed out by Mill that this does not give a creator of the universe, only a moulder of the material. That is true, but the believer might reply, all I require at present is an intelligence that creates animal forms and cosmical structures. We can settle the larger question of creation later. As Freethinkers have pointed out that the contrivances for evil in the world are at least as elaborate as those for good, and while both may show wisdom they cannot both show goodness. Or, again, if animals are designed to live, their imperfections are so many evidences against even the wisdom of their alleged maker. And to all of this the Theist might reply: "Granted, I am not arguing, at present for a wise or a good creator. I am only arguing for the existence of a God. And for that purpose a God who is not wholly good, or not wholly wise, or not wholly powerful, will serve. My case is simply that a God exists. Yours is, there is no evidence for any such existence. It is enough for me to establish his existence."

* * *

A Fatal Flaw.

The fundamental flaw in the design argument goes deeper than this attack and defence. Its fault is not that it is inconclusive, or that it does not prove enough, or that the evidence is weak, the real fault is that it is absolutely irrelevant to the question at issue. The argument has no bearing on the issue, the evidence has no relation to the case. To prove this let us give the Theist all for which he asks, remembering that his task is to prove that this world is the product of design. Take any animal structure: How does he know God designed *that?* "Oh," he replies, "look at the way in which the parts are brought together." But, admitting that the parts have really been brought together by someone, still, how does he know the product was designed? Let us illustrate. We remember once trying to make a pudding. All the parts of that pudding were brought together by us. There was no doubt of that. No one else had a hand in it. So an observer might have argued that the pudding was the result of design. But it really wasn't. It was altogether different from the pudding we designed. The pudding we designed was a gastronomic joy. It was all that a pudding should be. The pudding that resulted from our handiwork was in no way the pudding we designed. It was an entirely different thing. It came through our activity, but it was not the one we designed. Now, granting a God who stands to the world in the same relation as we did to the pudding, how can anyone tell that, although this world may have been made, this was the world designed? He simply cannot do it. There might be a God who manipulates the material of the universe; the world as it is might be the consequence of his manipulation; and yet the world might be an altogether different thing to the one designed.

* * *

What is Design?

Design, in fact, is not a physical thing at all, and you cannot, by examining physical processes and results, reach design. You cannot start with a material fact and reach intention. You must begin with intention, and end with a comparison of it and the physical fact. Things may be just the same whether there is design or not. If an enemy aeroplane drops a bomb on our house, we cannot logically say that this was the result of a designed act because it was the result of human agency. The airman may have designed to hit St. Paul's or Woolwich Arsenal. The bomb may have broken loose, and dropped sooner than it

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was intended to drop. But whether it was dropped by accident, or deliberately aimed at our house and reached its mark, or was intended for the Arsenal and reached us through bad marksmanship, the relation between the means—the bomb—and the end—the explosion—is the same. And we cannot, by examining the material chain of causes, reach design. To do this, we must compare the intention in the mind of the airman with the actual result. If the two agree, there is design; if not, design is absent. But the psychic fact must be first. You may start with mind as a datum; you cannot by any possibility reach it as a logical inference.

* * *

The Impossibility of Proof.

To warrant a logical belief in design in Nature, three things are necessary. First, one must assume that a God exists. Second, it must be granted that one is acquainted with the intention in the mind of the Deity before creating. Finally, one must be able to compare the intention with the result, and demonstrate their agreement. But the impossibility of knowing the first two things is patent. And without them the third is of no value whatever. The fundamental fault of the Design Argument, therefore, is, as we have said, not its weakness, but its irrelevancy. No amount of examination of Nature can lead back to design. All the volumes that have been written, and all the sermons that have been preached, depicting the varied and cunning structures of Nature, are so much waste of paper and breath. They are no more than dust thrown in the eyes of people. They prove nothing, and can prove nothing. They assume at the beginning all they require at the end. Their God is not something reached by way of inference; it is something assumed at the very outset. And its root is not in civilized reason at all. God, in civilized society, is a mere hereditary appanage. It was born, not of the reason of civilized man, but of the fears and guesses of the savage. To the sane intelligence, the existence of God is not even a question for discussion. There is only a discussion of the history of the belief, and in that is found its strongest and clearest condemnation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Popular Delusion.

THE more we study the methods pursued by the pulpit the more evident it becomes that they are at once irresponsible and dishonest, and that their dishonesty is the natural outcome of their irresponsibleness. In the overwhelming majority of cases the pulpit is either a coward's castle, or a safety valve for fools. A tradition still survives that the preacher is Christ's ambassador, entrusted with a message from another world with which he dare not tamper; his one business being to deliver it in the exact form in which he receives it from his Master. But in as much as his Master is both invisible and silent, and never interferes in any way, he naturally grows careless, and falls into the habit of attributing to his Lord opinions and prejudices which are exclusively his own. In the prayer before the sermon he implores God to supply him with a special message, or to speak himself to the hearts and consciences of the people, well knowing that the discourse about to be delivered is in his pocket, fully written out, or carefully committed to memory, and that in answer to his prayer not a single syllable will be altered or suppressed. Generally speaking, prayer is an insincere, hypocritical exercise, and the same is essentially true of preaching. One of Browning's characters pities a certain preacher's "immense stupidity"; but, as a rule, much more noticeable than the stupidity is the criminal play-acting, the wicked pretending to speak in the name and by the authority of an absent Deity who never charges the speaker with his misrepresentation. Unfortunately, the hearers continue, to some extent, to take the preacher at his own valuation long after he himself has realized his true position; and as he is never formally called to account, either by the Lord or by the Lord's people, he waxes bolder and bolder, and utilizes the pulpit entirely for the expression of his own idiosyncrasies, eccentricities of temperament, and narrowness as well as shallowness of intellectual view. His theology becomes an endless repetition of meaningless shibboleths, and his messages degenerate into so many self-advertisements. Consequently, he naturally loses all real sense of responsibility, and utters only what he believes will be most acceptable to his audience, or least costly to himself. The other Sunday morning, in a provincial town less than two hundred miles from London, a preacher, occupying for the day the pulpit of a Congregational Tabernacle, took for his text Matthew xvi. 24: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The sermon began with the lying assertion that Jesus was the most attractive and popular personality of his own day. Even assuming the historicity of the Gospels the popularity of Jesus was extremely limited, confined to a few localities in an out-of-the-way part of the country, and lasting only for a short time. The tide soon turned against him, and his brief public career ended in humiliating disaster. It is only fair to add that the preacher admitted his ultimate unpopularity, or that he repelled as well as attracted people; but the repulsion was explained as the natural reward of his indomitable fidelity to truth.

But the preacher, undeterred by stubborn facts, declared that Jesus has proved the most attractive personality of the ages, neither Confucius nor the Buddha being in the running at all. Amazing is the audacity of a man who can so utterly ignore the facts as to indulge in such a false declaration without a blush. The people who heard and seemed to enjoy the lie belonged almost exclusively to the so-called middle class, the workers being conspicuous only by their absence, although the streets were crowded while the service was going on. Very probably the statement was one the congregation had heard so often that they took its truth for granted. It was simply one of a host of pulpit platitudes which tickled their vanity and made no demand whatever upon their thinking faculties. The preacher was eminently Scriptural throughout, his discourse from beginning to end bristling with quotations from the Bible; but he was also wholly destitute of the slightest tinge of originality in either exegis or application. Christianity is defined by the Bishop of Oxford as "a certain kind of personal belief and a certain kind of personal life," but in the sermon under consideration it was reduced to mere imitation of the life of Jesus. To deny self signifies to root it clean out of our nature; to take up the Cross is to face suffering and sorrow cheerfully, and to follow Christ, to shirk no duty, however disagreeable, and welcome death itself in the service of the truth. This, we repeat, was loyalty to the written word, but it lacked the feeblest grip on reality. It was Christianity without Christ, or the old Paganism draped with Christian phraseology. With certain words left out, the discourse might have been given in a Confucian or Buddhist temple. It was Christianity *minus* its fundamental doctrines that the preacher presented to us. Curiously enough, in the evening of the same day we attended a Unitarian place of worship and listened to practically the same views, but presented with such a vast and vital difference. The Jesus of the morning address rested upon a supernatural basis, while the

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Jesus of the evening discourse was a human teacher come from God, whose words should be done by all his professing followers. In the background of the mind each of those two preachers entertained a radically different conception of Christianity from that held by the other. And yet both preached substantially the same Gospel, and both equally had the lie direct given them by the facts of life.

To the Unitarian, the orthodox Church was guilty of betraying the Christian religion with a kiss. During the dark period of the regnancy of ecclesiasticism, Christianity was a dead letter; the beautiful and deeply true sayings of Jesus were as totally neglected as if they had never been spoken. Creed and ritual were treated with supreme respect, while conduct, which Matthew Arnold regarded as three-fourths of life, received but slight attention. And yet, the preacher assured us, the humble-minded, sweet-tempered, beautifully spirited teacher of Nazareth is destined to win the world's heart and bring all life into loving subjection to himself. But here again we are face to face with the irresponsible extravagance of the Christian pulpit. The supernatural Jesus is much more popular even to-day than the merely human one. The Congregational minister faced a congregation that more than half filled a moderately large church, while the Unitarian's audience numbered less than twenty. It is a vain delusion to speak of the popularity of any of the hundred different versions of the Gospel Jesus now extant. Superstition dies hard, but its death-knell has sounded and its grave is already dug. The day of Jesus is past, and Man's day is dawning. Even God himself is almost gone. As Swinburne says:—

> Thou art judged, O Judge, and the sentence is gone forth against thee, O God.
> Thy slave that slept is awake; thy slave but slept for a span;
> Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee, who made thee lord over man.
> For his face is set to the East, his feet on the past and its dead.

The very divines are to-day rapidly manufacturing Atheists.

J. T. Lloyd.

What a Deaf Girl Did.

> Hail to the steadfast soul,
> Which, unflinching and keen,
> Wrought to erase from its depth
> Mist, and illusion, and fear!
> Hail to the spirit which dared
> Trust its own thoughts, before yet
> Echoed her back by the crowd!
> Hail to the courage which gave
> Voice to its creed, ere the creed
> Won consecration from Time.
>
> —*Matthew Arnold, "Lines on Harriet Martineau."*

The life of Harriet Martineau is the simple record of a quiet and eminently useful existence devoted to the service of her fellows. It will be of interest to those who never read the literary works of this great and noble woman. So far back as 1832 Lucy Aikin wrote to Dr. Channing: "You must know that a great, new light has risen among Englishwomen." Lord Brougham, a still better authority, remarked to a friend about the same time: "There is at Norwich a deaf girl, who is doing more good than any man in the country."

It was in that quiet cathedral city that Harriet Martineau was born. She has given us a picture of life in the town; of its clerical exclusiveness and intellectual stagnation, only slightly modified by the social gatherings of a few cultured families, and by an infusion of French blood, the result of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Martineaus themselves were among the "aliens" whom that intolerant measure drove to our then hospitable shores. At Norwich they had flourished for about a century, part of the family devoting itself to silk-weaving, while others were in the medical profession. Harriet's father died young, leaving a family of eight children, of whom Harriet and her brother James, the distinguished theologian, are both famous.

Harriet was barely of age when she published her first book, *Devotional Exercises for Young Persons*, a modest religious publication of the Unitarian School, in which she had been brought up. It is a work of very little consequence, but it was the harbinger of a splendid series of productions which were destined to raise her to the pinnacle of fame and influence.

Her mind ripened rapidly, and there was soon a marked improvement in her choice of subjects. Works of fiction, travel, folk-lore, biography, and sociology, followed in rapid succession. Her fertile and versatile pen even attempted a series of stories illustrating the working of the principles of Political Economy, which had been laid down in an abstract manner by Adam Smith, Bentham, and Romilly. These stories had a wide circulation, and were translated into several Continental languages. She found time for travel, visiting the United States, and meeting with a most cordial reception. On her return to this country, she associated herself with Charles Knight, the famous publisher, and contributed a number of useful books to the popular series which earned for him a well-deserved and enduring reputation.

With the object of lightening her literary labours by variety, she next employed her busy pen on a series of tales for children, of which *The Settlers at Home* and *Feats on the Fiord* are still read. At the same time she produced two novels of a very marked and distinguished character, called *Deerbrook* and *The Hour and the Man*, the latter dealing with the unhappy Toussant L'Ouverture and the Haytian Rebellion. This latter work passed through many editions, and remains, perhaps, her most popular work.

About this time her health failed, and Lord Melbourne pressed upon her acceptance a Government pension, but she was too high-minded and conscientious to accept it. In declining this pension, she pointed out that she could not share in the proceeds of a system of taxation which she had criticized adversely. Her illness lasted several years; but she, characteristically, turned her misfortune to account by writing *Life in a Sick Room*, a work which alike proves her rare courage and serenity under the iron hand of affliction. Soon after her restoration to health, she varied the monotony of a laborious life by a visit to the Orient, and recorded her impressions in *Eastern Life*, a work which is still full of interest, for in it she declared her Freethought opinions.

During all these years her mind had been irresistibly growing, and the result of her mature thought was embodied in *Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development*, written conjointly with Henry George Atkinson, who was afterwards a frequent contributor to the *National Reformer* and other Secular journals. This volume revealed to all the world that Harriet Martineau was an Atheist. Nor was this her most notable contribution to Freethought literature, for three years later she introduced to the English-speaking world a version of Auguste Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, a work destined to have an enormous effect on contemporary thought. While thus employed, she yet found time to write her *History of England During the Thirty Years' Peace*, which is characterized by its extreme clarity and fine impartiality, and is, perhaps, the finest historical work written by a woman in our language.

From this time it was mainly as a leader-writer in the *Daily News* and as a contributor to *Once a Week* that her

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literary ability manifested itself. To the last, in spite of the drawback of bad health, she took the greatest interest in every movement for the bettering of humanity. She lived through a long, happy, useful, irreproachable life, and sank, calmly, full of years, into the grave, regretted and esteemed by all.

Because Harriet Martineau taught the vital truths of Liberty and Fraternity, of good deeds to others, of kindly tolerance, she is worthy of warm and genuine approval. Popularity, applause, and friends were rightly hers. Who knows, when the final result is weighed, who will have done the most good in the world—the artist who adds masterpieces to our literature, or the warm-hearted woman who does her best to alleviate "the weariness, the fever, and the fret" of life? If Freethinkers, still true to the long line of their illustrious dead, keep her memory green, holding her, as she was, the embodiment of true womanhood, then better than in effigy or epitaph will her life be written and her tomb be built in the hearts of her fellow-soldiers in the Army of Human Liberation.

MIMNERMUS.

Materialism.

II.

(Continued from p. 273.)

AFTER protoplasm, or the fundamental life-substance, had made its appearance on the earth, there was evolved the cell from which all living beings, that develop in the ordinary way, take their start. The development of this cell-unit was secondary. That is, it was preceded by the formation of un-nucleated, and almost structureless, living matter. The cell-unit is of definite structure, and has a nucleus. It has, therefore, quite a history behind it, which precludes the idea that even so small a form of living matter was specially created.

Here it is not possible to enter into the details of the evolution of sex, or discuss important subjects relating to the biological question of reproduction. Suffice it to say that man does not form an exception to the fact that all higher animals develop from a single cell which is brought into being by the coalescence of a male and a female cell.

From the single cell man evolves, stage by stage, in the same way in which the dog and the horse evolves; and at no time in his development does he show any signs of being under the especial care of a divine creator. Just as in the dog and the horse, cell is added to cell, until the whole body becomes a vast cell state, so it is in man. The various organs of the body are formed by a natural process of evolution; and, as occasion demands, they begin to function, unless from some cause or other the new being is defective. From beginning to end, so far as the development of the bodily structure is concerned, the whole process is a materialistic one. Yet the theologically minded have informed us that man has been made in the image of a divine being, in the sense that he is a spiritual soul, with a specially created body in which he dwells.

We must now deal with the materialistic evolution of the psychic life of man. And, in doing so, we shall find that there is no evidence for the theory that man's consciousness, or his mind, is of divine origin.

The pyschic life of man includes the whole of the activity of the nervous system and the brain, whether that activity be conscious or unconscious. Reflex actions, and automatic acts are as much part of our psychic life as mind, or consciousness, is. And every process which takes place in man's psychic life is a manifestation of matter in motion.

Consciousness, which I take to be the same as mind, is a mode of motion that is quite natural to the delicate and highly sensitive matter of which the brain is composed. The purely natural development of mind-life can be traced, from the unconscious sensitivity of the lower forms of animal life, to the brain of the higher animals, including man. Not only so; we can observe it in the evolution of the child into the adult.

The physical basis of mental life has been termed psychoplasm. It consists of protoplasm, which is capable of psychic activity. In the earliest forms of animal life practically the whole of the protoplasm reacts, in an indiscriminate manner, when under the influence of stimuli from without. That is, no specific sense-organs have been developed. Later on, the formation of rather vague sense-organs, which are considered to be the forerunners of the nerves of touch and sight, takes place. Then, in still higher forms of animals, specific organs of sense appear. They are the chemical instruments of smell and taste; and, also, the physical organs of touch, temperament, hearing, and sight. This is followed by another stage in the evolution of the psychic life of animals, in which an approach to consciousness is made. The nervous system becomes more centralized, and impressions made upon the sense-organs by the outside world are, to some extent, unconsciously associated.

Lastly, we have the highest stage of development, in which we find the psychic function of conscious perception, as in the higher vertebrates and in man.

For a fuller statement of the gradual development of consciousness, from the sensitiveness of the protoplasm of the lowest animals, I refer to Haeckel's chapter on "Psychic Gradations," in the *Riddle of the Universe*. To a large extent I have followed that chapter in making my brief statement of psychic evolution.

It must be remembered that the evolution of psychic life has been very slow, and that a long series of minute developments forms the chain of evolution, by which the simple response to stimuli in the lowest animals is linked to the consciousness of the external world, which manifests itself in the brain of man. Then the fact that the development of mind-life is dependent upon the evolution of psychoplasm into nerve-system and brain will be more easily grasped.

I shall not attempt to give a detailed description of the brain, but will content myself with stating one or two facts in connection with it.

The psychic life of man, both conscious and unconscious, is dependent upon a nervous system, which makes its ramifications into various parts of the body; and upon the groups of nerve-centres situated in the spinal cord and the brain. The nerves consist of bundles of fine white fibres, and are divided into two important classes. We have the sensory nerves, which are subject to nervous action on their end-organs being stimulated. Their end-organs are attached to the skin, and the membrane of the stomach, etc., while the other ends of the sensory nerves are connected with the nerve-centres of the spinal cord and the brain. The sensory nerves are the in-going nerves, as they transmit to the brain and spinal cord impressions made upon their end-organs by the outer world.

Then we have the motor nerves, which are stimulated to nervous action from the nerve-centres. These nerves are, at their outer terminations, mainly attached to the muscles. They are the out-going nerves, and may be set in motion as the result of thought or nerve reflex action. The nerve-centres, both in the spinal cord and the brain, consist of nerve-cells formed of a greyish kind of matter.

In the spinal cord the grey nerve-cells are to be found in the centre, and the white nerve-fibres on the exterior.

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On the other hand, the grey nerve-cells of the brain are on the outer side, while the white nerve-fibres spread themselves inside.

E. Egerton Stafford.

(*To be concluded.*)

Acid Drops.

If only the Government would rise to a plain statement, we should dearly like to know who was responsible for the exemption of the clergy from the Military Service Act. Nonconformists avow their indignation at being excluded; so do the Anglicans. And *if* we credit these protests, it seems that the Government alone was responsible. First it put the clergy in, and then it took the clergy out. And *if* we believe the protests of the clergy to be genuine, the Government was acting "on its own." Can it be that it thought the "spiritual" value of the clergy as an aid to winning the War too great to be lost? Looking at the Government, one would hardly think so. And so the matter stands. Everyone from eighteen to fifty-one is in the Army, except the women (who may yet be conscripted), the physically defective, and the clergy.

The Chief Rabbi has followed the Christian Bishops in declaring that the Jewish clergy are anxious to join the Army, and had no wish to be exempt from the operations of the Military Service Act. We quite believe that they are just as anxious as are the Christian clergy to join the Army. But if they are so desirous of joining, why the deuce don't they do so? The Act doesn't force them to stay at home. It only declines to force them to go.

A humorous incident took place at the Baptist Union meeting. An address was given by an Army Chaplain on the relations of the Baptist Church to the soldiers. At the conclusion, the President announced a hymn, "Souls of men! Why will ye scatter like a crowd of frightened sheep?"

"The ordinary clergy," says an evening paper, "have, on the whole, played their part as Christian ministers and as English patriots." Indeed! "On the whole" the clergy have stayed at home, and left the defence of the nation to other men.

The members of the Stratford-on-Avon Shakespeare Club attended church on April 28 as part of the annual observance. Apparently, the pious members of the Club do not realize that the poet himself did not often trouble the pew-openers.

Since the famous proclamation of the three tailors of Tooley Street, beginning, "We, the people of London," there has been nothing to compare with "a message from the Christian people of Great Britain to the Christian people of Russia," published in the English press. This document is signed by fifty-two persons who presume to speak for the millions of British people who profess and call themselves Christian. Among the signatories are three members of Parliament, two directors of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, one lady inspector of factories, a cocoa manufacturer, and a real bishop. The message has, we are assured, been "cabled to Russia to be read in the Churches." We wonder what the authorities of the Greek Church will think of this scratch-team of fancy religionists? Perhaps it will be like the cocoa-manufacturer's boast, "Grateful and comforting."

"A Man of Kent," in the *British Weekly* for May 2, says that George Meredith "must have been in a gloomy humour" when he remarked, during an interview with Desmond McCarthy: "Nature cares not a pin for the individual. I am content to be shovelled into the ditch." But "A Man of Kent," who is no other than Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, is certainly wrong. Nature's persistent indifference to the individual was a cardinal article in Meredith's creed, and in both prose and poetry his treatment of it is characterized by anything but "a gloomy humour." Christianity bestows its supreme care upon the individual, and as an inevitable result it has been guilty of gross neglect towards society. Meredith, on the contrary, loved the race, and insisted upon the service of it as our chief duty. Individuals come and go without ceasing, but the race endures through all generations.

Newspaper editors often have to sit on the fence, but it is not often they do it so openly as the editor of the *Times*, who said in one issue: "We have made no attempt as yet to assess the direct responsibility of the Vatican for the action of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ireland," and a few days later stated: "The Vatican has not inspired the action of the Roman Church in Ireland."

An editor, trying to explain the Man-Power Bill, pointed out that "men in B2 are still in Grade 3." It is almost as puzzling as the tangle of the Trinity.

We are sorry to learn that the Rev. Rhondda Williams, of Brighton, has lost a gallant son in the War; but it was scarcely playing the game to exploit the sad event to serve a religious purpose, as the reverend gentleman is reported to have done. "He confessed that if he had been an Atheist the experiences of the past four weeks would have been enough to convert him." Not being an Atheist, it is sheer nonsense of Mr. Williams's even to pretend to know what effect such a bereavement would have had upon him had he been one. Atheists have lost sons in this War, and they are Atheists still, the mournful experience through which they have passed having only confirmed them in their Atheism.

There is to be erected a huge War museum which is to contain relics of "the Great War." We would suggest the following as worthy of a place: (1) Mr. Bottomley's Virgin of Albert, which was held up by the interposition of God—until the Germans cut the fastenings with which the British engineers had secured it; (2) Some feathers from the wings of the angels that saved our Army at Mons; (3) the Kaiser ordering his Army to pray to God for victory; (4) King George ordering the nation ditto; (5) plaister group of the Bishop of London on his visit to the Front surrounded by hordes of British soldiers begging him to send out more chaplains; (6) group representing the indignation of the clergy on being left out of the Military Service Acts; (7) statue of the Bishop of London uttering his famous "Thank God for the Zeppelins!"; (8) group representing Father Bernard Vaughan discussing with Jesus Christ the ethics of non-resistance; (9) Bible which saved a soldier's life by intercepting a bullet; (10) pack of playing-cards which did the same; (11) expression on the face of a soldier who, on opening a parcel from home, found it to contain nothing but a Bible and a number of religious tracts.

Connecticut recently repealed her old "blue sky laws" and for the first time in 300 years milkmen, druggists, ice cream stores, and similar mercantile establishments did a flourishing business on Sunday. It argues unusual endurance for a people to have stood such ridiculous laws for so long. Perhaps the change is part of the religious revival due to the War.

A newspaper paragraph states that the Bishop of Norwich has placed his palace and grounds at the disposal of the Red Cross Society. The Founder of the Christian religion was not so fortunate; he had no palaces and servants.

A "Rural Dean," writing in the *Church Times*, sharply criticizes the loose talk about the revival of religion at the Front. He says that "if there is any sort of revival of religion in the trenches, we find practically no trace of it among the men to whom it is our privilege to minister at home." Of course, the reason is that it exists neither at home nor abroad. Indeed, the fact that parsons write and speak as they do about the revival of religion at the Front makes one wonder at the stupidity of their audiences. For everyone

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knows the soldiers, more or less. We knew them before they went out; we hear from them while they are out; and we meet them when they come home. How much religion do we hear or see? And if we can see this kind of bare-faced lie planted on the people, need we wonder that the greater lie of Christianity was forced on the world at a less critical period than ours?

Commenting on May 5 on one of our "Acid Drops," Mr. J. McKenna writes dissenting from the conclusion that the Irish Question is a religious question. He says:—

> I contend, and have always contended, that religion has absolutely nothing to do with the Irish Question. But it has been exploited to side-track what is essentially the Irish Question which is, was, and will be. Robbery, yes, sir, had the Irish been Hindoos, Agnostics, or anything else, you would have the Irish Question as you have the Indian Question. Irishmen are beginning to understand a foreign Government dominating politically and a foreign Church spiritually, and sooner or later they will shake themselves free from both and settle the Irish Question themselves.

We do not think it can be gathered from the paragraph in question that there is nothing but religion in the Irish Question. There are, of course, other factors involved. But we do not think it can be doubted that the two religions in Ireland—one identified with English rule and the other with Irish national aspirations is *the* factor that makes settlement so difficult. Without this the situation would present only such difficulties as have been or are being overcome elsewhere.

Commercialism and Christianity often run in double harness. At the Sunday-school Union's Book Department, Ludgate Hill, London, the centre of one of the large windows is taken up with a display of Jerome K. Jerome's book, *Three Men in a Boat*. One would have imagined that a Sunday-school Union would be more concerned with eight persons in the ark.

The Church militant, after four years of War, is at length waking up. Here are some headlines from a newspaper: "Dean Inge Attacks Labour Party"; "Bishop Attacks Bishop." The clergy are leaving their vicarage entrenchments at last.

A half-column announcement in the press is headed "Y.M.C.A. Needs Money." We never remember the time when these young Christians were not in a state of impecuniosity.

Speaking at the Lower House of Convocation, Dean Inge said that men had no right to mix up politics and Christianity. Yet the dear bishops do "mix up politics and Christianity" in the House of Lords, as Democrats have real reasons for remembering.

The China Inland Mission acknowledges the receipt of over £115,000 this year, being an increase of £20,000. The *Annual* in answering the question: "Why has God given the mission this increase?" replies: "it is because he knew how serious the loss by exchange would be." Now, that really is considerate. And the picture of God Almighty studying current tables of exchange in order to see that the China Inland Mission doesn't lose anything is quite fascinating. And we are quite sure that when the Chinese look at the present state of Europe they will quite appreciate God's desire to make them more like unto us.

A new work of reference is being advertised in the daily press as "the greatest book in the world." Won't the dear clergy be pleased?

The clergy are still using the fiction of the angels at Mons. At the Central Hall, Westminster, a Wesleyan minister expressed belief that the enemy was checked in a supernatural way at Mons, and prayed for the intervention of more angel hosts to-day.

Sir J. J. Thomson's Education Committee has recommended that natural science should be included in the general course of education of all children. If this course is adopted the dear clergy will not find the children so gullible concerning the fairy tales of the Bible.

The London City Mission speaks very dolefully of the outlook in the Metropolis. In its Annual Report the public is told, concerning "unbelief," that "never has the enemy been so aggressive, so seemingly powerful, as to-day," and no "peace offensive," to use the graceful language of Lord Robert Cecil, is likely to be made. Again: "The working classes are largely outside the reach of normal Christianity, and the clergy are handicapped in dealing with them." So much for the religious revival in London. And we wonder what the Bishop of London, with his fantastical yarns about religion in East London, thinks of the above?

Dr. Henson, Bishop of Hereford, wants to get rid of the "insensate folly of denominational divisions" in Christendom. He has our sympathy, but he has his work cut out to reconcile Christadelphians, Unitarians, Swedenborgians, and other fancy religionists, with the Government Church.

The Rev. S. M. Watts, the new superintendent at Whitefield's Tabernacle, says that present-day Christians have a "delicate spiritual digestion." This looks as if he had found out that they cannot swallow the story of "Jonah and the Whale."

The Rev. William Henry Robert, of Philadelphia, says there never was a time in the history of the world when more faith in God was needed than right now. And there never was a time when so many people were seeing what a hollow fraud faith in God is.

Following the "toning down" of the more barbaric expressions in the Psalms, the Lower House of Convocation has been engaged in revising the New Testament. The clergy have been searching for a substitute for the word "Damnation," and have decided to use the word "Judgment." Presumably, Hell will still remain at the usual temperature.

Three hundred people, mostly women, took part in a procession from Newgate to Tyburn in memory of the martyrs of Tyburn. Why did they dissemble their love for the martyrs of Smithfield?

Some of the newspaper editors are waking up to the fact that the Irish question is mainly a religious one. The *Evening Standard* deplores the attempt of the Catholic clergy "to restore the theological temperature of the days of Titus Oates." If not wisely handled, the political situation will be raised to the temperature of the place so often mentioned in sermons.

The *Daily News* recently printed a bright description of some Yellow Press publications as "the ill-looking Sunday papers, with pictures of murderers and people who are still alive because they took the right pills."

At the Royal Academy Exhibition a sensational picture depicts a ballet-girl in her war-paint, prone on the ground and clutching at the feet of Christ. It would serve as an excellent advertisement of the Church and Stage Guild.

In a leading article, the *Evening Standard* (London) states that "The Prussian system is simply the negation of God." How is it that the German soldiers bear the words "God with us" on their uniforms?

Of a woman who was sentenced to six months' hard labour at Sheffield for false pretences, it was stated that she had belonged at different times to every religious sect in Sheffield, and had exploited each one in turn. Evidently, she knew where to look for credulous folk.

Private Charles Ernest Elmes, A.S.C., has been committed for trial for marrying three wives. His Old Testament ideals of marriage are not appreciated in a Christian country.

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To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—May 26, Maesteg.

T. C. Riglin.—Mr. Cohen has written you. Nothing more is needed to withdraw your child from religious instruction in any school receiving a Government grant than a simple intimation to the effect that such is your desire. No explanation or reasons for the request need be given.

S. Hall.—Sorry we can't explain why God doesn't stop the War. We suggest an application to the local parson, whoever he may be.

R. F.—Go ahead. We can do with all the new readers you may find. And our motto, based on experience, is, "You find readers; we keep them." Before we are done, we hope to see the *Freethinker* with a circulation really worthy of it.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—"Ernest," £1; W. Francis, 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. General Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—W. Francis, 2s. 6d.

F. Kenyon.—We are sending you out the *Freethinker*, with a few pamphlets.—This correspondent, at present in Mesopotamia, would be glad to hear of any Freethinker with whom he could correspond regularly. Address should be sent to this office.

H. Truckell (Barrow-in-Furness).—We are obliged to you, and have written to the address given. Will prove very useful.

V. H. Smith.—We are not, as you will see, dealing with that aspect of the argument in discussing design in Nature. It is dealt with in our new pamphlet, *God and Man*. Pleased you are so interested in the "Views."

A. T. Edwards.—Pleased to have your congratulations. Papers have been sent.

W. Mawson (Edinburgh) and C. Kerr (Eastbourne).—Certainly, call at the office. You will see we are keeping the *Freethinker* office open later on Saturday, the 18th, on purpose to meet visitors.

D. Keir.—The office will not be open on Monday—Bank holiday. Shall be pleased to see you any other day if you will drop a card.

C. F. Simpson.—Received with thanks. Will do as you request. Change of address noted.

G. H. Murphy.—We shall be pleased to avail ourselves of your offer of service, and will write you later on the matter.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings and collection of epitaphs.

C. F. Dixon.—We are greatly encouraged by your interest in the *Freethinker* and its work. Many thanks.

W. K. Smith.—Received, and shall be pleased to use as early as possible.

E. Lane.—The ground rents of London amount to over twenty million annually. The Dukes of Westminster, Bedford, Norfolk, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (in whose hands rest the revenues of the Church of England) are among the largest owners.

A. J. Marriott.—Sorry we are unable to find space for your letter, but we quite sympathise with your protest against gratuitous interference with public liberty.

C. W. Goulder.—Pleased to have your approval. We have every sympathy for those who have lost relatives in the War, and also for the sufferings of those who have them still engaged in the conflict.

H. Thurlow.—We greatly appreciate your remarks, and think you will be pleased with the result.

S. E. Brandall.—Papers are being sent. We are under no anxiety as to our "ability to carry on." A stiff struggle makes it the more interesting.

T. James.—Tithe was originally paid the Church on condition that one-fourth should be distributed among the poor. In process of time the parson grabbed the lot.

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.

There seems likely to be a number of provincial Freethinkers in London over Whitsuntide, and not all in connection with the N.S.S. Conference. Several have written to say they intend calling at the *Freethinker* office in the hopes of meeting the editor, so we have decided to keep the office open until 6 o'clock instead of closing at mid-day as usual. The N. S. S. Offices at 62 Farringdon Street (next door) will be open until the same hour, and Miss Vance will be in attendance.

London Freethinkers will, we hope, do their best to see that the evening meeting at the Queen's Hall is a good one As will be seen by reference to our back page, the platform is an attractive one, and the hall should be crowded. Admission is free, and every Freethinker would do well to make it a point of bringing an inquiring friend with him. The doors open at 6 o'clock, and the chair will be taken at 6.30.

London members will, we trust, not forget the business meetings of the Conference, at 10.30 and 2.30. Not much can be done this year in the way of providing refreshments for delegates, but enough will be provided to ward off starvation. Only members are admitted to the morning and afternoon meetings, and admission will be by exhibition of membership card, which must be produced at the door.

A friend who is interested in increasing the circulation of the *Freethinker* has placed at our disposal the sum of £2 16s. as payment for twenty-one quarterly subscriptions to this paper. He suggests that the recipients be soldiers at the Front, as a likely way of getting the *Freethinker* well read. We think this is excellent, and it will serve to supplement what we are already doing in that direction. So we shall be pleased to receive from our readers the names and addresses of soldiers to whom a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* would be acceptable. We should also like to add to the paper itself a few pamphlets which will, we hope, prove equally useful.

One of our friends at West Ham was, we are pleased to see, successful in getting a Labour Conference in that district to unanimously pass a resolution "That all State education, from kindergarten to university, should be purely secular." This is good work, and we hope other Trade and Labour organizations will follow suit.

We publish this week two four-page tracts by Mr. Cohen on *What is the Use of the Clergy?* and *What Will You Put in its Place?* We feel certain that they will prove useful, and we should like them to be widely distributed. As they are not published for profit, we are offering them at about cost price. This is an opportunity for all our friends to do a little useful propaganda for a very moderate outlay. The price of these tracts is 1s. 6d. per 100, postage 3d.; so that for 15s. anyone may put a thousand of these into circulation. We have printed a large supply of each, and we venture to ask the help of our friends to see that they are put into circulation quickly. They will be followed by others.

Next week (May 26) Mr. J. T. Lloyd visits Maesteg, and will deliver two lectures. This is the first meeting held by the new Branch which is being formed, and we hope that Freethinkers in the locality will make a point of being present. We have not yet been informed of the times and place of meetings, but that will probably come along in time for next issue.

The Southampton Branch reports a well-attended meeting on Sunday last to listen to Mrs. Palmer's address on "The Endowment of Motherhood," followed by a good discussion. We are glad to learn that things are promising in this new Branch.

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The Mechanism of Man.

VI.

(*Continued from p. 269.*)

ALL the multitudinous activities of life are ultimately dependent upon respiration. The cells would perish, the blood would be poisoned, and the heart soon cease to beat, were the oxygen of the atmosphere denied access to the body. In the earthworm, amœba, and other lowly creatures, the surface of the body functions as a breathing structure. And precisely the same principle obtains for all the higher animals and plants. In fact, respiration is universal throughout the entire realm of organic Nature. So, to furnish the internal cells with their essential oxygen, the great multicellular animals need a respiratory surface much larger than that afforded by the skin surfaces. This requirement is met by the presence of a complex arrangement of internal organs which function as oxygen-absorbing surfaces. So exceedingly complicated are the human lungs, that were these organs unfolded, and all their tubes and cavities spread out in a flat sheet, that, according to the estimate of Professor Leonard Hill, they would cover a surface of twenty-seven square feet.

The air, unless the mouth is open, passes in at the nose, and returns through that organ. Each nostril leads to a cavity from which the nasal duct proceeds. The nasal passages open into the throat region or pharynx, and from the pharynx two tubes are directed below. One of these is the windpipe (trachea), and the other is the gullet or esophagus. The air now travels through the larynx or voice-box, which is really the enlarged upper end of the trachea. Beneath the larynx lies the trachea or windpipe, which is the largest air-tube in the body. It runs down in front of the neck into the thorax, while the gullet proceeds downwards at its back. At the upper region of the thorax or chest cavity, the trachea divides into two main branches, termed the right and left bronchus. Each leading bronchus proceeds to the lung situated on its own side, and enters that organ at its root. Having reached the lung, the bronchus speedily breaks up into branches—the bronchial tubes.

The main breathing organs, the two lungs, together with the heart and its great vessels, occupy the greater part of the thorax. Between the two lungs are placed the heart and its appendages. The right lung possesses three lobes, while the left has two only. That the lungs function as filters is evidenced by the fact that in the young these organs are pale pink in appearance, but they darken in later life, and this change is most pronounced in those who breathe the dust-strewn atmosphere of crowded and busy cities.

The chief respiratory muscles are the diaphragm, a muscle which divides the thorax or chest from the abdomen or belly; the muscles which form the walls of the abdomen; and two muscular structures situated between the ribs. These last consist of two sets of short muscles, and are termed the intercostals. When air is breathed in or inspired, the ribs ascend, and the diaphragm descends; while during expiration, when air is breathed out, the ribs descend, the abdominal walls contract, and the transmitted pressure serves to raise the relaxed diaphragm. Dr. Meachen thus describes the respiratory process:—

> Inspiration is produced by the external intercostal muscles and the diaphragm; expiration by the internal intercostal muscles, aided by the natural elastic recoil of the chest-wall and lungs. The diaphragm descends in inspiration and rises in expiration. In both these movements the lungs follow the chest, inflating when it expands, and shrinking when it falls in again.

The lungs are non-muscular, but are composed of tissue containing a vast number of cavities—the pulmonary alveoli or air-cells. Lobules or clusters of air-cells are most abundant near the surface of the lungs. These alveoli are elastic, and enlarge as the chest expands. The air cavities are coated with an exceedingly delicate membrane of epithelial cells, through which oxygen easily enters and the poisonous carbon dioxide as easily escapes. The red blood corpuscles are the body's oxygen-carriers and distributors, and these discs derive their oxygen from the outer air during the act of breathing. Deprivation of oxygen proves fatal in a few minutes. An animal denied access to this life-sustaining gas quickly succumbs to asphyxia. Death by drowning, strangulation, or smothering is always due to the absence of oxygen.

All the vital active cells of the organism are constantly forming waste material, and carbon dioxide is one of the most noxious of these. Carbon dioxide or carbonic acid gas (CO_2) is composed of one part carbon and two parts oxygen in a state of chemical combination. If this gas be permitted to remain in the tissues the gas, or in any case the organic particles contained in it, soon poison the body. This baleful product of cell activity must be expelled from the system if life is to persist. Therefore, it is absorbed by the blood and passed on to the lungs, where it escapes from the pulmonary capillary vessels into the air cavities. It is then expired by the respiratory process.

Respiration is essentially an interchange of gases. The blood which is carried to the lungs for purification arrives as dark red venous blood, but having expelled its carbon dioxide and absorbed oxygen, the fluid is restored to that bright red tint which constitutes the natural colour of healthy arterial blood. It is interesting to observe that "venous blood is changed in this way out of the body, for if some of the fluid be shaken up in a test-tube with air it will change its colour and become brighter; or, in other words, it will be turned into arterial blood."

The average rate of respiration, the acts of inspiration and expiration combining to form a complete respiration, is normally about eighteen per minute in the healthy adult. During heavy labour or vigorous exercise this rate may rise to twenty-four or even thirty-five per minute. In a state of great mental or emotional excitement the rate of breathing is also increased. In pathological conditions, such as those of fever or lung diseases, it is no uncommon medical experience to observe a rate of respiration ascending to forty, fifty, or even sixty per minute. On the other hand, the respiratory rate declines in sleep; while, when subjected to the influences of opium, and when we become intensely absorbed in intellectual work, or even when witnessing a play, or listening to music or singing, the act of breathing is prolonged. In fact all forms of sustained interest tend to lower the respiration rate.

In a healthy organism breathing is an automatic and almost unconscious act. In truth, unless the painful and laboured respiration of dejected health, or the rapid breathing which results from unusual exertion compel our attention, we are rarely conscious that we are respiring at all. Nevertheless, the function is regulated by nervous influences. Respiration is largely a reflex phenomenon of rhythmical character. But in that part of the brain termed the medulla there exists a special nerve centre which controls respiration. Nervous impulses are constantly travelling to and fro between the muscles of respiration, the lungs, and the brain.

The respiratory structures are highly susceptible to derangement. A cold or catarrh is suffered when an organ becomes inflamed. An inflammation in the nasal passages is called a cold in the head, and an inflamed

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pharynx is termed a sore throat. Bronchitis arises from inflamed bronchial tubes, while pneumonia, asthma, pleurisy, and other ailments are due to the disease of one or another of the breathing organs. Vitiated air is one of the most malignant enemies of mental and bodily health. The whole art of ventilation exists for the purpose of banishing impure air and its microbic population, and for the provision of a plentiful supply of that oxygen so indispensable to organic vigour.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer

At the Vicarage.

Someone has said that many a jovial hour is spent inside a mourning-coach. And, strange as it may seem, two of the happiest years of my experience were spent—at a vicarage. I was visiting-governess to the vicar's two young children, who never tired of assuring me that I was the sweetest and nicest of teachers. The vicar and his wife, too, were exceedingly kind and considerate, and spared no effort to make me feel at home. Mrs. Johnston was of a meek and gentle disposition—in striking contrast to the vigorous and breezy personality of the vicar. It was the vicar who played the leading *role* in domestic as well as in parochial matters; who was, so to speak, the Punch of the show, the hero of the tale, the principal humourist in the comedy.

I have often thought that the vicar, if he had chosen the stage as a profession instead of the Church, would have had a distinguished career. The way he used to mimic the doleful drawl and sanctimonious phraseology of his clerical brethren after attending some evangelical or ecclesiastical meeting would have brought loud applause from a theatrical audience. His mental attitude towards the dignitaries of the Church, who were over him in the Lord, may be judged from the following. One night the bishop was coming to take the evening service, and a little before the time of his arrival the vicar got leisurely up from his chair: "I suppose," he said, "I will have to go to the station and meet that damned, silly, old ass?"

I had only been at the vicarage a short while when the vicar was offered a better living in a neighbouring town. He accepted it; but so soon as it became known there was a storm of disapproval. The vicar was very popular not only with his parishioners but also with the general public of the district, and they had the sense to know when they had a good vicar. Accordingly, they got up a huge petition praying the bishop that he might be allowed to remain in order that they might have the benefit, as heretofore, of his wise counsels and spiritual ministrations. And so the vicar stayed.

A few days after he came home in the afternoon, and, rolling himself on the couch, fairly shook the room with his laughter. He had been walking along the main street, when he was hailed by an old man who followed a very humble occupation. After an exchange of greetings, the old man, in a reproachful tone, said: "Here, vicar, what the hell did you want to go away and leave us for?" Whether the vicar piously admonished the old man for his irreverence I cannot say, but at the vicarage he considered it a capital joke.

One morning when I arrived by the usual train, I found the place in a state of great commotion. There had been an air-raid during the night, and a considerable amount of damage had been done. The inmates of the vicarage were greatly perturbed, and the household arrangements all in disorder. They were breakfasting late, and I was invited into the dining-room to listen to their tale of woe. During the meal Mrs. Johnston looked along the table with a penitent sort of look: "Oh, Henry," she said, "we haven't had prayers this morning." The vicar sprang from his chair as if another bomb had been dropped, exclaiming: "Damn the prayers after a night like last night!"

It never seemed to occur to the Vicar how these little incidents might strike a young lady who was supposed to possess all the religious qualifications necessary for the instruction of his children. But I admired him all the more for his candour and straightforwardness. As Mrs. Johnston said to me one day: "You know, Beatrice, there is one good thing about the Vicar; he is honest." And being perfectly happy in their home, criticism was the last thing I would have thought of. There was a touch of humour in everything he said or did, which at the time was the very salt of life to me. I have seen a phrase somewhere about the dulness of a vicarage, but I often smile to myself at the ignorance of the person who penned it. Dulness was a thing I never knew during the whole of my stay; there was always something happening to amuse one, and add a zest to life. Even in the vacations, if Mrs. Johnson had occasion to send me a card, there was always the little pencilled note appended by the Vicar before dropping it into the post, reminding me that I was missed. The dear old Vicar!

I shall never forget the evening of my departure, on which occasion I stayed to supper. Remembering all their kindness to me, I felt somewhat sorrowful at the thought of leaving them, and going out into the world afresh. But the humour of the Vicar came to the rescue. When he took his seat at the head of the table, looking at me as if I were the twelve Apostles rolled into one, he spread out his arms, and, with deep solemnity, said: "The Last Supper." I could have screamed; it was so funny. It was just as if Aaron's beard, the simple uncouthness of all the Biblical characters, and the hoary traditions of religion were embodied in the simulated gravity of the Vicar's tone.

But if the Vicar played the leading role, the children fulfilled their parts of the comedy with amusing success. One day Minnie came in, and assured us with childish positiveness that she had seen a bear in the garden; and no arguments or suggestion that it might possibly have been a dog would make her admit that she might have been mistaken. When she was ready for bed at night, her mother said she had better ask God's forgiveness for telling such a falsehood. When she came downstairs in the morning, and was asked if she had confessed the lie, with a jubilant and triumphant look she exclaimed: "Yes, I did; but God said, 'O, don't apologize, Miss Johnston. I thought it was a bear myself.'"

But perhaps the greatest surprise came from the Vicar's little son. He was a delicate child, and endeared himself to me in many ways. One day, when we were alone, he had a seizure, which naturally frightened me very much. As he lay in my arms, and I tried to bring him back to consciousness, his face was deathly white, and tears of genuine grief stood in my eyes. I could not help thinking of the possibility that the angels of God were hovering round, ready to bear his little soul away to the mansions of the blest. By-and-bye, he opened his eyes and stared at me. At last he spoke; and the reader may perhaps imagine something of my conflicting emotions when he said: "I—I felt the —— thing coming on." At first I could scarcely credit my hearing; but when the humour of the situation was fully realized, my tears of sorrow were swept away by the flood of tears of laughter at the comical ending of the painful episode.

If it should appear to some conventional people that the Vicarage was lacking in the religious atmosphere

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usual to such an establishment, I can only say that it had its compensations. The feeling of confidence, and of kindness and good fellowship with which I was always treated, was one of them. The position of a governess is not often an enviable one; but the Vicar it was a pleasure to serve. And at the risk of being considered worldly and irreligious, I will deign to say that, with all his faults, I loved him still. BEATRICE.

Christian Modes and Morals.

IN the evolutionary process there are two forces constantly opposed to each other, namely, the *natural* development with increased knowledge and an advancing civilization of a more perfect system of morals, and the *artificial* inculcation and imposition of a moral law derived from the teachings of the Holy Bible. The demoralizing effects of war always act as deterrents to natural development and, temporarily, with more ignorant people, enhance the opportunities of traditional authorities.

Put briefly, in other words, the perennial struggle is between knowledge and belief. Now, a thorough knowledge of any subject is not to be assimilated by anyone unless the knowledge is communicated at a comparatively early stage in life, that is to say, if the knowledge is to be personally and socially serviceable. On the most vital matter of the care of the human body the Churches unanimously protest against the communication by competent authorities of knowledge on the subject, particularly that affecting the procreative functions. On this topic the Churches prefer methods anarchic that would simply leave the ideas of the majority of people in a state of deplorable chaos. The Grundys of both sexes hold up their hands in pious horror when thinkers, like Edward Carpenter, hint at the advisability of informing children when they have attained puberty of the reproductive processes in mammals. *Their* plan would be to let the children acquire their information from the offensive garbage of pornography. They have no objection to young people reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting the "purple patches" of Holy Writ.

Another point in our indictment of Christian teaching is, that such communication of knowledge as it allows is limited by the restrictions imposed by Christian methods to a small minority. "Knowledge is power"; and it is certainly not in the interests of the class that benefits most by the continuance of religion that a rich measure of knowledge should be obtainable by the majority. The more knowledge rules the nearer is brought the doom of the supernatural and the unnatural. Ignorance and credulity are the most dangerous foes of natural development.

The helplessness and hopelessness of Christianity—notwithstanding all the rhetorical bombast of its representatives to the contrary—are demonstrated by the Christian attitude in great national changes and crises. Are the ancient sanctions appealed to to-day with the same effect that was produced by such appeals, say, fifty years since? We trow not. The object of such appeals (fortified by the most extravagant emotionalism) is ever to prove to the great mass of the people that religion is essential to man, and that the Churches have a supernatural mission. Mendacity—a weapon which can only be employed with the ignorant—is freely indulged in, chiefly to convince people that without religion an effective ethical system is impossible, and inferentially that any man who has not religious belief has no moral standard, and is bound by no ethical obligations. The Christian slanders of Paine, Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, and Foote stand to illustrate to an admiring world the glory of Christian morality!

In England, it seems that there is on foot a movement for a change in the marriage laws, and this has set the black-coated boys by the ears. Organizations have been formed to oppose any change, and these bear the usual marks of the clerical monopolist. Is it so very much, after all, that the Law of England should be brought into line with the Law of Scotland on this matter? In England, marriage remains a sacrament of the Established Church; in Scotland it is a purely civil contract. And he would be a bold man who should contend that because of this there is a higher moral standard in England than there is in Scotland.

Nowhere has the fumbling feebleness of religionists been more apparent than in the case of the unmarried mother. There is no more grotesque picture than that of a tribunal of censorious Holy Willies passing solemn judgment upon her. But the Holy Willies are mildness itself compared with the Holy Jeans; and it is the latter who are most "edified" when they are listening with rapt attention to the thundering voice from the pulpit that denounces their younger and, likely, more attractive sister!

IGNOTUS.

What Is Nature?

JEAN JACQUES ROSSEAU wanted us to "get back to nature," and you hear lots of people saying that now, and I want to know what it means. Let's run a string of talk through it and see whether we understand it. What is Nature, with a capital N, or without it? Nature is the sum-total of things—the processes of the world. Nature is what brings the flowers in the spring-time, and the rain, and the fruits, and all the sweet things of life.

If man, in the beginning of the ages, had been content to remain in obedience and sinlessness, without the interference of naughty Eve in the Garden of Eden, the world would have been an unpleasant place in which to live. The average age of man would have been 1,000 years, and the only consolation for such a length of life would have been the absence of doctors, life-insurance agents, parsons, publicans, burglars, and picture shows, all of which are parasites caused by the development of micro-organisms in the human system.

There cannot be a doubt
For us, and us alone, the whole creation came about:

Do you know what "the laws of Nature" are? There are none! "Law of Nature" is only a phrase. It is like "Free-will" and "Predestination," it means nothing at all. It is a human phrase and no more. "Nature" and "Nature's Laws" are phrases with contents that differ according to the intellectual status of the people who use them. To one of our blackfellows "Nature" simply means "Debil, Debil." That's all. Nature, to an educated man, means the observed order of things. But there is no law! Do you remember the story of the Lord Buddh of India? I never grow weary of it, for it is the story of "Nature." He saw how lovely "Nature" was, and how kind and fair and mystical. He saw the beautiful colours on the birds, and he heard the tinkle of the falling water, and he heard the laughing nesting-songs of the birds, and he was glad that life was so lovely:—

But looking deep, he saw,
The thorns which grow upon this rose of life:
How the swath peasant sweated for his wage,
Toiling for leave to live; and how he urged
The great-eyed oxen through the flaring hours,
Goading their velvet flanks, them marked he, too,
How lizard fed on ant, and snake on him,
And kite on both, and how the fish-hawk robbed,
The fish-tiger of that which it had seized;
The strike chasing the bulbul, which did hunt,
The jewelled butterflies, till everywhere,
Each, slew a slayer, and in turn was slain,
Life living upon death, so the fair show,
Veiled one vast, savage, grim conspiracy,
Of mutual murder, from the worm to man,
Who himself kills his fellow.

Then you have the story of "Nature." There you have "the laws of Nature," and there you have the reason why I don't want to have to "follow nature." Nature is horribly cruel, and I'm not going to "follow nature"; and what can I do? Nature provides the poison glands of the snake, and she sends droughts, and kills off the helpless and innocent things. Nature "is red in tooth and claw," life preys on life, and the law appears to "eat or be eaten," and the things that can't make a living die out. Nature has no blind asylums or benevolent institutions. There is no sort of namby-pambyism about Nature. She's a real dandy! You must be the mark with her every time, or it's you for the scrap-heap! Then what do we mean when we say that you ought to follow Nature?

Indiscriminate destruction, have ever made it plain:
Earth's parasitic beings become victims every hour
To elements regardless of their pettiness or power.

THE OWL.

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Correspondence.

"THE DEFEAT OF THE CROSS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of May 5, Mr. J. T. Lloyd busies himself in proving, evidently to his own entire satisfaction, that "in conflict with the world's forces the Cross has been totally defeated." For this modest conclusion it is somewhat difficult to find any adequate basis set out in his article. I certainly cannot find it in Mr. Lloyd's self-contradictory criticism of the *Times* writer on religion, whom in one sentence he charges with "tantalizing vagueness," and a little lower down with being "blindly dogmatic."

Moreover, Mr. Lloyd is clearly determined not to be outmatched in respect of dogmatism. His assertion that the truth and the life of Christianity have "produced, on the one hand, cruel tyranny, and, on the other, abject slavery," compels admiration—using "admiration" in its original Latin sense. Reasoners of Mr. Lloyd's stamp may well be regarded as the un-apostolic successors of the philosopher who maintained the thesis that snow is black.

Naturally, Mr. Lloyd makes great play with the shortcomings of the Churches. Of course, the Churches have "failed." Had they succeeded, it would have been a bigger miracle than any recorded in the New Testament. Every endeavour to realize or live up to an ideal is a failure. Even the noblest-minded Freethinker cannot live fully up to his ideal, constricted though that ideal be by the refusal to take account of eternal righteousness.

As to the statement that "in all sections of society..... unbelievers in their tens of thousands are to be found," one can only say that these cohorts of unbelief, if existent, are not working very hard at it, seeing (to take a rough test) that Christians denominations publish large and well-edited journals, while anti-Christian periodicals have to appeal persistently for more subscribers and subsidizing funds.

No doubt Mr. Lloyd will find that such remissness is due to the selfishness of human nature and preoccupations of human life. Will he be willing to admit the same plea in mitigation of judgment on the "failure" of Christianity?

A. J. S.

REFORM IN LEICESTER.

SIR,—As the town of Leicester has been very much before your readers recently on account of its splendid pioneer work in connection with "the best of causes," I should like to be allowed to point out that, apart from its signal services in the realm of Freethought (which alone will secure for it a permanent niche in the temple of fame), that remarkable town has other claims to the gratitude of mankind; notably, for its enduring services in exposing the fallacies of that other privileged class, and twin sister to the theological priesthood—the medical hierarchy. This Mecca of the anti-vaccinist will always be remembered in history for the part it has played in respect of that alleged prophylactic; for by its control experiment, Leicester has shivered to pieces the claims of vaccination, and knocked the bottom out of a grotesque superstition.

Leicester stands incomparably higher than any other town of its size in regard to sanitation and hygiene, and to this is due its fine health record, which ranks higher, indeed, than that of many other large towns whose topographical situation would appear to be more advantageous.

To what is due the pre-eminent position which Leicester now occupies in the civic and social life of the nation? I submit that it is primarily because it is more richly endowed than other towns with administrators whose minds are less trammelled by conventional shibboleths, and who possess in a superlative degree that wide-viewing Freethought to which Mr. Gould refers. Thus we have in Leicester, if not a control case, certainly an indication of the lines on which civic and social life would be conducted if our legislators, and those responsible for the moulding of public opinion, had their minds cleared of the incubus of dead cults, superstitions, and unscientific formulæ, and allowed their reasoning and intellectual factors to have full play.

H. C. HEBDES.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): No Service.

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): No Meeting.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): No Meeting.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley Road): No Meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): No Meeting.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: No Meeting.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): No Meeting.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): No Meeting.

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

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 1s. per hundred, post free 1s. 2d. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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A RATIONALIST "GREAT ADVANCE."

WILL YOU HELP?

IN view of the organized efforts now being made on the part of the Churches to awaken a "Religious Revival" on a colossal scale (*vide* Cardinal Bourne's Manifesto and similar pronouncements), it has been decided to make a counter effort by circulating Rationalist books in tens of thousands, if not indeed hundreds of thousands, throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The four following books have been chosen for the inauguration of the campaign, and others will be drawn upon later:—

1. **THE AGE OF REASON.** By THOMAS PAINE. 128 pp.; 3d. net, by post 4d.
2. **THE CHURCHES AND MODERN THOUGHT:** By P. VIVIAN. 432 pp.; 9d. net, by post 1s.
3. **THE CHRISTIAN HELL, from the First to the Twentieth Century.** By HYPATIA BRADLAUGH BONNER. 160 pp., with 28 illustrations; 6d. net, by post 7½d.
4. **THE RELIGION OF THE OPEN MIND.** By ADAM GOWANS WHYTE, author of "The World's Wonder Stories," etc. 160 pp.; 9d. net, by post 10½d.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Advertising the Gospel.—The Editor	289
A New-Old Argument for Atheism.—J. T. Lloyd	290
Charles Lamb: Humanist.—Mimnermus	291
Materialism.—E. Egerton Stafford	292
N. S. S. Conference—Executive's Annual Report	293
Presidential Notes.—Chapman Cohen	296
Immortality.—W.	297
Demonstration at Queen's Hall.—G. E. S.	297

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Advertising the Gospel.

One would have thought that the last thing the Churches needed advice upon was the subject of advertising. For they seem to have been always at it, and to be past-masters at the art. If a clergyman happens to be killed during an air-raid, there is a special paragraph in all the papers. If a chaplain is killed in France, extensive advertisement of the fact is assured. If a man who belongs to some dissenting sect is appointed to a Government office, the Nonconformists secure a paragraph in the public press giving full prominence to so important a fact. In the case of the Salvation Army, the advertising is more elaborate than with any other religious body. A favourite method here is to secure some obliging journalist and tell him all the good the Army does, and then reprint the supplied copy as independent testimony to the value of the Army's work. And the public reads without the slightest notion that what they are really getting is the Army's own puffing of its own activities. Nothing, in fact, is so well advertised as Christianity; and, as with many other shoddy things, to cease to advertise is to cease to live.

* * *

The Clergy at Work.

We were, consequently, surprised to see the appearance of a volume on *Church Advertising*, published by Lippincott & Co., made up of nine articles by clergymen, and the remainder of the contributors being advertising agents, with one or two laymen thrown in. All the writers emphasize the value of advertising, and advocate that it shall be more effective. The newspaper men, naturally, emphasize the value of advertising—of course, quite disinterestedly. But parsons are wary birds, and one, the Rev. R. C. Keary, explains that the right way is to wait upon the editors and explain to them the number of members represented by the Church. The connection between this and newspaper sales is left unspoken, but it will be understood. The Rev. Christian F. Reisner explains that good audiences may be secured by some such methods as the following: A man had had seven acres of dahlias that were being ruined by the frost. He gave 800 to the Church, and one was given to each attendant. There was a very much advertised apple, and the agent agreed to give one to every person who attended. A Chicago baker was persuaded to give a loaf of bread to everyone who came to Church, and this was given with the text: "I am the bread of life." Rev. P. B. Jenkins, Milwaukee, explains that among other advertising methods they adopt the plan of giving "Go to Church Sunday" buttons for men, and pins for women. Blotters for hotel writing-rooms with suitable advertisements. Ditto for school childrens' desks. Lead pencils for school children bearing the name of a Church, etc. We do not think that when it comes to advertising—particularly advertising on the cheap—that parsons have much to learn from newspaper men.

* * *

Some Hints for the Churches.

Altogether, though, this volume is a little disappointing. Considering that it hails from America it ought to have shown more enterprise. We really think that better and more effective titles might have been given them: "Preparedness in Religion," "Submarine Sins," "Short Cuts to Hell," and similar ones might have been suggested. In these days of War loans, meat scarcity, and food shortage, why not "Chops From the Lamb of God, Every Evening at 8, Free"? or "The Marriage Feast of Cana: Every Man His Own Brewer"? or "Jesus in the Wilderness: a Lesson in Economy, and a Tip to Those who Wish to Invest in War Loans"? or "The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes: Every Man His Own Food Controller"? What is needed is a manual for the use of preachers with a selection of titles. There are already manuals which supply them with quotations, and "experiences" (which become their own by purchase), and texts. Why not titles? For Christianity really lives by and on advertisement. It is as constantly puffed as soaps or medicines, and the methods are strikingly similar. The familiar notice that the Gospel alone makes life endurable is identical in kind with that which declares the value of Carter's Liver Pills or Kutnow's Powder. The testimonials from pale people who have benefited from pink pills are substantially one with those affirming the good done by regular doses of the Gospel taken immediately after supper.

* * *

Pills and Piety.

Such an announcement as the following, for instance, may be read as a testimonial to a pill maker or a mission, just as one reads or omits the words enclosed in brackets: "Until I became acquainted with (the glorious Gospel of Christ) Blank's pills I did not know what an hour's peace meant. Life was dull, and without enjoyment. I was irritable and unkind to all around me. One day a friend gave me (an invitation to a mission service conducted by the converted Pentonville Pet) some of your pills. Without much faith I (attended the service) took them as directed. I had not (been long in the room) taken more than three doses before I was aware of a (change of heart) marked improvement. My (feeling of despair) pains disappeared. I felt a new man. Instead of a (taste for evil associations) distaste for food, I (sought for better companions) took my meals regularly, and did my work without fatigue. I would

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not now be without (the Gospel) your pills for worlds. (It has) They have made a new man of me, and I (am now an earnest worker for Christ) have recommended them to all my friends."

* * *

"Spoof."

The sober truth is that the position of Christianity to-day is almost entirely due to advertising. We have heard men, whose sole literary provender appeared to be the *Daily Mail*, talk about the *literary* beauties of the Bible. Others talk glibly about the immense benefits conferred upon the world by Christianity, or the superiority of Jesus to all other world-teachers. Quite clearly, they *know* nothing whatever about these matters. They are simply repeating the advertisement distributed so lavishly by the Churches. Every business man knows that in advertising the whole thing is repetition. Keep on saying the same thing often enough, and suggestion does its work. And this advertising of Christianity has been carried on for centuries. It has been worked into school-books and nursery rhymes. Advertisements of Christianity have been cunningly inserted into sober works on history and solemn essays on philosophy. And, unlike the ordinary business man, the Churches have had the inestimable benefit of being able to suppress advertisements of would-be competitors. They have had the monopoly of the finest hoardings in the country—Parliament, the Law Courts, Local Councils, etc. No business in the world has ever been so advertised as Christianity has been. A mere fraction of it would have made a multi-millionaire of the greatest quack that ever lived. And the public has been compelled to find the money for all the "puffing."

* * *

The Limits of Advertising.

But in spite of this extensive puffing, the business is to-day anything but flourishing. New business can no longer be completely suppressed, and old customers are wandering into rival establishments. New tastes are developing, and the clergy are in the awkward position that, while they can vary the advertisement, they cannot secure a new class of goods. And that makes the situation more awkward still. For the difficulty with a quack article is that, while you may build up a big business by extensive advertising, you cannot maintain it with old customers. New ones must be continually found. As Abraham Lincoln said, while *some* people may be fooled all the time, *all* the people can't be fooled all the time. For generations the clergy overcame this difficulty—and still do so to a considerable extent—by breeding customers for their wares. Children were brought up with a carefully cultivated taste for the goods supplied by religious houses. But now this source of supply is beginning to fail. The close market can no longer be maintained. Competitors are coming along, and they affect the young as well as the old. And really free competition is finally fatal to all impostures. Place the clergy and their wares in an open market, and their occupation will soon be a thing of the past.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A New-Old Argument for Atheism.

PRINCIPAL P. T. FORSYTH, M.A., D.D., states in his exceptionally clever book, entitled *The Justification of God*, that "the only vindication of God is God." It must be admitted, at the outset, that if the Almighty does not defend his character, no one else can do it for him. In the Preface, Dr. Forsyth makes the fundamental concession that God does not at any time demonstrate the truth of his justice, but contents himself with saving man from doubting it. Now, the existence of evil is a fact which cannot be denied. Its malign power is to be felt at every turn. The theologians call it sin, and Dr. Forsyth speaks of the victory over it "as costing God his life." It stands to reason, of course, that "if God could be abolished there could have been no real God." There is, therefore, an issue between evil and God which we have no choice but to characterize as the sharpest, in fact the absolute, issue of the Universe. This crucial issue the author describes in the following forcible language:—

> Sin is the death of God. Die, sin must, or God. Its nature is to go on from indifference to absolute hostility and malignity to the holy; and one must go down. There is no compromise between the holy and the sinful when the issue is seen from the height of heaven to the depth of hell, and followed into the uttermost parts of the soul. And that is the nature of the issue as it is set in the Cross of Christ. It is the eternal holiness in conflict for its life. In the Son of God the whole being of God is staked upon this issue, and his whole campaign with the world; it is not one battle alone; nor is the sin he met but one of many foes. In the conflict the righteousness of God is either secured or lost to the world for ever. It is a question of a final salvation both for man and for God. God there must "save his word," which is his kingdom, which is his Godhead; else the realm of Satan takes its place in control of the world (pp. 151-2).

After all, that is not a fair statement of the all-important issue. The sentence, "Die, sin must, or God," conveys an entirely erroneous impression. Our contention is that the existence of evil disproves that of God, for, as the Principal says, "sin is the death of God," or, rather, of the belief in God. Evil and God cannot possibly co-exist even for a moment. Not only "die, sin must, or God," but the very fact of sin shows clearly that there is no God to die. Like all the smaller men, Dr. Forsyth evades the real problem at issue by an act of moral as well as logical cowardice. He pictures God as the author of two creations, the first and the second. The first, on its moral side, was so constructed that it was liable at any minute to go wrong. As the author says: "There was never such a fateful experiment as when God trusted man with freedom." The Creator ran a tremendous risk when he endowed man with a faulty nature, in possession of which he could choose either good or evil; but, according to the Principal, it was a risk well worth running:—

> Our Christian faith is that he well knew what he was about. He did not do that as a mere adventure, not without knowing that he had the power to remedy any abuse of it that might occur, and to do this by a new creation more mighty, marvellous, and mysterious than the first. He had means to emancipate even freedom, to convert moral freedom, even in its ruin, into spiritual. If the first creation drew on his might, the second taxed his all- might. It revealed his power as moral majesty, as holy omnipotence, most chiefly shown in the mercy that redeems and reconciles. To redeem creation is a more creative act than it was to create it. It is the last thing omnipotence could do.....It is no slack knot that the Saviour has to undo. All the energy of a perverse world in its created freedom pulled on the tangle to tighten it. And its undoing has given the supreme form to all God's dealing with the world. But at the same time the snarl is not beyond being untied. Man is born to be redeemed. The final key to the first creation is the second; and the first was done with the second in view. If moral freedom is the crown of the first creation, spiritual, holy freedom is the goal of moral; and it is the gift in the second creation. The first creation was the prophecy of the second; the second was the first tragically "arrived" (pp. 125-6).

Such is the God worshipped and preached by Dr. Forsyth, a being who culpably trifles with himself and

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his universe, whom to know is to despise. He created man in the foreknowledge that man so made would inevitably degenerate into a disgraceful wreck—into a howling reproach to his Maker; but he did so on purpose, designedly, and fully aware that he was thereby casting a dark cloud upon his name. By itself the first creation was highly discreditable to him, in face of which no justification of him would be possible. As a matter of fact, every philosophical theodicy ever attempted must be pronounced a logical failure. God's complete justification is to be found only in the fulfilment of the first creation in the second. In other words, the Cross of Christ represents the powers of the second creation retrieving, or more than making up for, all the losses incurred in consequence of the first. The moral resource inherent in the Creator was "put forth in Christ—in his overcoming of the world on the Cross, and his new creation of it in the Spirit." "The great goal is not the mere fruitage of the first creation, but another creation more creative still." Thus, by the Cross, are saved both God's reputation and man's immortal soul. "Man is only saved by God's holiness, by the tragic action of a holy God, by the honour done by God in Christ to his own holy name and purpose.....His justification of man is only possible by a practical justification of himself."

Such is Principal Forsyth's theory; but it completely breaks down when confronted by the facts of life. Instead of justifying God it annihilates him. If "die, sin must, or God," it follows that, sin being still very much alive, God must have died; but, on the author's own showing, "if God could be abolished there could have been no real God." Dr. Forsyth has thus furnished us with the most cogent of all arguments for the non-existence of a Supreme Being. With evil rampant everywhere, especially just now in the heart of Christendom, who has the hardihood to declare that an all-good and all-loving Deity sitteth as king for ever? It is doubtless true that the War, "the present cataclysm, is an acute condensation of what has been going on in Nature, human and other, for millenniums"; and it may be pertinent for a divine to ask, "if faith could survive that, need it succumb to this?" But the real point is that the faith of multitudes for generations could not survive *that*, and that to-day thousands more are by *this* brought, for the first time, to realize the true significance of *that*, with the result that faith vanishes never to return. The War is acting simply as a marvellous eye-opener to myriads, who either have lost or are surely losing their belief in God. The Cross, like Providence, is fast becoming a thing of the past.

J. T. Lloyd.

Charles Lamb: Humanist.

His graceful and lovely nature can hardly find expression in any form without giving pleasure to others.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

The most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men. He always made the best pun and the best remark in the course of the evening.—*William Hazlitt.*

Charles Lamb is the most lovable of writers, and, despite his own quaint jest that he wrote for antiquity, he becomes every year a more popular author with posterity. "A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," it could hardly be otherwise, for much that he writes awakens a sense of personal affection in the reader. Writing of youth, of death, of familiar faces, of homely things, he keeps marvellously close to life. It was, we feel, just so with us in childhood, at school, in this sad or glad experience. This power, together with the humanist temperament of getting at the heart of things, makes him keenly alive to life.

As a man, Charles Lamb was well worth knowing. What would it not be worth to have had a few hours of his company? In his buoyant humour, or in his more serious vein, it was all one. Suppose we could have dined with him that day when the dish was the sucking-pig that Farmer Collier sent him, and heard the good wishes wafted to the giver:—

> May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbours lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the days are long.

Or imagine we had been present when the stately and eloquent Coleridge asked him, "Charles, did you ever hear me preach?" and he replied in his amusing way, "I never heard you do anything else." Or what if we had taken a hand at whist when Martin Burney was his partner, and he called out, "Martin, if dirt were trumps, what a hand you'd have." Or, better still, had we been with him that Saturday night when he brought home the folio volume of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Plays* that he had coveted for weeks, while he had saved the price of it, and he could not think of going to bed till the loose leaves had been pasted in, and he had read his favourite passages. Or, best of all, had we been among those to whom his door was open on the famous Wednesday evenings in the Inner Temple Lane. Wordsworth was one of the number when he was in town, and Coleridge, Haydon, Hazlitt, Barry Cornwall, and Talfourd. Surrounded by such a galaxy of genius, it must have been a rich memory, an abiding delight, to have been with Lamb at times like these. It must have been a festal evening such as those ever-memorable nights at Frederick the Great's palace, when the nimble wit of Voltaire challenged the best brains of Europe, or those suppers at the "Mermaid," when rare Ben Jonson exchanged quips and cranks with the smiling Shakespeare, and the brilliant Elizabethan wits made the night merry with their jests.

The austere Thomas Carlyle was one of the very few men of note who misunderstood Lamb. Carlyle's seriousness, his want of humour, his dogmatism, shut the doors of sympathy. When they met the atmosphere was electric. On one occasion, while they were waiting for their host, Carlyle looked out of the window, watching the flight of some pigeons. Lamb, hurt, perhaps, at his silence, went up to him, and asked: "Mr. Carlyle, are you a poulterer?" Another time, as they were together in the hall, preparing to leave a party after the sage had monopolized the conversation, Lamb handed Carlyle his wide-awake hat with the remark: "Is this your turban?" Accordingly, we find the philosopher writing in his journal: "Charles Lamb I sincerely believe to be in some considerable degree insane! A more pitiful, rickety, gasping, staggering, stammering tomfool I do not know." Carlyle was as completely wrong with regard to Lamb as he was in error concerning Henri Heine, Voltaire, and Herbert Spencer. Lamb's jests often contained shrewd observation, as in his ironic expression of regret that the Royalists did not hang John Milton, for then we might have laughed at them.

Other men of genius who knew Lamb realized his real worth. They saw the good nature under the uncouth exterior. Lamb earned his own living, paid his own way, was the helper, not the helped; a man who was beholden to no one, a shrewd man, capable of advice, strong in counsel. He was ever ready both with sympathy and help, generous and unselfish. He had pensioners on his bounty, among whom were an old teacher of his own, and a cripple whose only claim was that he was recommended by his friend, Southey. Barry Cornwall tells a characteristic story. He was in Lamb's company one day, in low spirits, which Lamb thought due to want of

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money. Turning suddenly, Lamb said: "My dear boy, I have a quantity of useless things, including a hundred pounds in my desk, that I don't know what to do with. Take it."

Lamb was a hero, modest, and unobtrusive. There was a taint of insanity in the family, and Lamb never married. What this meant to him may be guessed from the pathetic pages of his essay—*Dream Children*. His sister, Mary, killed her mother in a fit of frenzy. A few weeks' restraint restored her to her right mind, but the disease recurred at intervals ever afterwards, and a retreat was provided in a private asylum. There was warning of their coming, and a friend has related how he met the brother and sister at such a time, walking hand-in-hand across the fields to the asylum, both in tears.

If Charles Lamb waged an unequal war against fate, he was, at least, a happy soldier. When his turn came he yielded up his broken, but not dishonoured, sword to fate, the conqueror, with a brave and a humble heart:—

> What good is like to this,
> To do worthy the writing, and to write
> Worthy the reading and the world's delight?

MIMNERMUS.

Materialism.

III.

(*Concluded from p. 281.*)

THE nerve-cells of the brain, at least so far as those of the cerebrum are concerned, which are arranged in a convulated structure of grey matter, constitute the organs of consciousness. They are connected with each other by numerous nerve-fibres, and thus, under normal circumstances, is made possible the harmonious working of sensory and motor centres.

We have no evidence that it is possible for consciousness—including thought, feeling, volition—to take place in the absence of a nervous system of some kind; while there is evidence in support of the conclusion that consciousness is a mode of motion, which becomes manifest when a material brain functions. In support of this, we may mention that the stimulation of an end-organ must be transmitted to the brain, in order that we may become conscious of it. As a result of mental activity, there is an increase in the circulation of the blood within the brain, which means that material elements are being used up while we are thinking. Along with this, there goes on an increase in the wasting of nerve-cells. And our consciousness may be interrupted, or destroyed, when the brain is injured, or when the supply of blood to the brain becomes greatly increased or decreased. In fact, imperfect development of the brain, with regard to what we might call the harmonious formation of its internal physiological structure, will mean relative imperfection in its thinking. That is, if we could take the brain of a man who has lived in a given environment and attained a certain degree of thinking; and if we were to notice its various imperfections of a serious nature with regard to blood-supply, the formation of convolutions, and the arrangement of nerve-fibres and nerve-cells, we might justly conclude that the thinking capacity of that brain would have been greater had it developed without those imperfections. The same environment is to be presupposed when we think of the brain in question in its imperfect state, and in its state of better development, so as to have it under the same influences in each state.

The process by which consciousness, whether as thought, emotion, or volition, is made possible, may be described in the following manner. Impressions of objects of the outer world are made upon the end-organs of the nerve-fibres, and the latter transmit the impressions to the sensory-cells of the brain, from whence they pass, by means of inter-connecting nerves, to the motor-cells. Rearrangements of the molecules of the grey matter of the brain take place, and the result is thought, emotion, or volition; or, perhaps, all three combined. Various degrees of complexity in the process are possible; but I am more concerned with the fact that the result from this process is due to the functioning of a material organism. To explain consciousness, as some would have us do, is an impossibility at the present time; and Materialists are content with describing the processes by which it is made possible. And the processes are such that we are led to form the conclusion that consciousness is motion manifesting itself in a peculiar way, and that this mode of motion is bound up with a certain kind of highly sensitive matter. This, of course, eliminates the idea of a soul, or a mind, capable of living apart from, or of existing as a distinct being within, a material body. If the term "soul" is to be used at all, it should only be used as an abstraction, denoting the total psychic activity of the nervous system.

One of the greatest mistakes that is made when the mind, or consciousness, is spoken of, is that of assuming it to be a fixed quantity, as it were. Consciousness, as a matter of fact, is subject to a great deal of variation. A man's consciousness is not the same to-day as it was yesterday. This is quite natural, and only to be expected, because our environment is, to some degree, ever changing, even when we are not moving from one environment to another of totally different make-up. Consequently, the impressions transmitted by the nerves from the outer world to the brain are of untold variety, and, as a result of this, consciousness cannot be otherwise than subject to variations with regard to contents and intensity. In the course of years, a man's mental outlook may be so greatly changed that what were objects of delight and interest when he was twenty, have become distasteful to him at the age of thirty. He may have learned to prefer the opera to the music-hall, science rather than fiction; and paintings, which he once thought works of art, may now appeal to him as being mere attempts at the production of something artistic. Or the change may have been for the worse. In either case it goes to prove what the Materialist believes, that mind is a purely national product of evolution.

Here, we can only briefly discuss Materialism in relation to Morality and Humanism. Materialism is directly opposed to the belief that morality is of divine origin, and that this life should be a preparation for a new life, after death.

As there is no evidence that man has an immortal soul, it is a fundamental principle of Materialism that we should spend our strength in trying to make this life better and happier, without troubling about a future life.

Morality is a product of the evolution of human society. It is that relationship which exists between man and man, when their actions toward each other tend to bring about their well-being and happiness. By a very slow process of evolution, men have learned that if they are to live together in society, and enjoy each other's company, they must acknowledge and perform certain actions, which have come to be known as rights and duties. But man's conception of his rights and duties has always been relative to his own environment. There is no absolute standard of right and wrong. What one society of people considers to be right, another society will consider to be wrong; or, at least, look upon it as a matter to be treated with in-

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difference. This, to some extent, accounts for the difficulty with which various classes, communities, and nations mingle together. But as men of different societies learn to agree more and more as to the principles of human actions, and as they learn to respect each other's differences of opinion concerning matters upon which they fail to agree, progress is made in the direction of widening the sphere within which men are able to intermingle with freedom and happiness.

There is nothing divine in this. Our moral feelings and ideas are dependent upon the quality of our brain and nervous system, and the way in which they are affected by our environment. It is by experience that we have all to learn what is best for us to do in order to contribute to the attainment of our own well-being and happiness, and that of our fellow-men. And, in order to do this, it is necessary that we should observe the effects which our speech and actions produce in the lives of those with whom we have to deal. Then, with care and thought, we shall learn how to correct our mistakes in conduct, and make some progress in living for truth, kindness, friendship, and purity. Materialism, rightly understood, does not provide any justification for laxity of living. It insists that matter in motion is essential to human feeling, thinking, and acting, but it also recognizes that matter in motion is capable of expressing itself in beautiful forms, and no less so in human character than in external nature.

The cultivation of art, science, literature, poetry, and the love of the beautiful in Nature, find their place in the philosophy of the Materialist; or, if they fail to do so in any particular case, it is because of some imperfection in the evolution of the grey matter of the brain. It is man's work, therefore, to do all he can to improve his environment so that it will react with favourable influence upon his brain, and thus make him more capable of performing the duties and enjoying the pleasures of life.

E. Egerton Stafford.

N. S. S. Conference.

Executive's Annual Report.

By The President.

It says much for the inherent strength of the Freethought Movement that, after nearly four years of war, your Executive is able to report continuous progress in all directions. In all parts the interest in our propaganda is increasing, meetings have been more numerous than has been the case for some years; the attendances have been large and enthusiastic, and the demand for our literature sustained. The threatened religious revival has not transpired, but there has been a decided awakening of Freethinking activity and interest.

The Executive takes pleasure in reporting that the accession of new members, noted in last year's report, continues, with gratifying results. During the year new Branches of the N. S. S. have been opened at Regent's Park (London), Goldthorpe, Southampton, Nuneaton, and Portsmouth. Branches in other parts of the country are also in process of formation, and it is hoped that in the near future a network of Branches may be established throughout the country.

It is also gratifying to record that the Branches formed during the past and previous years are settling down to work in a business-like spirit. The Swansea Branch, which works in one of the strongholds of Welsh Nonconformity, has had a most successful winter season. Meetings have been regularly held, and the audiences have been satisfactory from the point of view of numbers and enthusiasm. The New Manchester Branch can now boast of one of the strongest memberships in the country, and also reports a successful winter season. Birmingham friends were fortunate in securing the use of the new and handsome Repertory Theatre, and the fortnightly meetings have given great encouragement to all. Local friends would be well advised to see that this experiment does not break down for want of a little timely financial aid. Liverpool has been suffering from inability to secure a suitable hall, but it has held some meetings in the best available place, and the results have shown that the public is ready for the call when it is made. South Shields has had occasional special lectures, also with success. Glasgow, which, in a sense, is now farther than ever away from London, thanks to increased railway charges, has had its meeting-place commandeered by the Government; but up to that point the meetings addressed by the President and Mr. Lloyd were large and enthusiastic. Southampton, Goldthorpe, and Nuneaton have also settled down to work, and the results have been such as to encourage them to look forward to the autumn with increased hopes and pleasurable anticipations.

In London, a successful series of Sunday Afternoon Meetings were arranged by the Executive, and were only suspended when religious prejudice prevented our further use of the hall. More lectures would have been arranged but for the shortage of halls, a difficulty more or less general—owing to the War. For the rest of London, the open-air stations were well maintained during the summer; and during the winter, Sunday Evening Meetings were carried on by the South London Branch. In North London the local Branch inaugurated a series of Sunday Evening Open Discussions, which aroused considerable interest in those who made it their business to attend. This is a feature that might be followed with profit by Branches elsewhere.

The Executive deeply regrets to report the death of Mr. Samuel Morley Peacock, of South Shields. Mr. Peacock was one of the Society's oldest Vice-Presidents, and no Freethinker in South Shields was better known or more respected. His interest in educational matters was always keen, and for many years he sat on the local School Board as a staunch supporter of the policy of Secular Education. His death robs Tyneside of one of its familiar figures. It is gratifying to learn that the Secular Society, Limited, is one of the beneficiaries under his will.

During the year a scheme has been propounded to present a portrait of Charles Bradlaugh to the National Portrait Gallery. It is not yet quite certain whether the Trustees will accept the portrait; but failing their acceptance, it will be presented to some other public institution. The portrait is to be painted by the Hon. John Collier, and the sum required is about £200. Over £100 has been subscribed, and the remainder will no doubt be forthcoming when required. A Committee has been formed to carry the scheme through. Mr. Cohen is a member of the Committee, and a subscription towards the cost of the portrait was voted by the Executive.

When this Conference met last year, we were able to congratulate the Secular Society, Limited, on its magnificent victory in the Law Courts. It was quite plain that one consequence of this victory was to legalize a bequest to any Freethought Society, whether the Society was registered or not. The Conference had scarcely adjourned before proof of this was furnished. An old friend of the Movement, Captain Raggett, died, leaving a small bequest to this Society. The testator's solicitor wrote, asking for particulars of the Society, so that he might advise the executors of Captain Raggett's will. These were at once supplied, and the bequest was paid without demur.

The Executive has great pleasure in reporting that the dispute with the London County Council over the sale of literature in the parks and open spaces under its control has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It will be remembered that the L.C.C. decided to prohibit the sale of literature in such places, in connection with meetings, after September, 1916. Your Executive saw in this a quite unwarrantable attack on the right of public meetings, and felt that, if allowed to pass unchallenged, it would only be the beginning of still more drastic and retrogressive steps. On the initiative of the Executive, a Defence Committee was formed, on which your President represented the N. S. S., and Miss Vance acted as Hon. Secretary. Mr. F. Verinder, a Churchman, but a man who values public rights and justice above all, acted as Chairman, and deserves the highest praise for his untiring and able direction of affairs.

After several summonses had been heard in the police

(Continued on p. 296.)

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Acid Drops.

We ought to have noted last week a case in connection with the Central London School Assistants and Southwark Union. The Superintendent reported that a number of boys had been caned for absenting themselves from afternoon "Divine Service." The day was a fine one, and the boys had gone out instead of attending chapel—which shows good judgment on the part of the boys. The Rev. T. Green, one of the Managers, suggested that the Chaplain might arrange for an evening service. It is noticeable that no objection was taken to the caning. What we should like to have, is the name of this flogging bigot who is so fond of the cane as an adjunct and as an aid to religious instruction. The matter has been referred to the "House Committee," and we hope that body will express a pretty sharp opinion on the matter.

The Congregational Union of Scotland gravely suggests placing wealthy Germans in every hospital ship—removing them last if the ships are torpedoed. Certainly an original way of forgiving one's enemies.

Canon Hodgson has not the courtly manners of a Lord Chesterfield. Referring to the women munition-workers, he asked, "Are they a righteous lot?" and added, "One is a bit anxious about the future home life of England." The obvious reply is that everybody would be far more anxious about the homes of England if the defence of the country had been left to the skin-careful clergy.

Westminster had the unusual experience lately of a Roman Catholic procession to the Abbey. It was organized by Father Bernard Vaughan, and was a pilgrimage to the shrine of "Saint" Edward the Confessor. In the Abbey, Father Vaughan said they asked for the "saint's" intercession at the Throne of Grace for aid in fighting the Germans. The cream of the jest is that equally pious Catholics in Austria and Germany are pleading with other "saints" for the success of the Central Powers. And, as there are more Catholics on the Continent, their appeal is very likely to be more noisy and insistent.

Referring to the Germans' claim that they made the mist under cover of which they attacked the Fifth Army, the *Daily News* says "Joshua's performance in the valley of Ajalon is beginning to look very contemptible." Where does the editor of the *Daily News* expect to spend eternity?

At Riga, the Germans have converted the Greek Orthodox Cathedral into a Protestant place of worship. What terrible "Atheists" those Germans are!

Mr. John Kensit is beating the Protestant drum very loudly, and is lecturing on "Is Rome Behind the War?" Even he must admit that the influence of the Roman Catholic Church is not very pronounced in Bulgaria, Russia, Turkey, and Japan.

The Vicar of Feltham, at a meeting of parishioners, produced a balance-sheet, stating that, after necessary expenses were deducted, he "received minus £73—4s. 10d. a house." Has he taken lessons in book-keeping from the Bishop of London, who professes poverty on an income sufficient to keep fifty families?

The tenderness of the military authorities towards the clergy has now been extended to the religious camp-followers. According to a newspaper paragraph, it is not proposed to call up "full-time workers of the Young Men's Christian Association." "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"

The clergy are very fond of exploiting the War for the benefit of religion. Billy Sunday, the American Evangelist, sent a telegram to Mr. Lloyd George: "We are with you to the trench." Billy ought to know that the clergy prefer their parsonages to the trenches; and that he has no mandate to speak for the American Armies.

General Maurice, whose name is on everybody's lips, is a grandson of the Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice, the famous Christian Socialist, and the friend of Tennyson and Kingsley. He is chiefly remembered as the first Church of England clergyman who protested publicly against the dogmas of eternal damnation and hell fire.

We are glad to see the *Nation* giving a rap over the knuckles to those fiery members of the Established Church who write as though the question of marriage concerned them alone. It is not for the Anglican Bishops, as the *Nation* well says, to decide what form of marriage is right and what is wrong. That is wholly for the Secular State. And the Anglican Church is a part of the State. It was created by the State, fed by the State, its ritual decreed by the State. If certain people want a religious performance at marriage, let them have it. That is their own concern. But we fancy the fussiness of the bishops will serve only to teach sensible people that the civil form of marriage is the only one that really matters.

The death of George, King of the Tonga Islands, reminds us that the deceased monarch's predecessor was known as "the only Wesleyan King." Lest Wesleyans should get "swelled heads," we add that the monarch was a coloured brother.

A Select Committee of the House of Lords has recommended that the St. Olave's Church, Southwark, Bill should proceed on the ground that the church is useless, and the churchyard derelict and disreputable. The Christian religion does not appear to be flourishing in the Capital of the Empire.

The May Meetings have one advantage, and that is they throw considerable light on the inside of the Churches. The clergy are adepts at window-dressing, but at these annual functions matters are discussed which are kept discreetly in the background at other times. Thus, at the Congregational Union meeting the question of overlapping churches was discussed, and a suggestion was made that in villages where more than one chapel was to be found, and where there were not enough people to fill more than one place, one building should be used as a village hall. This, as our French friends would say, is the beginning of the end.

The British and Foreign Bible Society's output since the commencement of the War has been forty millions. What a waste of paper!

The Bishop of Lichfield says "our soldiers are literally defending our hearths and homes." He did not add that the great majority of the dear clergy were safe in their vicarages.

Lord Leverhulme says that "the most valuable adjunct in life is leisure." The dear clergy found that out many centuries ago.

The *British Weekly* is sometimes very sententious. In a recent issue it pointed out that "it is, however, always most dangerous to put one's head between the jaws of a lion." Unless, of course, the lion is as polite as the animals who smiled at the prophet Daniel.

The Rev. J. Pughe-Jones, R.A.F., formerly curate of St. James's Church, Brookfield, Highgate Road, has been described as "the first flying preacher." Surely, there is a mistake in this description. The Gospels state that the Founder of Christianity did some flying in his time.

The Rev. Bernard T. Snell, ex-president of the Congregational Union, says that he has heard Churches spoken of as "permanent garrisons opposed to popular ideals." He will find it difficult to refute the soft impeachment.

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To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—May 26, Maesteg.

D. N. (Edinburgh).—We have glanced through the *Message from God*, and if it is really authentic, its silliness will explain many things in his alleged government of the world.

D. Legar.—We have every sympathy with the mothers and wives who have lost sons or husbands in France. But their finding consolation in religion is evidence only that they believe in their religion. If they believed in another religion, they would find in it as much or as a little comfort; and if they were without religion altogether, it would make no difference in the way they face disaster—which is ultimately an expression of temperament and education.

Mrs. M. Lester.—We do not know any Nature songs that would suit you. We should think a number of ballads, such as any music dealer would recommend, would meet the case. But your husband's choice, we think, is good. It is well not to be too sensitive on such matters.

J. B.—Received, with thanks. We endorse your estimate of the gentlemen named. "Jolly good fellows" describes them well.

G. E. Francis.—Let us know your wishes, anyway. We will do all we can.

W. Repton.—Pleased to hear from you, and to know that you are well.

M. F. Bishara (Egypt).—We do not see any evidence whatever of a "soul" in hypnotism. The brain is *not* incapable of thinking in this state, since it acts on suggestions and carries them into operation.

Three Dundee Friends.—15s. for distribution of literature among the men at the Front.

J. E. Witheford.—Parcel of literature for distribution is being sent. Pleased to know that you have been relieved of Church attendance, and also that so much interest in the *Freethinker* is shown by your fellow-soldiers.

F. Betts.—Thanks. Shall be able to use later. Rather crowded at present. We do not anticipate much trouble so far as we are concerned, but time will show.

T. Jones.—We are sending the paper for thirteen weeks to the address given. We are also enclosing some other literature. This is in accord with our offer of last week, and the expense is covered—so far as the *Freethinker* is concerned.

W. Briden and Others.—*Freethinker* being sent for thirteen weeks, free, to addresses given.

D. Mason.—Mr. Cohen is not likely to be lecturing before September 24, when he commences his winter season in the Town Hall, Birmingham.

R. H. Rosetti.—Very glad to see from your letter that you are still exempt from the attentions of German shells and bullets. We welcome also your expressions of appreciation of our work. We are looking forward to the time when you will again resume your work for the Old Cause.

A. B. Moss.—We greatly appreciate the congratulations of so old a writer and speaker for Freethought as yourself. We intend keeping on with our work, and to follow your advice so far as is possible.

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

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 must ask the indulgence of our correspondents this week for a number of letters remaining unanswered, and also for a paucity of paragraphic matter. But we have only one pair of hands, and as everything has to be done single-handed, and there has been unusual pressure of work in other directions, we sometimes need more than a twenty-four hours' day to do it all. We shall make good all lee-way by our next issue.

The following Resolution has been passed by the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S., and copies sent to all Liverpool M.P.'s and to the Minister of Education:—

> That this meeting of the Members of the Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society hails with pleasure the introduction of Mr. Fisher's New Education Bill in the present Session of Parliament, and desires to emphasize the need for purely Secular Education. We contend it is morally wrong to teach children in the Public Schools, at the public expense, particular views on the nature of religion, and we demand as a matter of elementary justice for the adult, and freedom for the child, that all forms of religious education be eliminated from the school curriculum.

We hope other Branches and Societies will follow suit.

Mr. W. Walden writes from France to tell us that, thanks to the Army Order which we published in this paper, he has had his own way in getting his position in relation to religion recorded, and is also "dismissed" from attendance at church. We are very pleased to hear this, and also that the free literature we have sent out "has fallen on fruitful soil."

Mr. F. Betts writes:—

> As you will see I am in the Army, my experiences may possibly interest you, as I joined up as an Atheist.
>
> My first skirmish was on attesting, when Captain Cyril Yard tried to saddle me with a religion. I objected. He objected to my objection. I persisted in what I termed my right, and he phoned to H. Q., Wolverhampton. They were quite at sea. Finally I produced a copy of the Oaths and Affirmation Acts, 1888, and pointed out the procedure of affirmation. He expressed his regret for his ignorance, and asked permission to retain copy of the Act.
>
> My second skirmish was at Fort Brockhurst, when the question of religion again rose over my identification disc. After some discussion, my "rosary" was stamped "F. Betts, Atheist." I had won again.
>
> Having entered the Army without a religion, one would have thought that I might rest in peace. It was not so. The question of Church Parade arose. Once more I stood out for my right as a Freethinker. I was offered "Police Duty" as an alternative. As an *alternative* parade I accepted it. During my stay there I always accepted that fatigue. In fact I came to enjoy the three hours, 9 p.m. till midnight, when I could commune with the night.
>
> Arriving here I again firmly insisted on my being exempted from Church Parade. It was granted—*without any alternative.*

We are evidently making headway in the Army, as elsewhere. We wish that all Freethinkers would follow the example set by Mr. Betts.

Several friends have written enclosing the names of soldiers to whom copies of the *Freethinker* are to be sent for three months. Twenty-one of these quarterly subscriptions have been paid for by a friend, and our list is not yet complete. And if it were, we should still send. As a matter of fact, we have been sending free literature ever since the War started. And it has done considerable good.

The Secretary of the new Maesteg Branch writes that Mr. Lloyd's meetings will be held in that town in the Gem Cinema Theatre at 2.30 and 7.30. A "light tea" will be provided for all visitors from a distance. We hope these will be numerous, and the hall crowded. There should be half-a-dozen new Branches in S. Wales before the year is over.

Sir Harry H. Johnston is to deliver the Ninth Conway Memorial Lecture at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, on Thursday, May 30, at 5, p.m., his subject being "The Urgent Need for a Reform in Education." Admission will be free, except to a few reserved seats.

These are the days when the price of everything goes up, and so it is cheerful to record a case where the price has gone down. The Pioneer Press has a few hundred copies of the late G. W. Foote's *The Grand Old Book*, a criticism of the Bible, which was originally published at a shilling. It is now being offered at twopence, postage 1½d. Only a small number is available.

We regret that owing to want of space we have been compelled to hold over the continuation of Mr. Palmer's informing series of articles until our next issue.

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Presidential Notes.

ON Sunday last the Annual Conference of the N. S. S., in one of the most representative gatherings of recent years, did me the honour of re-electing me as its President. Every Branch of the Society—now numbering nineteen as against nine when I became President two years ago—was represented, save one, and that one was only unrepresented by accident. In the circumstances, I feel it a personal compliment that so many delegates should have travelled to London from distances represented by Glasgow at one extreme and Swansea at the other, in order to support my candidature. Except for a very small and well localized opposition, the support given was general throughout the country. I was again assured of the confidence of British Freethinkers, and I think I know myself well enough to be assured that this confidence will continue. Opposition to a new President seems hereditary in the N. S. S. Charles Bradlaugh had it when he commenced his Presidential career; G. W. Foote also experienced it; and the "law" is again fulfilling itself. I am encouraged, however, by the knowledge that neither of these great men had, at the outset of their Presidential career, so small a minority in opposition or so large a majority in support.

With regard to the general business of the Conference, discussion on my proposals for re-organization took up so much time that only the necessary formal business was attempted. Owing, also, to the determined opposition of a minority in the meeting, it became impossible adequately to discuss my proposals in the time at the disposal of the Conference. They might have been carried substantially as they stood, as the majority of delegates appear to have come with the authorization of their Branches to vote in their support, and had I forced the issue they would have been carried. But it is always possible to move amendment after amendment, and so spend time, and in the end, so that the complaint that they had not been adequately discussed could not be made, I agreed to the matter being referred to a committee made up of three delegates from London, four from Provincial Branches, which with the President and Secretary, should consider my scheme, and report, with such alterations and additions as are thought desirable to a Special Conference.

This delays a much-needed reform, but the delay is not my fault. I have done my duty in bringing the matter to a head. The question of re-organization cannot now be evaded or denied, and so good has been done. Perhaps it is all for the best. I am certain that those delegates who were present from all over the country will see the need for something to be accomplished in the shape of creating a really democratic society which shall actually represent the members composing it.

Personally, I shall continue as I have done hitherto. Two years of my Presidency has left the N.S.S. stronger, and more active in every way than when I assumed office. I am hopeful that the third year will show a still greater advance. I have no other interest in the matter than that of the dominating one of devotion to a great cause.

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President N.S.S.*

On earth discord! A gloomy Heaven above opening its jealous gates to the nineteen-thousandth part of the tithe of mankind! And below an inexorable Hell expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals! O doctrine comfortable and healing to the weary wounded soul of man.

—*Robert Burns.*

(Executive's Annual Report—continued from p. 293.)

courts, the Committee took a step which it had all along regarded as inevitable. A test case was raised on an application made for a permit to sell literature by a Branch of the National League of the Blind. This was refused, and application was made to the High Court asking for a rule calling upon the L.C.C. to show cause for its action. This was granted without hesitation, and came on for hearing before Justices Darling, Sankey, and Avory. The judges were unanimously in favour of the applicant, and gave judgment to that effect, with costs. The victory was complete, and the matter now stands substantially where it did before the Council took its ill-advised action. It is to be hoped that the regulations will now be carried out with justice to all concerned. The Executive has, however, justification in congratulating the Society on the outcome of its endeavours. The question was purely a matter of principle, and that principle has been vindicated. It should be added that the Executive contributed from its funds £10 towards the cost of the case, and a sum of over £40 was raised by the Editor of the *Freethinker* and handed over to the Committee.

The War has brought to the front a subject that is always of importance to Freethinkers. When the War began, there was considerable doubt in the minds of both officers and recruits on the question of affirmation. Thanks to the publicity given to the matter in the *Freethinker*, complaints on this head have greatly diminished in number. A soldier has exactly the same rights as a civilian, and with respect to a statement of religious opinion, officers are bound to take that as given, and anyone joining the Army or Navy may be entered as Freethinker, Atheist, or Agnostic, or by any other title. The large number who have insisted upon their right has had an educational effect on all concerned.

Attendance at Church Parade and at Church still remains, however, compulsory. Letters continually reach headquarters protesting against being compelled to take part in a service in which they do not believe, and to which they have the strongest possible objection. Under prevailing conditions not very much could be done; but full publicity has been given to the matter, the War Office has been made acquainted with the grievance, and, as a result of the publicity achieved, numbers of soldiers have asked to be relieved from Church Parade, the authorities showing a disposition to deal more adequately with the matter in the future. Your Executive must, however, again protest against the injustice of denying to a soldier a right conferred upon all civilians in all civilized countries. Men will not be worse, but better soldiers, when due regard is paid to some of the deepest of their intellectual convictions.

The question of religious instruction in the schools still remains where it was. No mention of religion is made in the Bill now before Parliament, and there are reasons for believing that this may be dealt with in a separate measure. If this is so, it is almost certain to be on the basis of an agreement between the Christian sects, in which the rights and claims of non-Christians will be substantially ignored. In these circumstances the Executive urges Freethinkers everywhere to be active and on the alert. Much may be done by seeing that a resolution is passed at all meetings where it is possible to bring one forward, calling for the application of the principle of the Secular solution in all State supported schools. No other policy is just, and no other policy will put an end to that which has for more than a generation obstructed educational progress. Freethought stands here for no sectarian advantage but for an all-round measure of justice.

The Executive feels that it is fully justified in closing this Report on a note of satisfaction with the year that has closed, and of the increased hope in the future. Everywhere the story is one of progress. The War, which has disproved many time-honoured fallacies, has, undoubtedly, given an impetus to various hitherto unfashionable opinions. The very general feeling of disgust at the attitude of the clergy in first playing the part of active recruiting agents, and then being exempted from the operations of the Military Service Acts, the shock given by the War to those who believed that in some way Christianity was an instrument of good in the

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world, have combined to drive thousands to a reconsideration of the whole question of religion, and this has reacted powerfully in favour of Freethought. Freethought to-day is more active and more actual than it has been for many years. All over the country men and women are beginning to realize that Freethought is no mere academic question with which to pass an idle hour. They are realizing that, on the contrary, it forms the condition of the solution of the gravest social problems. Now, as ever, the "Age of Reason" is the condition for the achievement of the "Rights of Man." It is for our Society to make the most of the opportunities that now present themselves, and organize for a more effective warfare against the enemies of truth, freedom, and justice.

Immortality.

I had climbed the steep of a Gloucestershire lane, and stood gazing upon a panorama of wonderful beauty. The "Surprise View," it is called, and nothing was ever more appropriately named; for on reaching the brow of the incline one beholds, stretching in one grand sweep, the magnificent Severn valley, rich in colour, and stately in its impressiveness. I was glad to rest, though I forgot tiredness in the entrancement. I tried to enjoy the full of every detail, but the grandeur was baffling.

In parts, the slopes leading down to the picturesque waterway were thickly wooded, whilst the rest was apportioned into wide stretches of meadows and fields with boundary hedges seeming like the grotesque pencilling of a cubist drawing. The thin, silvery wind of the river could be seen meandering a way between its verdant borders, occasionally receding from view behind the timbered protrusions of high banks. The further side of the valley was suffused by the purple tint of distant atmosphere, whilst the full glare of the early afternoon sun made the extensive pastureland a motley of varied greens. The sky appeared a blue wash, showing up with pleasing distinctness a solitary belt of snow-white clouds that seemed to be hung motionless by invisible strands. The whole was a scene of enchanting beauty, and, in spite of the overbearing sultriness, every breath inhaled imbued a bracing naturalness.

The autumn sun gave abundantly, and the heat was terrific; so terrific that one could almost see it like a curtain in the middle distance. Everything seemed resigned to mute acceptance of the relentless rays. There was a slothness in the gait of pedestrians, whose lethargic locomotion suggested a strong desire to withdraw to pleasant shades. The air held all in a stagnant grip. Overhead, the throb of an aeroplane reverberated in a drone that pressed. There was not the slightest wisp of a breeze to stir the full-foliaged trees, or to scatter the heat that glanced from the ground. Stillness—intense stillness that held the temples in a vice—lay heavy everywhere.

Yet deep down, chafing beneath that stillness, there was life. It was not aggressive. Nature was in a sluggish mood, but permeating all—every blade of grass—was coursing life. The very quietness and submission to the inevitable, denoted—impressed—that somewhere there was an indomitable force. The whole landscape was bulging with it, quietly waiting to give riotous expression.

The heat-laden ray beat me to cover. I looked round for a sheltered place, and at last located, just below, an erosion in the hillside. I made a circuitous descent, and entered the enclosure, settling myself in the shade at the foot of the earthern wall.

In comfort I enjoyed the glorious scene, noting the immediate surroundings. The road by which I had approached led through a low-lying village to my right, but I had branched off by a pathway which continued, close beside me, through the churchyard not more than a stone's throw away. The church itself stood on prominent guard over the cluster of cottages and farms of the village whose roads (as befitted the humble supplication of rural devotion) all led to the arrogant sentinel above. From some of the cottage chimneys smoke rose perpendicular, making thin milky tracings to the sky. The planning of those cottages was delightfully irregular, some seeming to crowd others out of existence, whilst odd ones were aristocratic with their spacious yards and gardens.

Then, as I gazed at that tranquil fluttering of civilization, a curious comparison commanded my thought. On the one hand was the Church, monumental and inanimate; on the other the wonderful unsullied craft of nature resplendent in glorious tranformation. The two became more incongruous as I meditated. The Church, what did it represent? Its complacent indifference challenged the glory of its setting. Yet it stood as a thanksgiving. The anomaly! One day in seven within its manufactured portals (sanctified by nominal travesty) praise of the beauty around was offered through liturgical burlesque and monotonous chanting. Superstition and pageant mummery are the height of artistic appreciation that civilization has bequeathed to the Church—or the Church to men. And men bow their heads.

But the valley. There my thoughts probed the lapse of ages. That interminable stretch of time seemed an impassable gulf, yet it was easily bridged. Slowly the ego faded until the "I" was no more, the while receding through the labyrinths of cause and effects. Back to the almost incredulous embryo; dissecting and analytical, wandering among the phantasmagoria of prehistoric forms—of cells and protoplasms. Then, again, returning slowly along the course of evolution. The scheme, dovetailed and interlocked in perfect order and symmetry, was perplexing—bewildering to a plebeian mind. But even my dulled senses grasped the great truth—the true fact of existence. Permeating, vibrating, through every atom was some supreme force of animation; the co-ordination of all matter that could not be separated, inter-existing so that the least could not be taken away. A gradual evolutionary force that neither lagged nor gathered impetus. It was inviolable for all time. For all time! In a flash my scattered senses were steadied—*for all time*—that was it—the real immortality.

Voices just above jerked me back to self-consciousness. A party had been viewing the scene, and, as they moved away, a voice was saying: "Yes, it is a pretty view—but the church, is it not superb?" I shuddered in spite of the heat. The graven image is ever worshipped.

W.

Demonstration at Queen's Hall.

Mr. Chapman Cohen presided at the evening public meeting, which was well attended, many provincial visitors being present. He was supported by Messrs. J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, F. Willis, A. D. Howell Smith, W. Heaford, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner.

Mr. Cohen, who had a very cordial reception, said that the National Secular Society was one of the oldest societies in Great Britain. It had always been connected with fighting, ever since the days of Charles Bradlaugh, its first President. Its second President was G. W. Foote, who possessed one of the best brains and most cultured intellects that English Freethought ever had. He himself now stood in the position of these two illustrious men. The mere position of the presidency of any society did not appeal to him, as such, for he never cared for honours, and would no more think of running after a president's job than a knighthood—a title which was thrown about as recklessly as stale bloaters. But as head of the N. S. S. there was an opportunity of doing work on behalf of one of the noblest causes that ever occupied the minds of men. And from this point of view there was both a compliment and an opportunity in being selected the member of the National Secular Society to represent their cause to the world. There is great need for Freethought in the world. It is the only thing that could break down international suspicion and promote the genuine brotherhood of nations. A frame of mind lies behind every movement. Fools run after knaves more energetically than knaves pursue fools. Freethought makes men think.

The clerical prophecy of the revival of religion had not been realized. Angels appeared at Mons, but they had probably only enlisted for three years, and not the duration of the War, and the angels had vanished. All over the world men see the failure of Christianity; they look at the world and they realize that it could hardly be worse. The clergy have missed their chance. They might have stood as representatives of humanity and brotherhood in a world gone mad. But the

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priests were ever opportunists. They went to the Front—or near the Front—and came back with delicious yarns of soldiers begging for more chaplains. We all know how far these tales were true. Soldiers' letters proved the truth as to whether for one request for cigarettes there were a dozen for chaplains. And religion did not bubble from soldiers when they were on home-leave. The clergy clearly believe that truth is a valuable thing, not to be thrown away indiscriminately.

If there were not a revival of superstition, there was a revival of Freethought. He had received letters from all parts of the fighting area proving this. Common sense is catching, and thousands were thinking now who never thought before. The logic of events is teaching the supremacy of reason. Men are beginning to realize that there is sanity in Secularism. If there is another life, that is all the more reason for making the most of this. A man cannot be happy by himself; he must share his happiness with others. Unselfishness is the secret of keeping life sweet, clean, and healthy. The flowing tide is with Secularism. Education is on our side; knowledge is on our side; science is on our side. The world is getting tired of theology and of the clergy. What freedom we have obtained has been purchased at a price awful to contemplate. Pioneers have to endure, and those who follow reap the profit. We have inherited the fruits of their work and ill deserve the gift if we do not do something in return for the best of causes. The world is always being made better for the many through the sufferings of the few. In the great French Revolution, the last few survivors of the Girondists stood at the foot of the guillotine, waiting for death. As they stood they sang the *Marseillaise*, as only Frenchmen can sing that noble hymn. It was an act of faith by men, who, although dying, felt that Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity would one day be living realities. What the world needs to-day is the undying hope of that hardy band of heroes. For then, man, no longer the dupe of political and spiritual despots, will be conscious of his own power, rulers of the forces around him, and master of his own destiny.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd said that Secularism stood for freedom from the tyranny of the supernatural, and for freedom from false hopes. Christian critics allege that this liberty means licence, but Christians are themselves disbelievers in Freedom. Secularism enhances the reality and importance of this life. Freethinkers did not object to the idea of another life, but they knew nothing of it. Christianity laid too much emphasis on a world to come, and the present Bishop of London told the faithful to think nothing of this world, but to think of God and eternity. Christ himself insisted that his religion was not of this world. Life here was only preparatory to a life hereafter. But this attitude blocked progress. Why should Christians trouble about social reforms here if they were only strangers and pilgrims in the world. In the days of negro slavery Christians told the unfortunate slaves that they would be free in the hereafter; and poor Christians everywhere had always held before them the parable of Dives and Lazarus, where the rich man went to hell and the poor man to heaven. Christians cared more for liberty in other countries than their own. Even Wilberforce, who did so much for the black slave, did not do anything for the white slaves in this country in factories and mines. It remained for a later generation to point out the evils and horrors of child-labour. He heard a preacher recently, and the burden of his sermon was that people were ashamed of Christ and his Gospel. How true that was! Men and women are getting ashamed of the Christian religion, and listening more and more to the voice of Reason.

The veteran, Mr. William Heaford, said that, although an old worker in the best of causes, he felt perennial youth in regarding the vista of the future. Standing in a critical juncture in the world's history, men were perceiving that the Churches had failed. Instead of bringing the redemption of mankind into the region of fact, they had failed to restrain horrors at which mankind revolted. The God of the Churches had been proved to be a great neutral, a deity who did absolutely nothing, although the majority of the nations implored help from heaven. After 1,800 years of the Gospel of Christ Europe was deluged in blood, and it was noticeable that it was Freethinkers who voiced the feelings of humanity, and pointed out that international disputes should be settled by rational means rather than by the repulsive methods of brute force. A world controlled by Freethinkers could never have had such a history of eighteen centuries as Christianity had given, but would have realized the dreams of poets and philosophers, and made a beautiful world, which would ever be made still more beautiful to posterity.

Another veteran, Mr. A. B. Moss, pointed out that Christians complained that they had left undone those things they ought to have done, and done those things that they ought not to have done, and it was permissible to ask whether such reflections occurred to their deity? It was hard to conceive of a good and kind father in heaven witnessing such a great panorama of tragedy unmoved on the earth. A good deity might, conceivably, have stopped the murder of civilians of old men and women, of little children. He might have shorn the War of some of its worst horrors. The deity had done nothing. All the things of good repute done in this War had been done by human beings. If only the time, money, and energy expended on this dreadful War had been devoted to the spread of knowledge, and for the uplifting of humanity, our children's children would have had the greatest cause to bless their ancestors. The only right way of living was that which would gladden the hearts of succeeding generations.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner was in a reminiscent vein. Speaking as her father's daughter, she said that he valued the position of President of the N. S. S. because by virtue of that office he was the acknowledged champion of Freethought, and could voice the aspirations of thousands who otherwise had been voiceless. Those who worked with Charles Bradlaugh were getting fewer in number, but his influence was still real. She had a letter from Scotland in which the writer said what an inspiration Bradlaugh had been to him, and he added: "If we had a thousand Bradlaughs, England would be a Freethought country." Younger Freethinkers were inclined to underrate the works of the pioneers, forgetting that whatever liberty they possessed had been won for them by their heroic predecessors. At the last Conference Bradlaugh addressed he pointed out that the great fight between Freethought and Superstition had yet to come. In the old days Freethinkers had to fight for the right to think aloud. Bradlaugh could only do so because of the work of Richard Carlile and his colleagues. Huxley, Darwin, and Tyndall were only enabled to build where the pioneers had cleared the ground. Bradlaugh's message was: "Be on guard." The Catholic Church, the strongest Church in Christendom, was as much the enemy of progress and freedom as in the days of the Inquisition. Every Freethinker can help in his own way.

Mr. Howell Smith said the special need of the world was love and fine thinking. We have had enough of hatred and coarse thinking. The Church has professed to preach love, with what results we all know. The Church has taught freedom—in heaven. Freethinkers believe that without liberty on earth life is not worth living. Despite the hymn, "There's a friend for little children," the Church has never been the friend of the child. Nor has the Church done anything for woman. It is not even the friend of the worker, and economic slaves still remain unemancipated. Long before the days of Lord Shaftesbury, Robert Owen, the Freethinker cared for the white slaves of England. All that the Church had done was to claim victories won by other and better men.

Mr. F. Willis, of Birmingham, said he had visited the fighting Front and knew the truth about the boasted revival of religion among the soldiers. The only thing that soldiers wanted to know was concerning the welfare of their kith and kin. Soldiers pinned their faith to shells and not to Bibles. Christians boasted of the miracle of the Virgin's statue of Albert, which, it was alleged, was divinely spared from artillery fire; but what state of mind was it that could conceive of a deity who spared a paltry statue and allowed human beings to be murdered. This War had done harm to Christianity, and men remembered that the Christian God was not a naturalized British deity. It remains for us to dispel superstition from the minds of men, and to realize that the theological tyrants will not live for ever.

G. E. S.

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Correspondence.

EPITAPHS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Let's talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs.
—*King Richard II.*, Act iii. 2.

SIR,—A tomb in the north cloister of Tetbury Parish Church, Gloucestershire, has the following inscription:—

"In a Vault underneath lie several of the Saunderses, late of this Parish:—particulars, the Last Day will disclose. Amen."

"This monument was erected to the memory of Sam Jones who was accidentally shot as a mark of respect by his brother."

"Here lies the body of Mary Anne,
Safe in the bosom of Abraham;
'Tis all very well for Mary Anne,
But it's simply hell for Abraham."

"Here lie the bones of William Jones,
Who all his life collected bones;
Till death, that grisly, bony, spectre,
That most amazing bone collector,
Hath boned poor Jones, all snug and tidy,
And here he lies in bona fide."

Added by a wag:—

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum."

The following caustic apothegm was scribbled on the gate of a cemetery by a cynic:—

"Here lie the dead, and here the living also *lie*."

E. 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.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, William Archer, M.A., "Our Duty to India."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Neutrals and the War.—The Editor	301
The Cross of Christ.—J. T. Lloyd	302
Christian Camouflage.—Mimnermus	303
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	304
The "Tricks of the Spirits."—Arthur B. Moss	308
One With Another.—G. E. Fussell	310
N. S. S. Annual Conference—Report of Business Meeting	310
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

Neutrals and the War.

Before America's entry into the War millions of people were blaming her for her neutrality. And I for one sympathized with the complaint. Of course, if war is never more than a balancing of profit and loss, then a country is justified in standing out of a quarrel when it may lose much or gain little by taking sides. But if war is, or is to be, more than that—if to act as the cause of war is to commit the crime of crimes—then neutrality has no place with a people governed by moral considerations. The war-maker is a criminal, and decent people the world over have the same interest in his suppression that they have in that of the confirmed homicide. But American opinion needed education on the rights and wrongs of the War. When that process of education was sufficiently advanced America took the side of the Allies. No one can doubt that had the matter rested with President Wilson war would have been declared with Germany at a much earlier date.

* * *

Our Neutral God.

Now, take President Wilson out of the picture and substitute God. Does the moral issue stand differently? We think not; and for very good reasons. Several correspondents have favoured me with a copy of an article by Mr. B. Newman Flower, which appeared in a recent issue of the *Weekly Dispatch*, entitled "Why God is a Neutral Still." The question to which Mr. Newman Flower attempts an answer is not new. It has been asked by thousands—perhaps millions—of people, and replied to in a score of ways. And these people are still wondering why God is neutral. For the claim of religion has hitherto been that God was not neutral. He was on the side of righteousness. Tracts and books, written by the faithful for the foolish, have provided the world with hundreds of illustrations of God's active interference in the affairs of men. From the case of Sodom and Gommorah, blasted by God because of its sins, down to the cases of boys drowned for playing games on Sunday, and infidels stricken with blindness or death for "blaspheming" God, we have been fed with stories of how God does interfere. Have we not prayers to God on the War, which proves the possibility of action; and thanks to God for victories, which assumes that he has interfered? And if God is not neutral in the case of breaking the Sabbath, or similar instances, what can justify his neutrality in this world-war? Mr. Newman should reflect that a neutral God is a negligible God. A God who does nothing need expect nothing. If we can get through the War without God, we can certainly manage without him afterwards. And if we may be excused a religious figure—when the shades of our slain soldiers reach heaven and ask its ruler: "What did you do in the Great War?" he will have to reply: "Nothing. I remained neutral. It was my world, I made it, and when the crash came I sat aloft watching all that occurred, maintaining a strict neutrality." And if "Tommy" in heaven retains the capacity for picturesque language there will be *some* remarks percolating the celestial atmosphere.

* * *

An Apology for God.

Mr. Newman admits that in this War religion has been a ghastly failure. The Churches have done nothing, save to contribute exhortations "that might have fitted equally the opening of the Crystal Palace on the Death of Queen Victoria." "As a public factor to a public good, religion has failed to score a point." Still, Mr. Newman finds a reason for God's neutrality, and it is this. The Germans believe that God is with them. But if the Allies had been able to break down the German military power and secure a crushing victory, the German people would have believed that God was dead—"There was no God." "Central Europe to religion would be lost," or reverse the case. Suppose Germany had overrun France and Britain, "What should we say of God, or religion, or any form of belief? Again, no missionaries in a century would build up the wreckage of that belief into a stable thing." Also, "Suppose God threw in his weight with Germany. Imagine the rape of France complete, the rape of Britain complete, then religion is destroyed in both countries for a century at least." The position, so far, is clear. If God helps the Allies he loses Germany. If he helps Germany he loses the Allies. It is with God a case of "heads I lose, tails you win." So he decides to remain neutral. A more far-seeing Deity would have seen that by this plan he runs a risk of losing both sets of followers. A more intelligent apologist would surely hit upon a more plausible excuse.

* * *

Careless or Callous?

As Freethinkers, we do not expect God to interfere, for the sufficient reason that we see no evidence to justify the belief in the existence of Deity. But if Freethinkers were believers in God, we should certainly expect him to do something to justify his existence. And he has had so many opportunities. Churches have been destroyed with as much impunity as brothels. The pious have been killed as freely as the ungodly. A book of profane poetry has been as effective in stopping a bullet as a Bible. On Whit Sunday, which marked the inauguration of a week of prayer and supplication, one of the most dastardly outrages that even this War has produced, occurred. A large hospital in France, containing many hundreds of wounded men, was deliberately bombed and fired on with machine guns by

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German airmen. It needs no word-painting to bring home to all the horror of the situation. And throughout it all God remained strictly neutral. The men on the spot did all they could. The nurses, with a heroism that is beyond praise, stuck to their post, and paid the price in killed and wounded. God alone did nothing —because, says Mr. Newman, if he had interfered he would have lost followers in either Germany or elsewhere! What an apology! And what a condemnation! The Great Neutral! Call him the Great Opportunist, and we shall be nearer the mark. Call him the Great Accessory before and to the fact, and we shall be still nearer the mark. The paralysing horror of belief in a God who can allow such things is only equalled by the colossal stupidity of those who can continue to believe and to worship.

* * *

By the Grace of God.

The German motto is "God with us." This Mr. Newman calls a horrible blasphemy. Stupid it is; false we believe it to be; but why blasphemy? There is nothing new in the cry or the conviction. Some of the vilest crimes in the history of the world have been sanctioned in the same way. When the Bible said,—

> And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it 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.....thou shall 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,

was that not setting an example to the German in his ugliest mood? And could not the Kaiser find perfect warranty for his own bombast from the same "sacred" volume?—

> I will make my arrows drunk with blood and my sword shall devour flesh.....And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven; then shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them.

"God with us" said the ancient Israelites, in their savage tribal warfare. "God with us" said the pious Crusaders, centuries later, when they robbed, and pillaged, and raped, and massacred in the name of Christ. "God with us" was said through all the torturings and murderings of innocents century after century. The Kaiser is in the true religious line. And the lesson is, surely, not that it is blasphemy, but that no such perverter of moral judgment exists in the world as intense religious feeling.

* * *

The Uselessness of God.

God, says Mr. Newman, is neutral. God, says the Freethinker, does nothing. The two statements are, as far as practical life is concerned, identical. The world grew uneasy at the neutrality of America. There was a healthy feeling that so great a nation was not discharging its duty to humanity while such vital issues were at stake. And the feeling was a good one. But, after all, had America continued neutral, President Wilson might have pleaded that America did not make the War, nor the European world in which it arose. But God, if the Christian theory is accepted, did make the world. He made us all. The responsibility for it and us rests with him. And when the world is stricken with this tragedy, he prefers to continue strictly neutral. If the world looks askance at the nation with power to intervene and remains neutral, how shall it regard a God who does nothing? Fools offer apologies, knaves invent excuses, slaves continue to praise where duty is neglected. But clear-minded men and women all over the world are drawing the true inference from the situation. "God" is an outworn hypothesis. God explains nothing; God does nothing. "God" is nothing about which men and women need seriously concern themselves.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Cross of Christ.

WHAT are we to understand by the Cross of Christ? What has it chiefly stood for in the Church from the beginning? What does it signify in the Pauline Epistles which the Church has always regarded as finally authoritative? To Principal Forsyth, one of the ablest and subtlest of living theologians, the Cross of Christ is the central, supreme, reality in the universe. In his amazingly ingenious and interesting book, *The Justification of God*, he makes the astounding admission that "no reason of man can justify God for his treatment of his Son," but claims that "whatever does justify it, justifies God's whole providence with the universe, and solves its problem." This is a stupendous claim, but the Principal hurls it at his bewildered reader with astonishing vigour and confidence. "The true theology of the Cross and its atonement," he repeats, "is the solution of the world. There is no other. It is that or none." Observe, it is a non-rational, if not irrational, solution that the Cross affords; and, consequently, it is a solution which cannot satisfy Freethinkers, being a solution solely intended for earnest believers. But what is the true theology of the Cross? The following is Dr. Forsyth's answer:—

> That theology is that the Cross is not simply the nadir of Incarnation, but that it is God's self-offering (under the worst conditions that love could feel for evil man) to his own holy name. The just God is the chief Sufferer and sole Doer. The holy love there is in action everywhere. The most universal thing in the universal Christ is his Cross. Everywhere, according to God's ubiquity, immanence, or what you will, his holy love is invincibly at issue with death, sin, and sorrow. Everywhere is redemption. And that is the only theodicy. The purpose of salvation is the principle of creation; and the ruling power of the world is the purpose of God (p. 125).

Christ crucified and risen "is the theodicy of God and the justifier both of God and the ungodly. The supreme theodicy is atonement." Such is "the eternal cruciality of the Cross for destiny." The all-devastating enemy of the universe is sin, "but the meaning of the Incarnation is that God was capable, in his self-emptying in Christ, of a self-limitation, *i.e.*, a self-mastery of holy surrender, whose moral effect was more than equal to the foreign invasion by sin." The death on Calvary was God's own death in Christ. The sin that aimed at extinguishing God, God extinguished by dying for it himself. This is how the author puts it:—

> His holiness so dies as to inflict on sin a death which it has not power to repel. There is an experience of death that destroys its deadly power. God's moral (*i.e.*, his holy) power converted death itself from the destructive service of sin to his own redeeming service. God in Christ so died that sin lost its chief servant, death, which became now the minister of life, so that its universal curse became universal blessing. Sin, therefore, cost Godhead not its existence but its bliss. It cost the Son of God not his soul but all that makes life a conscious fulness and joy. It cost him the Cross, and all that that meant for such a life as his, God in Christ so met the one enemy as to turn upon him his own weapon of death. God so died as to be the death of death.....He could so identify himself with sin and death, his absolute antitheses, that he conquered and abolished both, in an act which brings to a point the constant victory of his moral being. The destiny of the

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world is whatever does most justice to the nature of God, and most glorifies it. And that is, of all things in the world, the atoning Cross of Christ—where therefore the teleology and the theodicy of the world lies (pp. 152-3).

Such, according to Dr. Forsyth, is the true theology of the Cross, which is the solution of the world. We readily do the famous divine the justice of regarding his theory of the death of Christ as logically the most consistent and ideally the most beautiful of all the theories known to us. It is even in essential harmony with the teaching of the New Testament and the various Councils of the Church. It is Augustinianism and Calvinism combined, stated in the terse, angular, paradoxical style so characteristic of the Hackney College oracle. But it partakes of the radical defect which discredits and condemns all other theories of the Cross, namely, that it is nothing but a theory, and has no practical bearing whatever upon human life. It is non-rational simply because there is no truth in it; and it is irrational because, if true, it would be not the justification, but the positive condemnation of God. The death of God, if such a thing were possible, or the Father's treatment of his Son in sending him to crucifixion, would be the quintessence of immorality. It would be fundamentally wrong to punish the innocent for the guilty, the holy for the unholy, and absolutely impossible to abolish death by the immolation of the only begotten Son. Had it ever occurred as described by our author, the death of Christ would have been the most tragic and momentous event in history, nay, the most monstrous, the most criminal thing ever done in the career of Humanity, and no words could have been strong and scathing enough to denounce it. Yet, whilst frankly calling it the greatest, most loathsome crime ever committed, Dr. Forsyth has the audacity to assert that this indescribably horrible crime "became, by the moral, the holy victory of the Son of God, the source not only of endless blessing to man but of perfect satisfaction and delight to holy God," and that consequently, "there is no crime, not even this War, that is outside his control or impossible for his purpose." Surely, it is a new thing under the sun for a theologian to represent God as wickedly exploiting the frightfullest and bloodiest deed on record for the furtherance of his purpose of human salvation. Of course, it is perfectly safe to ascribe any purpose or conduct to an absentee Deity, who neither approves nor disapproves. Indeed, Principal Forsyth treats God with greater familiarity than he would dare to resort to when dealing with his next-door neighbour, and no Divine resentment is ever shown. God expresses no condemnation of the statement that the cruel murder of Jesus became the source of perfect satisfaction and delight to him, and the Principal evidently interprets the silence as a token of agreement; but when he affirms that the same dark deed resulted in endless blessing to man, we can bring him to the bar of history, and call for evidence for and against. What has the Cross of Christ done and failed to do for humanity? The evidence is now in our possession, and the verdict of the court, based upon it, so far from having proved an endless blessing, has been the source of incalculable misery to mankind. What that evidence is we shall endeavour to show in our next article.

J. T. LLOYD.

GOD AND MAN.

An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.

BY CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE THREEPENCE. POSTAGE ½D.

Christian Camouflage.

The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies.
—*Lucretius.*

The carpenter said nothing, but
"The butter's spread too thick."
—*Alice in Wonderland.*

FREETHINKERS are familiar with the methods of the Press Boycott by which all matters relating to Freethought are either excluded or grossly misrepresented by Christian editors in the interests of their religion. Indeed, in some quarters, the conspiracy of silence against Freethought is simply wonderful. The very name is like that of the God of the Ancient Hebrews, which was never to be spoken. Where the conspiracy of silence is broken, accidentally, the Christians display another aspect of their attitude towards Freethought, which is then misrepresented and slandered. Few, however, are fully aware that this peculiar Christian habit is extended to literature itself, and that the campaign of calumny is just as apparent in some books as in newspapers and periodicals. Look, for example, at the works of reference which are to be found in most libraries, and notice how Freethought and Freethinkers are treated in their pages. Sins of omission and commission constantly leap to the eye of the reader, who may be ill prepared for this exhibition of the fierce flash of the primitive spirit of Christianity. For, nowadays, Christians are no longer able to crush opposition, and they are obliged to answer its arguments or make a show of defending their own doctrines. Feeling that the tendency of Rationalism is against them, and afraid to resist it, they bend before it rather than break.

One of the most popular series of the day is the Home University Library, which includes, among many other volumes, a work on the *Victorian Age of Literature*. This particular work has been entrusted to the versatile Gilbert K. Chesterton, whose peculiar piety is so notorious that the editors apologize for his exuberance. They may well do this, for Mr. Chesterton uses his talents tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of Churches. He has nothing but the crudest insults for the great "intellectuals." Ignoring the long series of masterpieces that have come from the greatest of living English novelists, Chesterton says of Thomas Hardy that he is "a sort of village Atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." Algernon Swinburne, a poet of the rarest and most brilliant genius, who has enlarged the boundaries of song, is accused of composing "a learned and sympathetic and indecent parody on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin"—surely an ironical suggestion in a Protestant country. In speaking of *Songs Before Sunrise*, Chesterton tries to belittle those superb lyrics by saying that they were songs before a sunrise that had never turned up. Even the great Victorian authors do not escape censure, and are dubbed, spitefully, "lame giants," and women writers who show independence of thought are derided. Emily Bronte, who gave us *Wuthering Heights*, is described as being as "unsociable as a storm at midnight." The only Freethinker to whom Chesterton is civil is James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who, he informs us, pontifically, "knew how to be democratic in the dark." As Chesterton spells the poet's name with a "p," the compliment is a very doubtful one, after all. And Gilbert Chesterton is the man, be it remembered, who challenges the dogmatism of the Agnostic; convicts science of irrationality; and who pretends to find liberty inside the least progressive of the Christian Churches. Chesterton, the jester, cuts a much braver figure in the imagination of the public than Chesterton, the Christian apologist.

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Another work of reference, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, by J. W. Cousins, issued in Dent's Everyman Library, is open to somewhat similar objections. The following interesting passage relates to Shelley's opinions:—

> The charge of Atheism rests chiefly on *Mab*, the work of a boy, printed by him for private circulation, and to some extent repudiated as personal opinion.

James Thomson, the poet, is introduced as an awful warning, for we are told his "views resulted in depression which led to dipsomania." In the case of "George Eliot" the information is given that "her general view of life is pessimistic," despite the fact that this gifted woman expressly coined the word, "meliorism," in order to show her own attitude with regard to optimism and pessimism. Robert Buchanan's anti-Christian views are slurred over by the grudging admission that "his latest poems, *The Outcast* and *The Wandering Jew*, were directed against certain aspects of Christianity.

Still another reference-book, *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, in an edition issued a few years ago, is full of bias against men and women of sceptical opinions. A diatribe against Thomas Paine is quoted from the pen of Leslie Stephen, which the writer apologized for, but there is no mention of this latter fact. Colonel Ingersoll is said to have attracted more attention than he deserved, and readers are referred for information about Charles Bradlaugh to the libellous "Life" by Mackay, a work which Bradlaugh himself proceeded against and had destroyed. Even the then popular novelist, "Ouida," is accused of "muscular heathenry" and "encyclopædic ignorance."

This is the latest form of an infamous religious tradition, which may be traced back through the centuries to Lucretius, and even earlier. The fortunes of really great writers, like Shelley, Meredith, and Swinburne, have been very much influenced by this frigid and calculated misconception. Freethought invariably incurs the hatred of the orthodox, and no enmity is more unscrupulous, more relentless, or more venomous. This garbage is thrown at Freethinkers of set purpose. It is meant to discredit the characters and writings of men and women who look scornfully at the Christian superstition. Freethought has wrested so many positions from Christianity that in order to support the tottering edifice of superstition, believers will hesitate at nothing to buttress the wavering allegiance of their luke-warm fellow-Christians. The Church will never rebuke her faithful followers for "lying for the glory of God." Formerly, the Church used scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture-chambers; now she relies on lies, libels, and misrepresentations.

MIMNERMUS.

The Mechanism of Man.

VII.

(Continued from p. 285).

THE alimentary canal is the name for all the complicated passages along which the food travels through the body. A study of the digestive system must begin with that orifice, the mouth, into which the aliment enters. Not only should the teeth be sound and serviceable, but they should be exercised in masticating the food before it is swallowed. Digestion consists in softening and pulping the food so as to enable it to diffuse through the walls of the alimentary canal and pass into the blood, and thus exude through the walls of the vascular vessels into the tissues.

These changes are accomplished mechanically by the action of the chewing muscles, the teeth, and the three muscle layers situated in the walls of the alimentary passages. Chemical changes result from the action of acids and alkalies on the nutrient substances. Then there are the activities of the ferments or enzymes. These remarkable organic secretions possess the property of producing chemical transformations in substances brought into touch with them, while they themselves continue unchanged. The mouth has one of these secretions, the stomach has two, and there are three in the small intestine.

Until the seventh year, the child's mouth contains twenty temporary or milk teeth. The first of these usually appears when the infant is about seven months old. This set of teeth is shed, and then the permanent teeth cut the gums. These number thirty-two; the earliest appear about the seventh year; and the complete set, unless spoilt by decay, remains throughout life.

People are plentiful who imagine that the main function of digestion is performed by the stomach. This belief is entirely unwarranted. For, in addition to the gastric glands; the salivary glands, the pancreas, and the liver, all powerfully co-operate in the processes of digestion. Those who bolt their food, and these form the vast majority, ignore the far-reaching fact that digestion commences in the mouth. Immediately the food enters the mouth, the saliva of that cavity's salivary glands begin to act upon it. This saliva moistens the food, and thus prepares it for the processes of mastication. It also assists the act of swallowing. When the mouth's interior is parched, swallowing becomes painful and difficult. Moreover, the saliva enables us to taste our food. The organic constituent of the secretion, ptyalin, is an important digestive ferment, which converts starch substances into sugar. Starch contained in food is consequently transformed into sugar while still in the mouth. But this reservation is essential. Ptyalin changes starch into sugar only when granted sufficient time. If the food is insufficiently chewed, it passes into the alimentary canal in an unconverted condition. Unless the aliment is properly masticated, complete insalivation is prevented. As a result, the stomach is overburdened with labour, and the horrors of indigestion begin.

When swallowed, the nutrient matters pass down into the gullet or esophagus, and the muscles of that organ urge them towards the stomach. The solid and liquid nutriment is prevented from passing down the wrong channel by the bending of the epiglottis over the larynx, which lies at the upper part of the windpipe. In this protective office the larynx is now known to co-operate with the epiglottis, which is a sort of lid composed of elastic cartilage which covers the glottis, as the upper aperture of the larynx or voice-box is called.

When the food has entered the stomach, gastric digestion begins. The mucous membrane of the stomach possesses two sets of glands. One glandular secretion is pepsin, which is a most efficient digestive ferment. Pepsin is prepared in the peptic cells, and forms the active constituent of gastric juice. This special fluid is secreted in the gastric glands. Placed between the stomach's peptic cells there are other cells which do not manufacture pepsin, but elaborate the acid of the gastric juice. While digestion is in active operation, the muscles of the stomach's walls contract. Thus the shape of that organ becomes changed. The stomach lengthens and broadens, and its contained food is subjected to a churning process, during which the food is blended with the gastric juice. This fluid is more active than the saliva. The presence of the food in the stomach stimulates the mucous membrane which lines it into action, and its numerous gastric glands busy themselves in the preparation of the gastric secretion.

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This powerful digestive juice serves to convert animal and vegetable proteids—substances containing nitrogen, such as lean flesh, cheese, eggs, bread, peas, and beans, into peptones. Unchanged proteids will not diffuse through animal membranes, and are, as such, unavailable for purposes of nutrition. But pepsin so modifies them that they become diffusible, and then they readily pass through an animal membrane. The gastric secretions also arrest the development of injurious germs absorbed with the aliment. The gastric fluid contains a small percentage of hydrochloric acid, and this acid acts as a mild antiseptic. It also aids the pepsin in its activities, for pepsin alone, of all the digestive juices, proves incapable of influencing alkaline bodies. The hydrochloric acid converts substances made alkaline by the action of the saliva into an acid state, and then the pepsin acts with ease.

Proteids are the only alimentary materials reduced by the agency of the stomach and its secretions. The remaining food-stuffs—fats, carbohydrates, salts, and water are immune to the influences of gastric juice, and leave the stomach unchanged. While within that organ the food materials undergo the digestive process of chymification, with the sequel that these foods are converted into chyme. The distinguished Russian physiologist, Professor Pavlov, has recently proved that only when the stomach is stimulated by the presence of food do its glands become active. In the empty stomach no secretions are discharged, and the quantity of digestive juice in the stomach varies in proportion to the amount of food contained in that organ.

As we have stated, the food passes into the stomach at its esophageal opening, and when the nutrient matter has been transformed into chyme, the pylorus—the watcher at the gates—which consists of a tube-like valve situated at that termination of the stomach which passes into the intestines, opens to permit the passage of part of the stomach's contents into the duodenum. The pylorus forms the most narrow part of the small intestine, and its tube, which constitutes the exit of the stomach, is so small that a farthing could barely pass through it. The pylorus relaxes every minute or two, and thus regulates the quantity of chyme which issues from the stomach and enters the duodenum—the twelve-inch intestine. As Meachan says: "The pylorus is a capital gatekeeper, and it shuts up again directly the right amount of chyme has passed through it."

Immediately it leaves the stomach the chyme reaches the first part of the bowel which emerges directly from the stomach, the pylorus standing on guard at the gates. The small intestine extends from the pylorus to the ileo-cæcal valve where the lesser intestine joins the large gut. Its length is twenty-three feet, and its diameter about an inch. Proceeding from the narrow pylorus is the duodenum. This twelve-inch-long intestine forms an extremely important part of the intestinal system. Two invaluable secretions are discharged into the duodenum. This intestinal organ bends round to form a loop which environs the pancreas or "sweet-bread." The duodenum constitutes the thickest, widest, and least flexible channel of the small intestine, and it receives both the common bile-duct, and the duct of the pancreas. The bile is the secretion of the liver, but this intestine owes its priority as a digestive organ to the fact that the secretion of the pancreas, the most powerful of the digestive ferments, is poured into it. For while the saliva acts on some of the starch, and the stomach digests part of the proteid, the small intestine digests the bulk of the starch, the greater part of the proteid, and all the fats.

The food remains in the mouth for a few moments, and lingers in the stomach for two or three hours, but it spends from ten to twelve hours in the small intestine. And, in addition to the secretions of the liver and pancreas which enter the duodenum, there are multitudes of tiny intestinal glands that secrete juice which digests cane sugar. The little intestine also contains a ferment which increases the strength of the pancreatic juice.

(To be concluded.) T. F. PALMER.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George gave a speech at Edinburgh on May 24, and reminded his hearers that quite near to where he was speaking John Knox gave a copy of the Bible to the Queen of Scotland. And, added the Prime Minister, "We are fighting for the principles of that book." Really, that *is* news. Among the principles of "that book" are witchcraft, slavery, the subordination of women, the doctrine of damnation for unbelief, demoniacal possession, miracles, and a number of other things all equally out of date. "The principles of that book" is a very elastic phrase, and it is probable that Mr. Lloyd George did not mean what he said. At least, we hope he did not.

Divine Psychology is the title of a new book by a lady. There is one thing quite clear: the writer is not likely to be hampered by anything in the nature of facts. And when one is dealing with the operations of a mind without knowing there is any mind to operate, the book may well be a big one, if not a useful one.

Religion is popularly supposed to change men's hearts An interchange of views between British and German Baptists, through the Swedish co-religionists, has resulted in a message, quoted in the *Baptist Times*, which shows that the Teutons are on the side of their own Government in the matter of the War. Is this another instance of the powerlessness of religion?

The endowment of superstition goes on apace. The late Mr. Arthur Bowdler, of Blackburn, left nearly £50,000, out of his fortue of £156,784, to the Congregational Union and the London Missionary Society.

The Salvation Army announce further War Fund Flag Days. We thought that this non-military organization was engaged in fighting "the Devil," and not the soldiers of the Central Powers.

A religious periodical contains an advertisement, "Why Blush?" offering a remedy at a low price. Perhaps Christians blush when they read the realistic earlier pages of the Holy Bible.

Some schoolboy "howlers" are unconsciously amusing, and the report of the Chief Examiner of London County Council schools contains some fine examples. In the recent examination for scholarships, one boy estimated the value of education by stating, "You may become a very great man, or else a clergyman." Another wrote, "If God spares our lives, when we grow up we need not become a teacher." Yet another young student ventured to say that "education saves you from going to the dogs."

How fond pious folk are of using the term "Atheistic" without realizing the real meaning of the word. The late Dr. Silvanus P. Thompson, in a posthumous work, entitled *A Not Impossible Religion*, refers to the dogma of the Virgin Birth as a materialistic, non-scientific, Atheistic idea. All that the learned professor meant was that the particular dogma was an odd conception.

Principal Griffith Jones declared, in his address from the chair of the Congregational Union, that "their Churches must be born again" before Christianity can become the controlling power in national and international affairs, which was equivalent to admitting that Christianity is doomed to

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complete extinction, the Churches being, in the nature of things, incapable of the requisite birth.

A good story is told of the German Kaiser in Mr. Edward Legge's new book, *King George and the Royal Family*. Once the Kaiser remarked complacently to King Edward: "My people look upon me as a god!" "Not when you're in mufti, William," remarked the King, glancing at his nephew's shooting-coat

The Pope has asked the Kaiser to spare the Church bells and organs. Papa might have thought of the women and children first.

Mrs. Bonwick, a lady preacher, speaking at the Memorial Hall, London, said that the women's ideal was that some day there might be an inter-denominational college where men and women should be trained together. "Oh, that will be joyful!"

The glamour of the "Holy Land" will soon be a thing of the past. The newspapers inform us that the firm of Lipton has opened a store at Jerusalem.

The Ven. E. E. Holmes, preaching recently at St. Paul's Cathedral, sadly admitted that he could not, in the utter impotence of his ignorance attempt to explain why an omnipotent God refuses to "stop the present-day slaughter." With Christopher Wordsworth, he has sung, "See the Conqueror mounts in triumph"; and yet he fails to "see the victory." If we judge by the facts, there is no possible escape from the conclusion that God "is a King who has ceased to rule." And yet the Archdeacon believes in God, though he is obscured by a cloud, and cannot be seen at all! "He has for a time been taken out of our sight, but our faith enables us to say he is still there."

The newspapers tell us that the German Kaiser has enjoined all Teutons to "cease to talk foreign languages, and to speak Low German." His own command of language is somewhat copious, but his theology is decidedly "low."

Over five hundred undefended divorce cases have been disposed of in London during the Easter term. Apparently, few people nowadays respect the priestly command, "Let no man put asunder those who God hath joined together."

The dear *Daily News* does not object to a joke at the expense of the Church, and it tells a story of a short-sighted bishop who went into a hatter's shop and approached, hat in hat, a customer whom he mistook for the shopman: "Have you a hat like this?" he asked, holding out his own corded beaver. "No!" said the other, "and if I had I'd take jolly good care not to wear it."

A proclamation in the United State announces a day for prayer and fasting. This gives point to the Gallic jest that America is "a barbarism lighted by electricity."

The "twisted mind" of the Germans has "annexed even God Himself" in this War, writes Mr. John Oxenham in a Sunday paper. Yet the dear clergy will persist in saying that the Germans are "Atheists."

The report of the Archbishop's committee to consider the reform of Church administration lays stress on "a living wage" for the parsons. In process of time, doubtless, it will be possible to consider the question of "a living wage" for organists, members of the choirs, and vergers.

Hustle has never been a marked characteristic of Government departments, but a newspaper paragraph states that at noon daily in the women's sections of the Post Office work is stopped for two minutes for prayer. As the men's departments are unaffected by this arrangement, any ill results from hustling the deity should not be felt by them.

The Church of St. Catherine Coleman, Fenchurch Street, London, which has no congregation, is to be sold to furnish funds for ecclesiastical purposes. This is an interesting side-light on the boasted revival of religion.

The *Church Times* does "not consider that, in modern circumstances, a Church is any the more a safeguard of public morality for being nominally 'established.'" That is perfectly true; but our contemporary does not seem to realize that a Church, whether established or not, has never been a safeguard of public morality. As a matter of fact, the Church, in all ages, has been guilty of the grossest breaches of public morality.

For tactlessness and blundering stupidity the parson, as an individual, is hard to beat, and we can imagine the depth of silliness sounded when they act or think collectively. Lately, we have had an amazing example in a circular letter addressed to heads of colleges, professors, and other responsible persons at Oxford, and signed by over a hundred clergymen, only three of whom are directly connected with the government of the University. It would appear that these gentlemen, who are pious water-drinking prigs, have no stomach for fighting the Germans. They prefer the easier task of stabbing the undergraduates in the back. This is what they call the Lord's business, for which they are exempted from military service. It usually means that a set of black-coated humbugs have a mind to poke its nose into other people's business. At an opportune moment, when the flower of Oxford's youth has offered itself a willing sacrifice for an ideal, when practically the whole of the University is on active service, a number of tactless hypocrites are urging the authorities to interfere with the liberty of the undergraduate to drink what suits him. We are pleased to see that Sir Walter Raleigh, the wittiest of professors, has made public, in the University journal, the letter, in which he administers a scornful rebuke to these preposterous clerical humbugs.

Christians have very quaint ideas of holiday-making. Christ Church, Westminster, was open for nine hours on Whit-Monday for "intercession" services. Every hour addresses were given by preachers, and an added inducement was that tea and coffee was provided, we hope by permission of the food-controller.

His lordship, the Bishop of Birmingham, states that "there is only one Christ for the healing of social diseases." Unhappily, there are so many "social diseases," and Christ is not in the directory.

Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich, has appointed a woman preacher. We wonder what St. Paul and the great leaders of the Christian Church would think of it! But really the Unitarians have no clear claim to be called Christians.

THIS-WORLD-ISM.

Seeing that the Power, whatever it be, that created the world (which, I think, certainly cannot have created itself) has, for the present, while using us as its instruments, reserved to itself the privilege of knowing why it has made us and whither it is leading us—seeing that this Power (in spite of all intentions attributed to it, in spite of all the demands made upon it) appears even more and more determined to guard its own secret—I believe, if I may say all I think, that mankind is beginning to cease to try to penetrate that eternal mystery. Mankind went to religions, which proved nothing, for they differed among themselves; it went to philosophies, which revealed no more, for they contradicted one another; and it will now try to find its way out of the difficulty by itself, trusting to its own instinct and its own simple good sense; and since mankind finds itself here on earth without knowing why or how, it is going to try to be as happy as it can with just those means the earth supplies.

—*Alexander Dumas (fils).*

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To Correspondents.

A. F. THORN.—We have not received copies of that particular publication for some time. Pleased to have your opinion that *God and Man* is "splendidly vital and lucid."

W. J.—Your letter has only initials, and no address. We must have these with all communications, if they are to receive attention.

D. M.—Yours is a substantial way of showing your appreciation, and we hope to avail ourselves of it in the course of two or three months.

J. FOTHERGILL.—Received. As early as possible, but crowded with articles at the moment.

A. S. PICKERING.—We agree with your comment on Sir A. Griffith Boscawen's statement that "We have all got to be Christians if we are going to win the War." One would be as great a disaster as the other.

A. RAWLINSON.—Thanks. The circulation of the *Freethinker* is still creeping upward, and in the course of a week or so we shall be suggesting a plan to our readers by which we think a very material advance may be made. What we have done already makes us certain that more can be done.

L. STANSFIELD.—We are sending the quarter's paper with pamphlets. Glad the last parcel was found useful.

J. HUME.—The lying story about Voltaire was completely exposed by Sir T. C. Morgan, in 1822, who secured signed statements from the doctors in attendance. The Paine story has been exposed scores of times. For that, see Moncure Conway's *Life of Paine*.

T. FOWLER (Coventry).—Have passed on your letter to the General Secretary. The new Branch will doubtless be glad of your assistance.

J. M.—We are repaid for our trouble by the knowledge that you found our advice so useful.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Collection, Queen's Hall, 17s. 2d.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Dr. R. T. Nichols, 10s. 6d.

D. MASON.—(1) You can hardly expect us to say that we think *God and Man* "unanswerable." It is gratifying to know that you think so. (2) If your friend, whom you say holds a post in one of our Universities, thinks he could disprove what we say, our columns are open to him. (3) We will always make special terms for quantities to be used for distribution.

A. BRENTON.—Thanks for copy of Upton Sinclair's journal. It is a striking production well calculated to do good in many directions.

G. A.—You are right. We *ought* to feel complimented at so many delegates travelling such distances to be present at the Conference. And we quite appreciate their presence. We intend repaying them by renewed activity in the cause.

W. MANN.—Thanks for congratulations and expression of confidence. Sorry you were subjected to annoyance by undesired and undesirable correspondence. Our readers will be pleased, and so shall we, to see your pen again active in these columns.

ALEC BRAHAM.—Paper being sent for three months to address given.

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 has received a large number of letters during the past week congratulating him on his re-election as President of the N.S.S., many containing renewed promises of support, with appropriate words of encouragement. It would be impossible to reply to all these letters by post, and words are inadequate to express his appreciation. So will those who have written please take this paragraph as a grateful acknowledgment?

We know our readers will be interested in the following from a recipient of one of our parcels of literature :—

> Just home for a few hours, and I must write to thank you for the pamphlets you kindly sent; they followed and reached me quite safe.
>
> The *Freethinker* reaches me—I have it sent every week—and is eagerly looked forward to, and then read and re-read by my two chums and myself until the next *Freethinker* arrives.
>
> Then we hand the old *Freethinker* on, after making sure that it will be appreciated, because I think it too precious to be given into anybody's hands.
>
> I must say your pamphlets found me and my chums, and gave many of my "Christian" messmates an awakening. Further, it is interesting to write that, in a crew of roughly eighty men, there is not one ardent Christian; on the other hand, three ardent Freethinkers.
>
> On every possible occasion I propagate my ideas, and, on the whole, with satisfaction. Moreover, I am not jealous of the Church and her *proteges* in the Royal Navy.
>
> Might I ask a favour? Could you find me someone to correspond with? A letter from a Freethinker at home would be ever welcome.
>
> I am glad you are so optimistic that you will be able to carry on the *Freethinker*, and hope that indeed you will have "a circulation really worthy of it."

We shall be pleased to send the address to anyone who will act as correspondent to the writer of the above.

We are pleased to say that the two four-page tracts *What is the Use of the Clergy?* and *What Will You Put in its Place?* have caught on. They are being well distributed, and we should like to see 50,000 of them in circulation within a month or two. 1s. 6d. will buy a hundred copies, and 15s. 1,000, carriage paid. Their circulation is pure propaganda on the part of the Pioneer Press, as they are being sold at about cost price. More of these tracts will be issued shortly.

In a week or so we shall be publishing a reprint of Mr. G. W. Foote's *Philosophy of Secularism*. It is in the press, and, when issued, will supply a much-needed want. This will be followed by a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. H. G. Farmer, dealing with the religious opinions of great artists and musicians. Those who know how much of an authority Mr. Farmer is on such subjects will look forward to the appearance of this work. We also have in preparation a larger pamphlet by Mr. Cohen on *Christianity and Slavery and Serfdom*, which will be fully documented, and will be found useful for propaganda. This will in turn be followed by another from the pen of Mr. Cohen on *Christianity and Woman*, and later by a treatise on the *Existence of God*. The times are not favourable for publishing, but as the War seems unending, the only thing is to get on with *our* war. And that we intend doing in spite of all difficulties.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd had two very successful meetings at Maesteg on Sunday last. There seems a good prospect of building a very strong Branch there, and we shall be greatly surprised if more Branches are not formed in the district between now and the end of the year.

The wife of a greatly esteemed member now serving with his Majesty's forces writes Miss Vance. The letter is dated May 20 :—

> I felt I must write and tell you of an incident that occurred last night. The Congregational Church is just opposite their house, and they have a service from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. every

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Sunday evening to try and get God's ear and ask him to stop the War.

I was preparing for bed at 10.45 and listening to them singing "O God, our help in ages past," when the syren went, warning us of approaching aircraft. The singing came to an abrupt end, and the people scuttled down the street like rabbits. My daughter, aged thirteen, was in the room and said: "They haven't given God much time to help them, mother." Please excuse me for taking up your valuable time, but I thought it too good to keep to myself.

Large numbers of people to-day are keenly interested in the question of "Survivals," and, indeed, the sociological and humanistic interest of the subject fully justifies the interest shown. Mr. J. H. Moore has just issued, through the Rationalist Press Association, *Savage Survivals* (2s. 6d. net), which tells in plain but extremely interesting language the story of survivals as they exist in domesticated animals, human society, and social customs. Those who know Mr. Moore's *Higher Kinship* or *Ethics and Education* will hardly need advising to secure a copy of his latest work. Those who have not that good fortune will go far before they can find a volume which, while simple enough for an intelligent boy or girl of thirteen, is suggestive and profound enough for more mature persons. There is material here for a dozen volumes, and its reading is certain to send the beginner farther along the road.

Sex Antagonism, by Mr. Walter Heape, is the last addition made by the Pioneer Press to its remainder list. The work is a strikingly suggestive one, and discusses the subject from the evolutionary point of view, which is the only point of view likely to be of real help. Mr. Heape examines in detail the conditions of sex life in primitive communities, and the three chapters on "Totemism" and "Exogamy" are particularly suggestive. The whole work is worthy of the closest study. It was published at 7s. 6d. net, and is now being offered at 3s. 6d., postage 5d. Only a very limited number of copies are available.

From the *Literary Guide* for June:—

Mr. Chapman Cohen, who has the rare gift of writing both lucid and impressively, has published through the Pioneer Press a threepenny pamphlet, entitled *God and Man*, being an essay in common sense and natural morality. It is long since we read a more interesting and convincing ethical address, or one better suited for propagandist purposes. We warmly commend it to the notice of our readers.

The North London Branch held a very successful meeting on Sunday last. Mr. H. Johnson was the speaker, and a large audience remained interested to the end of his lecture, while the Christian Evidence lecturer, a little distance off, remained talking to "empty benches." One more evidence of the revived interest in religion—perhaps!

An effort is being made to form a Branch of the N.S.S. at Barnsley, Yorks. There are, we know, a large number of *Freethinker* readers in and around Barnsley, and if all these interested in organization will send their names to Mr. H. Irving, 48, Sheffield Road, Barnsley, the Branch will be formed at once. If this can be done it is intended to commence active propaganda work in the autumn.

Sanity and simplicity are the distinguishing marks of the loftiest genius, which may be described as inspired common sense. The great artist never loses touch of facts; he may let his imagination soar as high as the stars, but he keeps his feet firm-planted on the ground. All the world recognizes the sublimity of Greek sculpture and Shakespeare's plays, because they are both true to nature and fact and coincident with everlasting laws. The true sublime is not fantastic; it is solid and satisfying, like a mighty Alp, deep-rooted first of all in the steadfast earth, and then towering up with its vineyards, its pastures, its pine-forests, its glaciers, its precipices, and last of all the silence of infinitude brooding over its eternal snows.—*G. W. Foote*, "*Flowers of Freethought.*"

The "Tricks of the Spirits."

A FEW weeks ago, as I felt rather depressed over the War news, I called upon Uncle Joe, at his nice little villa residence at Dulwich, to see if he could cheer me up a bit, and make me view the awful tragedies that are taking place in France and Flanders from a larger perspective, and try in imagination to realize how the great conflict must end in the final triumph of right over might.

Now, Uncle Joe is a born optimist. He never looks upon the dark side of any subject for long without finding a bright spot somewhere, and, by infusing a little of his own cheery nature into it, he gradually transforms the whole aspect of the subject. Aunt Jane, on the other hand, is liable to be a bit pessimistic on some subjects; and so many of her friends and relations have lost sons in the great War, or have had them "wounded" or "missing," that any mention of a British reverse sends a thrill of horror through her whole frame, she requires all the comfort Uncle Joe can give her to revive her drooping spirits.

On the evening in question, I opened my conversation with Uncle Joe by telling him that I did not like the idea of the British being pushed back in Flanders, and I feared every step we took in the retreat might spell disaster to us.

"Not at all, my boy," he said; "we are all right. The whole move is a bit of fine strategy on our part, and we are bound to come out on top in the end."

This declaration, made with a fine spirit of manly confidence, put me in a better mood at once, and made me feel that I need not discuss the War any further at present, and that the subject might safely be left in the capable hands of Uncle Joe and the military authorities.

Aunt Jane, however, ventured to make one remark. She did not doubt, she said, that we should win in the end; but, in the meantime, she could not help thinking of the brave young fellows who were sacrificing their lives in order that we should be relieved from the thraldom of German militarism.

When, however, we had talked about the War for a few moments, Aunt Jane changed the subject by informing me, with tears in her eyes, that poor young Walter Williams had died in action, and that his parents were overwhelmed with grief at his loss.

"I don't see why they should be so grieved as other people," said Uncle Joe. "Both of the parents are Spiritualists, and they profess to believe that the poor boy is not dead—that, as a matter of fact, he is as much alive now as he was before a shell burst over him and left his body a bleeding mass of earth on the battlefield."

"But in that they do not differ from the generality of Christians," I replied, "for they weep over the dead just like ordinary people who have no belief in a resurrection and a life of everlasting happiness in heaven hereafter."

"It is true we Christians do grieve over the loss of our dear ones; that is a weakness of human nature," said Uncle Joe; "but we still have the promise and 'a certain hope' of a life to come. But we differ from the Spiritualists. They believe that we never die, and therefore it is folly to weep and sorrow over lost ones, because they are not lost, but are in fact more alive than ever, being relieved of the flesh or raiment in which they have been clothed on earth."

"In my judgment, all Christians, to be logical, should be 'Spiritists.' They believe in a soul that has an existence separate and independent of the body."

"Perhaps so," said Uncle Joe, "but we do not believe

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in table-rapping and things of that sort. By the bye, Mr. and Mrs. Williams wanted your aunt and myself to attend some religious services at one of their halls a short time ago; and they also gave us an invitation to attend some private *seances* at which a celebrated medium was to be present; but we did not go."

"Why not?"

"Well, we thought we should like to ask your opinion before we ventured upon such a course. We know that you have studied the subject."

"Personally, I should never attend a spiritualistic *seance* unless I went in the company of an expert conjurer, because I know how easy it is to be deceived; but that is no reason why you should not go. I know enough about the history of the movement and the frauds of some of the leading mediums to convince me that such phenomena as they allege to be capable of producing can be just as well produced under similar conditions by men who confess that the whole thing is done by trickery."

"But they tell me that some of the leading men of science are staunch believers in Spiritualism—distinguished men like Professor Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Sir Conan Doyle; also that the late Professor Russel Wallace was a believer in it," said Uncle Joe.

"Yes, I know; but none of the evidence that these distinguished men advance in favour of 'Spiritism' seems to me to prove that they receive their messages from 'spirits,' and none of them can tell us what a 'spirit' is, or how a 'spirit,' which is something differing from matter, can act upon matter, or how you can have intelligence apart from an organism. Such questions as these do not trouble them much; at all events, they do not give us a rational answer to them."

"But they say they receive messages from the dead," went on Uncle Joe.

"Yes, I know; but I should like to ask how many of the dead ever learnt the spiritualistic language? How they come to know that three knocks on a table means 'yes' and two 'no'? And how does the medium manage to get into communication with the spirits until they have learnt the language of 'spiritism'? And if they can communicate without the aid of such language, how is it they cannot communicate direct with their parents and friends without the aid of the medium?"

"Well, but the 'mediums' say that they can call up spirits from the vasty deep, and they will come. They tell us of the spirit of John King and others who appeared before a large number of people."

"But have you not noticed that when these ghosts appear they come like the ghost of Hamlet's father—armed from head to foot—they don't leave their clothes behind them? Now, I am like Artemus Ward, I can understand the ghost of my great-grandfather; but, for the life of me, I cannot understand the ghost of my great-grandfather's overcoat."

Aunt Jane looked at me and smiled. Evidently she appreciated the joke, but she made no observation.

"But Spiritualists claim most extraordinary things as being done through the aid of these mediums," said Uncle Joe.

"Again, I say, I know. They tell us of a fat woman, named Mrs. Guppy, being transported through the air, and coming through the roof of a house and falling on to a table before the wondering gaze of a company of credulous believers. They tell us of flowers jumping out of a flower-bed, floating through the air, and landing in a vase on a table; but they don't tell us of any useful service these spirits ever perform."

"Is that so?"

"No spirit ever knows more than the medium through whom he is supposed to communicate his messages; and if the spirit of Shakespeare is ever called up, he talks no more wisely than a superannuated tub-thumper. He never, under any circumstances, says anything to remind us of the profound philosophy of Hamlet, or Prospero, or King Lear."

"But mediums tell us that the 'spirits' can communicate to us facts than nobody but we ourselves could possibly know."

"Indeed. Have you ever heard of a 'spirit' who could tell us what is going to happen to us an hour after he has communicated his message?"

"The wisest man on earth cannot do that."

"Well, then, you think that 'spiritism' is mainly composed of trickery and fraud," said Uncle Joe.

"Certainly, I do; there may be certain psychological phenomena that happen that we do not understand, but that is no reason why we should jump to the conclusion they are produced by spirits. Besides, have you ever thought of this? All the Spiritualist mediums that have been exposed have been in possession of 'the paraphernalia' of their trade, such as 'spirit hands' affixed to musical-boxes, spirit photographs, and other appliances of their profession. Let me quote from the late James Thomson (B.V.), the poet and philosopher, who said in his *Satires and Profanities* (p. 167):—

> Can anything be darker and more debasing in a so-called civilized home and country than this Spiritism has proved itself from the beginning until now? I have yet to learn that the whole of the world of spirits, now for many years at the beck and call of countless mediums, professional and private, has ever dictated or written a single great sentence, revealed a single great truth, discovered a single important fact. Nothing but the dreariest drivel, or delirium, the most wretched and imbecile juggling tricks, with all sorts of evasions, and deceptions, and lies."

"There, I think that is a very good summing up of the case as it presents itself to the mind of a Freethinker like myself. But you, as a Christian, are entitled to take your own view of the subject."

"Yes," said Uncle Joe, "and though I may not be logical, as you say, I've got brains enough to see through such 'trickery of the spirits' and their mediums as have been revealed in the exposures we have had from time to time in the police-courts and other less public places."

"Did you ever hear a lecture on the subject?"

"Yes. I heard the late Dr. George Sexton when he was a 'Spiritualist'; and I heard my old friend, the late George W. Foote, in debate with Dr. Sexton on the subject for two nights in 1874 at the old Hall of Science. Dr. Sexton was a very clever man, and if anything could have been said from a scientific point of view worth saying, Dr. Sexton was the man to have said it. But he relied almost exclusively on the point that man had 'an inherent desire to live again.' But that proves nothing. I may desire to have five thousand a year, but that doesn't prove that I shall get it. Does it?"

"Certainly not. No; I shall have to ask my friend Williams some questions about his Spiritualism when next I see him, and if he tells me anything worth remembering I will let you know."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

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One With Another.

THERE are those who believe in Christ, and even of their number some who endeavour truly to serve Him in accordance with his precepts. They find in the exaltation of their religious fervour a sufficient end in life to prepare for the life to come, and they live as it were removed from the world, although pertinent thereto. Indeed, the more sincere do many works of goodliness in following their Master, rendering aid to the helpless, making gifts to the poor, and showing gentleness and kindliness in their dealing with all men, whom they regard as their brothers. These, in spite of their too frequent resemblance to their Master's poverty in the paucity of their worldly goods, seem to reap a goodly harvest of happiness.

There are those who follow Mammon, and whose days are spent in the accumulation of golden wealth. In these times they differ from the God's follower's of ancient days who used to worship the true gold itself, and were never so happy as in the contemplation of a huge or small pile of coin which they possessed. And since many coins were of good workmanship, it is not to be understood that it was the power of coined metal alone which to them was blessed, but that they took pleasure also in the contemplation of the many forms which human ingenuity had given to the shining substance itself. The coin is but a symbol now. It is but a melancholy matter to possess, and its chief significance is the power over his fellows which is wielded by its fortunate owner. Ever in the pursuit of more power, ever in the seeking for greater possibility of possession, and not in its true sense exercise of that power, these spend their lives. Do they not reap a measure of happiness, proportionate though it may be, to the favour of their God?

Again, there are those who deify life itself, and by life they usually mean human life, although they delude themselves with the belief that they worship all organisms as an expression of the Godlike attribute. These spend their lives much in dreaming of schemes for the improvement of the conditions under, and in spite of which, man finds it possible for a short three score years and ten to fan the flickering divine spark. They do more; often by some slight scratchings, the work to which their short duration is devoted, they add their meagre share to the shaping of the monster—Life. The very hopelessness of their gigantic task, and the scant development which has taken place during these many centuries, should appal them, yet they seem to be satisfied—hardly happy.

There is also the great subordinate class who labour, and whose mere existence in the flesh is devoted to the constant striving after the continuance of their sordid living itself. These are by far the most numerous, although considered and treated as the class of least worth. However, individuals pass thence into the other classes occasionally, and breathe the new life of enthusiasm into the fallacious, exhaustive strivings of those other classes.

The artist lives for his art alone, and he is but a member of this class who struggle for continuance; but he is the more noble since he will not be denied the actual exercise of such ability as lies within him, and the glorious desire to attain some goal ever farther distant as he advances towards it. He it is who reaps the harvest of reward, holding credence in the true worth of his aim, the pure joy of his efforts, and the constant irritations of his failures.

All life strives constantly. It seems that fatigue must be the precursor of new force, and new force is that most generally desired.

The mere lust of pleasure cannot bring joyousness one cubit nearer; but the pursuit of an ideal, true or false though it may be, lends that illusion which is so necessary to make life bearable.

The sadness of civilization is not so much consequent upon the constant striving for the achievement of some perfectly hopeless ideal, inasmuch as it is a truism that struggle is the most sane form of pleasure. The misfortune of our human strivings is that so many of us are bound about with the cords of those old falsehoods which have been placed upon us in the time of our innocent, guileless, unsuspecting youth. From these it is so hard to escape that each and all strive rather one with another than one beside the other in a rank that marches to a common goal. The falsehood, nay, the very canker of death, which lurks in our system of morals, our system of commerce, our very ambition, so evilly directed from ages past, darkens with sorrow the name of civilization. And yet it seems impossible that there could ever be agreement amongst us with regard to the value of any ideal. Alas! Ever striving one with another; illusion based upon illusion in a never-ending scale leads us up and down, but does not direct us one and all along a certain path.

And, in consequence, we have in all these ages contrived that poor, dignified fallacy which we pleasantly term the civilized world.

G. E. FUSSELL.

N. S. S. Annual Conference.

Report of Business Meeting.

DESPITE the many and almost unprecedented difficulties now attending a Conference in London, the fact that seventeen out of twenty-one Branches should be represented points to a re-awakened interest in our Cause throughout the country.

The following London Vice-Presidents were present: Messrs. W. H. Baker, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, J. T. Lloyd, W. Leat, A. B. Moss, Jas. Neate, C. G. Quinton, Victor Roger, T. Shore, H. Silverstein, S. Samuels, T. J. Thurlow, F. Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, and Mrs. Rolf.

Our Provincial Vice-Presidents representing their respective Branches were: R. Chapman, J. G. Dobson, J. Hammond, F. E. Willis, and E. Clifford Williams.

The Branches represented were: Bethnal Green, Birmingham, Battersea, Glasgow, Goldthorpe, Kingsland, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, North London, Nuneaton, Portsmouth, South Shields, South London, Swansea, Southampton, and West Ham.

Our venerable friend, Mr. G. Alward, of Grimsby, was present.

Mr. J. Holmes, of Wantage, presented a beautiful offering of flowers and foliage, which decorated the platform at the evening meeting.

The roll having been called, the Agenda was proceeded with down to No. 4, the election of the President, followed by that of the Vice-Presidents. Freedom of thought usually necessitates a divergence of opinion, and as these motions, if carried straight through, would have been in opposition to No. 8, the scheme for re-organization standing in the President, Mr. Cohen's name, a quite unusually heated discussion arose, wasting a considerable amount of valuable time, and leading to an early adjournment.

At the afternoon session, "cool patience" having been sprinkled upon the atmosphere during the adjournment, it was agreed unanimously that certain important items should be put to the meeting again.

Re the minutes of the last Conference, on the motion of the Birmingham delegates, it was resolved that a full report of this and future Conference deliberations be supplied to all Branches.

Mr. F. A. Davies temporarily occupied the chair during the re-election of Mr. Cohen as President, and other official elections were also confirmed. Motion No. 7 *re* the revised rules of the Society was carried, and the next item being Mr. Cohen's scheme for re-organization, the services of Mr. Davies were requisitioned again to give the necessary opportunity for explanation and discussion.

Many complications and much discussion arose on Clause A. Suggestions that the matter be referred to the Executive, and many amendments threatened to occupy the already extended time.

Eventually Mr. Heaford rose to support Motion 9, Clause A, already moved as an amendment to the President's scheme, with an addendum that the matter be brought up before the Interim Conference. Here opinion was again divided and the amendment lost. Mr. Baker suggested that a special committee be formed, composed of delegates from as many Branches as could be brought together to discuss the whole matter and report. Mr. Cohen suggested that a committee of seven be nominated by this Conference.

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Finally, the Chairman made a suggestion, with which Mr. Cohen concurred, that a committee be formed of representatives from each of the three oldest London and four oldest Provincial Branches, including the President and Secretary.

It was finally agreed that the report of the Committee should be printed and issued to all members of the Society, and a special Conference convened in a central position to discuss fully, and finally endorse or reject the scheme.

Motion No. 12 by Mr. Cohen was also remitted to this Committee.

The time for the evening meeting having arrived, the remaining motions on the Agenda were remitted to the Executive and the proceedings terminated.

E. M. V.

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT AND THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—After being in the Army now for twelve months, it appears to me that a grand field for the propagation of our cause lies amongst the millions of men that now constitute our land forces. Before I was fined £2 and, after six days' imprisonment, "handed over," I was under the impression that it was a great rarity to find a soldier who did not state his belief in some religion or other, especially on the recruiting form. Really, such is not the case, however, and avowed sceptics are quite commonly found amongst all ranks, officers as well as n.c.o.'s and men.

Nearly all the soldiers whom I have shown this paper to were quite unaware of its existence, and it was quite a treat for them to read its contents. As a matter of fact religion has buttressed itself in the Services, like it has always done, when opportunity offers, by means of persecution and penalties. It is a truism to state that not one quarter of the men would attend "divine service" if they could go out or be sure of having the time off instead. So far as my experience goes, attendance at Church is considered duty, and those who are caught evading it are liable to punishment equally with those who commit "crimes." A few weeks ago, through some order made officially, every man in our company was deputed to attend the special place of worship that he had named himself as belonging to, but instead of this occasion being regarded with great solemnity and exactness, no greater mirth was ever caused on a parade by n.c.o.'s in charge making fun of the various religions. As I know you require brevity, I had better conclude with saying that no greater evidence of the progress Freethought has made in the last half century exists than the poor position religion has been relegated to by the rank and file of the Army.

LUX.

Inspiration.

A SONNET.

MUCH had I wondered how it might be shown
That those who told the story of our Lord,
And penned the Gospel record of his word,
Were moved by powers to other men unknown;
And many times when daylight long had flown,
Have pored o'er ancient volumes amply scored,
With proof on proof the doubting mind t' afford,
Yet still retained those doubtings of my own.
Then glad was I to learn, by Matthew faced,
That Mary knew not Joseph ere Christ's birth;
And then, in wonder, follow him, to find
Christ's line through *Joseph* back to David traced;
For sure such reas'ning cometh not from earth,
But speaks the fulness of the Godhead's mind!

G. H. BOSWORTH.

Without philosophers, without some few virtuous men who seem to be of a different nature from the rest of mankind, the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth.—*Goldsmith.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, M.P., "War Aims."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, A Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley Road): 11.30, Mr. J. W. Marshall, "God's Omnipotent Impotence."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mrs. Rosetti, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.30, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Miss Kough, A Lecture; (Clapham Common): 6.30, Mr. H. V. Storey, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): 11, Members are urged to attend. Business very important. Delegates Report of Conference and other important Discussion.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Dales, and Kells.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Freethought and Morals.—The Editor	313
The Cross of Christ.—J. T. Lloyd	314
The Clerical Offensive.—Mimnermus	315
The Mechanism of Man.—T. F. Palmer	316
Concerning the "Freethinker."—Chapman Cohen	319
Popular Tales for the Copts.—F. J. Gould	320
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	321
Confidence.—Ignotus	322

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Freethought and Morals.

In dealing with the morality of Freethinkers, Christians have employed, and still employ, three arguments. First it was said the foundation of unbelief was ill-living. But it was always puzzling in what way unbelief made immorality easy. A man can be a scoundrel and pious with much greater ease than he can combine rascality with unbelief. A profession of piety is a valuable asset for anyone out to swindle the public, and a complete record of the world's scoundrels would show a quite overwhelming proportion of fervent believers. The second argument is that if unbelievers are not bad, at least they would be if they carried their beliefs to a logical conclusion in practice. This argument is advanced by a higher order of writers than the first one, although all that it really amounts to is "As without certain beliefs *I* should be a scoundrel, seeing that you repudiate those beliefs *your* blackguardism may be taken for granted." If the blackguardism is not apparent that is because the Freethinker does not see the logical implication of its principles. His morality is saved at the expense of his intelligence.

* * *

The Christian Tradition.

From these two arguments there develops a third. If unbelievers are in practice as good as believers, this must not be attributed to greater intelligence or better character, it is due solely to the fact that the Freethinker is born of a Christian ancestry, lives in a Christian society, and so becomes unconsciously influenced by Christian principles. This is substantially the position taken up by two such writers as Mr. A. J. Balfour and Mr. W. H. Mallock. We cannot tell what the ethical consequences of Atheism are because no country is free from the purifying influence of Christian teachings. We cannot separate ourselves from either the power of Christian influence or the "stream of Christian ideas." So runs the argument, and its suicidal nature is obvious. It proves too much, and so destroys itself. For if Freethinkers are the product of a Christian ancestry, Protestants are equally the product of a Catholic ancestry, and Christians generally the product of Pagan forbears. We could go further back still, and prove that the virtue of the whole race was resident in the primitive savage, and so show that all progress is pure myth. For unless one generation can lift itself above the moral and intellectual level of its predecessor there could be no such thing as either progress or development. Each generation builds on the experience of those that went before, and *we* are utilizing that experience in discarding the myths and puerilities of Christian theology.

* * *

Christian or Non-Christian?

It would be quite easy to say, and far from difficult to justify the statement, that instead of the goodness of Freethinkers being the result of a Christian training and a Christian environment, the comparative purity of modern Christian ideas, and the more liberal conduct of modern Christians, are due to the influence of the few that have shaken themselves free from the "stream of Christian ideas." During the whole history of modern Europe there is not a single progressive idea—not a single established truth in science and philosophy that has not had to fight for its life against Christian feeling and teaching. The stream of Christian ideas was on the side of Ptolemy and against Copernicus. It was for a flat earth and against a round one; for miracle and against causation. It was for whipping devils out of lunatics and against mania as a product of neural derangement, for creation and against evolution. The list might be extended indefinitely, and it can be exemplified even in the sphere of morals. It was not Christian influence that made Christians cease burning heretics or gloating over the torments of the damned. Developing knowledge on the one side forced Christians to surrender their absurd teachings in the region of science. A more humane social life on the other side forced them to drop their savage doctrine of eternal damnation. When men, like Morley and Mill, and women, like George Eliot, denounced the inhumanity of Christian teaching, it was not because of Christian influence, but because they had shaken their minds free from it. It is never religion that moralizes man, it is always man that moralizes religion.

* * *

The Power of the Past.

There is, of course, a sense in which the present can never wholly escape the influence of the past. The power of the dead hand is very real in all human society. But it is one of the damning features in the history of religion that it has used the past only as a means of enslaving the present. The great aim of religion, now and always, is to chain man to the past, and to prevent his experiencing the full influence of contemporary life and knowledge. That is the bottom reason why we employ in religious services an archaic form of speech use an archaic dress, perform an archaic ceremonial. In the civilized world the priest stands in a privileged position. Why? Only because he is the lineal descendant of the primitive magic-worker, who, by his magic, was believed to have power to coerce or persuade the tribal deities. Just as behind the god is the ghost, so behind the priest is the medicine-man, and so behind the elaborate ceremonial of the modern cathedral there are the magic-working ceremonies of the primitive savage. All religion strives to keep the past alive because its real life belongs to the past. There is no hope and no justification for it in the present.

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Prospective and Retrospective.

But we are told that we cannot tell what would be the effect on society of the wholesale adoption of Atheism, because no society professing Atheism has ever existed. True, so far as the latter part of the statement is concerned; and yet, if Christianity has an advantage over Freethought in this respect, we imagine it is one that Christians would often like to be without. So far as social control is concerned, the Freethinker must look to the future. The Christian can only prophesy what Freethought will do. But with Christianity there is no need for prophecy. Its record is before us; its influence and the results of its control are matters of history. And we know that the period during which the influence of Christianity was strongest was the period of civilized history when intellectual life was lowest, morality weakest, and the general outlook most hopeless. Christian control gave us heresy-hunts and Jew-hunts. It gave us burnings for witchcraft, and magic in place of medicine. It gave us the Inquisition and the *auto-da-fe*, the fires of Smithfield and the Night of Bartholomew. It gave us life without happiness and death cloaked with nameless horrors. It gave us the war of sects, and it contributed largely to establish the sect of war. Certainly, the Christian record is before us, and it is such that every Christian Church blames all the others for its existence. Quite as certainly we cannot point to a society which has been dominated by freethinking ideas; but we can point to their existence in all stages of civilization, and can demonstrate that whatever improvement has been effected must be attributed to their presence. We can show that advanced ideas have always originated with the least, and have been resisted by the most, Christian section of society; that freedom of thought and speech, increased purity and truthfulness of spirit, have always been forced upon the Churches from without. What Christianity has been, we know. What Freethought will be, we can only guess; and we can speculate cheerfully in the conviction that honesty is possible without the lie of religion, and that duty may still be done with no other incentive than its visible consequences on the lives of those around us.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Cross of Christ.

II.

IN estimating the evidences of either the triumph or of the defeat of Christ's Cross in history, it is essentially necessary to bear in mind the radical distinction between the primary and the secondary objects for the realization of which it is said to have come into existence. Both objects are distinctly stated in the New Testament, though in the great Creeds only the primary aim occupies the forefront of importance. In the Pauline Epistles the Cross is God's message of reconciliation to a world at enmity with him. Believers are represented as saying that when they were enemies they were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. The primary effect of the Cross, therefore, is reconciliation, not between man and man, but between man and God. As a secondary effect comes the brotherhood of believers, not of mankind. This brotherhood is described as a new creation in Christ Jesus. That is to say, those who become reconciled to God by the death of his Son enter into a bond of union and harmony among themselves. They alone are "the brethren" who are earnestly exhorted to love one another, while all the rest of mankind constitute what is called "the world," which is not an object of love. In John's Gospel, God is represented as loving "the world," so that those in it who believe may not perish but have everlasting life; but in John's First Epistle the brethren are forbidden to love the world on the assurance that "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." According to Calvinism, which in the Catholic Church is known as Augustinianism, Christ died only for "the sheep," the elect, and it is they alone who can be saved. Be this as it may, the fact that stares us in the face is that the reconciliation effected by the Cross has never been realized except by a comparatively small percentage of the human race. Christendom itself, at its very largest, has formed but an insignificant fraction of the world. Surely, this fact is totally ignored by those who so confidently declare that the Cross has triumphed, or that Christianity has conquered the world.

What has the Cross accomplished in Christendom? Nominally, it has produced the Church, though in strictest truth the Church has produced the Cross. At first the Church was the smallest and feeblest of institutions, of which Paul, its chief founder, was often profoundly ashamed. For the first three centuries the brethren comprised not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble, but were noted, as Paul tells the Corinthians, for their lack of wisdom, for their weakness, insignificance, and even baseness. The Corinthian converts, at any rate, did not even love one another, but were divided into several contentious parties or factions. It is true, however, that, as a rule, they did display, especially in times of persecution, considerable loyalty to one another, but for the Pagan world round about them they entertained bitter hatred and undiluted contempt. The Master's commandment: "Love your enemies," was systematically disregarded by them. Even the great Apostle of the Gentiles did not seem to be aware that such a commandment was in existence, for of Jesus he says that "he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." When, under Constantine the Great, the Cross became a power in the Roman Empire, it was by no means the power of beneficent love, but of the material sword. Paganism was suppressed by force of arms. The Cross won its nominal victory in the West, not by fulfilling the royal laws of love, but by inducing the State to crush all rivalries beneath its iron heels. But what did this nominal victory of the Cross really signify? Not the advent of righteousness and truth as regnant factors in social life, not the overthrow of the powers of darkness by the omnipotence of holy love; but, rather, the establishment of the Church as the lowest and most cruel tyrant the world had ever seen. The history of the Middle Ages is practically the history of one form of oppression struggling with all its might for the subjugation of another form. Dean Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*, as well as Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*, show with the utmost clearness that the most fondly cherished ambition of the Church was to gain absolute supremacy in Europe, to be the sole arbiter in politics as well as in religion, and to exploit the State to its own advantage. For a time that ideal was on the point of being realized, both in England and on the Continent. Emperors and kings there were who recognized the superiority of the Popes.

Now, the truth is that when the Church was at its highest and strongest, the Cross was at its lowest and weakest. The plan of the world's salvation through faith in the crucified and risen Christ has never been fulfilled, even on the smallest scale. This is virtually admitted by Christians themselves. "Of course," they say, "the Churches have failed. Had they succeeded, it would have been a bigger miracle than any recorded in the New Testament." In that strange admission it is forgotten that the world's redemption was to be the biggest miracle in history, God's own masterpiece. The

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Gospel Jesus predicted that his crucifixion would result in drawing the whole human family to himself as Saviour and Lord. The Church claims to be a supernatural institution, the very body of Christ on earth, or the temple of the Holy Ghost, and it naturally follows that its failure is nothing less than the failure of the Holy Trinity. Of course, the success of the Church would have been the most stupendous of all miracles; but was it not in order that such a miracle might be performed that Christ promised to indwell it to the end of time? Was it not for the purpose of achieving that end that he promised to send the Holy Ghost to be its life and power? If we accept the New Testament interpretation of the Church's mission, there is no possible escape from the conclusion that the collapse of the Church represents the downfall of the supernatural principle. It is immaterial whether we distinguish between the Church and Christianity or not, or between organized and unorganized Christianity; the vital point being that the Church is the Divinely appointed agent or instrument chosen by the Redeemer to do his redemptive work, and that its impotence undermines the whole supernatural system. Principal Forsyth, without intending it, confirms this view when he observes that the conditions of life in this world are so hopelessly bad that even theologians "are driven into a new belief in another world, in Immortality." He says:—

> We are driven to find more meaning, and perhaps spend more time, in God's realm of eternal lordship by love, his righteousness perfectly holy, and his universal grace. It would be impossible to believe in his love or his kingdom if we could not call in another world to redress the balance of this, or rather to answer its groaning prayer (*The Justification of God*, p. 157).

J. T. LLOYD.

The Clerical Offensive.

> If I had been a bishop, with an income of five to fifteen thousand pounds a year, I should have had an inexhaustible source of rejoicing and merriment in the generosity, if not in the credulity, of my countrymen.—*John Bright.*

WHEN the World-War started the clergy hailed the event as the happy harbinger of a spiritual awakening, but subsequent events have discounted the hope. The War, which has tested so many men and institutions, has not spared the Christian Churches. It has, indeed, brought out strongly the unselfish sacrifice of hundreds of thousands who were utterly indifferent to the Churches, but it has also revealed, on the part of the clergy, and their leaders, a spirit of cant, compromise, and cowardice, that must tend to lessen what influence the Black Army possessed with the mass of ordinary citizens.

Freethinkers do not need to be reminded that this clerical influence is diminishing, and has long been a slowly vanishing quantity. And the clergy themselves have not been slow to perceive the waning allegiance of their flocks, and the high sniffing contempt of people who do not often trouble the pew-openers. A speech just delivered by Canon Meyrick, of Norwich, shows which way the wind of opinion is blowing, and is likely to provoke discussion on a question which cannot be reckoned as of small importance. Realizing the growing disfavour of the clergy, and the anachronism of mediæval prelates in a democratic country, Canon Meyrick seeks to restore the Church's balance of power by the creation of "many more Bishops and no more prelates." The Canon, naturally, wishes to keep the present bench of bishops to safeguard the political position of the Government religion; but he would curry favour with the democracy by the creation of many more new bishops, presumably to act as assistants to the titled and begaitered prelates who have brought the Church to its present position of impotence. Canon Meyrick asserts that the present bishops are overworked, and that they are aloof from the rank and file of the clergy, and that they have no sort of understanding of the laity and the general public. The creation of an entirely new class of working bishops, leaving the existing bench of bishops in their places, would do much to increase the Church's hold on the masses.

Canon Meyrick's attitude shows how far removed the Church of England is from democratic hopes and ideals. In the piping times of peace the anachronism of a clerical caste in our midst passed almost unnoticed, but the War has brought out in strong relief the position of the selfish and skin-careful clergy. All can recall the fervent appeals made by these priests, coupled with the fact that they have been themselves exempted from military service, and are free to tread the primrose path of dalliance. Is it strange that there should rise a note, not so much of remonstrance as of revolt, which suggests that the nation is dissatisfied with the behaviour of the clergy, from the wealthy bachelor occupant of Fulham Palace to the rotund tenant of Little Pedlington vicarage, who have equally proved themselves out of touch with the general life and aspirations of the nation. At a time when the civilized world is in convulsion, the Bishops have found time to discuss the claims of Charles the First to the highest rank of saintship. They have busied themselves in the important matter of altering the "vile body" of the Burial Service to "this body of our low estate." And they have found time to gloss the barbarities and indecencies of the "Psalms" of the Holy Bible. But on the great issues of the present day, how incomparably great should be clear to the thickest heads, they have shown a complete and shameless indifference, except to their own interests.

Canon Meyrick lays stress on the proper functions of statesmanship of the Bishops, but he had better have left that matter severely alone. The votes of the Right Reverend Fathers in God in the House of Lords is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking citizens, and their shameful opposition to all progress shows how hopelessly the Church of Christ is out of touch with democratic issues.

The Bishops voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees, and against the removal of civil disabilities from Catholics, Jews, and Rationalists. They opposed the introduction of Free Education, and voted against the admission of women to London Borough Councils. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison, or 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 mediæval and reactionary ecclesiastics, and their political record is sufficient to carry its own condemnation.

This new bid for popularity on the part of the Bishops is foredoomed to failure. Few worse misfortunes can befall any people than this of possessing a very powerful ecclesiastical institution in its midst that saps the very springs of morality and humanity, that permits mental and moral confusion, and that constantly hinders and hampers the wheels of progress in the way that the Church of England does. It is a survival from the past, and the enemy of democracy, and must be fought until it is no longer a power for evil. For the Church is opposed to the spirit of liberty, which animates the progressive peoples of the world.

MIMNERMUS.

The love of others has the same necessary foundation in the human mind as the love of ourselves.—*William Hazlitt.*

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The Mechanism of Man.

VIII.

(*Concluded from p. 305.*)

DURING the progress of digestion in the small intestine the chyme becomes thoroughly mixed with both the bile and the pancreatic secretion. The chyme is thus reduced to a creamy condition. At this stage it is known as chyle. Having been subjected to the action of all the intestinal juices, the chyle journeys through the small intestine which contracts gently and rhythmically with a worm-like movement termed peristalsis. These digestive processes completed, the labour of absorption begins.

The duodenum is prolonged into the jejunum, which is eight feet in length. From the jejunum proceed the remaining twelve feet of the small intestine—the ileum. This part of the small bowel terminates at the ileo-cæcal valve which opens into the large intestine. The large bowel extends from the ileo-cæcal valve to the anus where the waste solid substances—the excrementary matters—are discharged.

The first part of the large intestine is called the ascending colon, and just below this lies the cæcum, from which the vermiform appendix proceeds. The cæcum is much larger in herbivorous mammals than in man. In fact, it forms the second stomach in ruminating animals—those that chew the cud. The ox, deer, and sheep are well-known instances of these. In man, the apes, and monkeys, and other mammals, this organ persists in a dwindled state. With them it is a vestigial organ, and points to their descent from herbivorous ancestors. The vermiform appendix is, in man, about four inches long. It is a small blind tube devoid of utility in the higher mammalia, but, unfortunately, its inflammation proves the occasion of the frequently fatal disease of appendicitis.

Immediately it issues from the lesser intestine the large intestine passes upwards on the right side of the abdomen. Hence its name of the ascending colon. As it approaches the gall bladder, the ascending colon pursues a horizontal course, and then becomes the transverse colon. Having travelled across the abdominal cavity from right to left, it commences to descend when it nears the spleen, and passes down on the left side of the abdomen. This section of the gut is termed the descending colon, and it curves at its lower end before passing into the rectum, which forms the last part of the large intestine. At the lower region of the rectum there is a strong muscular ring, the sphincter ani, which relaxes periodically while the function of defaecation is being performed.

Not merely must the food be digested, but it must also be assimilated if it is to furnish the requirements of the organism. Before absorption can take place two conditions are indispensable. Food substances must be rendered soluble in the blood plasma and its derivative, the lymph, and they must become capable of diffusion through an animal membrane.

The chief centre of absorption is the small intestine, while there are two ways in which nutrient matters may be assimilated. These are absorbed, both by the blood vessels, and the channels of the lymph. The portal vein is formed by the junction of the various veins proceeding from the digestive viscera. These veins arise from the blood capillaries in the bowel, stomach, and other visceral organs. These capillaries directly absorb sugar, salts, water, and the peptones. In this manner these materials immediately enter the general circulation. The portal vein thus carries to the liver several food-stuffs including sugar. This last is stored in the liver, while the other nutrient materials travel to the hepatic veins, and from them to the heart.

The membrane which lines the small intestine contains large numbers of tiny projections termed villi. Each villus possesses a lacteal, and as the chyle passes over these projections part of it exudes through the epithelial surfaces of the villi into the lymphoid tissue lying below, from which it passes into the lacteal, and then the nutriment enters the lymphatic circulation. A small quantity of peptone is absorbed through the villi, but their special foods are fats.

Water permeates any part of the lining of the intestinal canal. Soluble salts are absorbed by the vascular vessels of the stomach as well as some forms of sugar. It is concluded that 20 per cent. of the nitrogen present in food is actually absorbed in the large intestine. We may briefly state that "Proteids as peptones, sugar, salts, and water are absorbed by the blood vessels, and fats by the lacteals."

In the tissues the capillaries form a close meshwork, and part of their contained blood plasma passes through the delicate capillary walls, and thus conducts its nutritive materials to the cells of the tissues. This fluid which passes from the capillaries to the tissues is the lymph. Lymph is a pale liquid, and is chiefly water holding proteids and other substances in solution. Unlike blood, the lymph contains no red corpuscles, although it possesses colourless corpuscles in abundance.

The lymph occupies the spaces between the cells of the tissues. These spaces are drained by a network of minute lymphatic vessels, which gradually join up into larger channels, which convey the lymph from its tissue. The lymphatic vessels from the various organs of the body become linked up into increasingly larger vessels, which ultimately pour their contents into the thoracic duct. This main lymphatic organ is situated in the trunk, in front of the vertebral column. As stated in Foster and Shore's *Physiology* :—

> It lies in the thorax on the front of the dorsal vertebræ, passes through the diaphragm, and extends down the abdomen to the level of the lumbar vertebræ, where the lymphatics from the legs and lower part of the trunk open into it. The lymphatics from the intestine and the other abdominal organs also open into it, so that the lower end of the thoracic duct is larger than the rest of it, and is called the receptaculum chyli.

From this chyle receptacle the thoracic duct advances upwards through the abdomen and thorax to the left of the esophagus or gullet. Finally, the duct opens into and discharges its lymphatic fluid into the blood-stream at the root of the neck, where it enters the large jugular vein at that vein's junction with the left sub-clavian vessel, the leading vein of the left arm. Thus the lymph, after passing through the walls of the vascular capillaries into the lymphatic channels, becomes restored by the lymphatic vessels and the thoracic duct to the blood system.

Although the blood nourishes and sustains the organism as a whole, still, save in the spleen, the vascular fluid itself never directly enters into the vital cells of the various tissues of the body or brain. The lymph serves as the blood's instrument in fulfilling this function. The lymph vessels are amply provided with valves which assist the flow of the lymph towards the veins that receive it, but which would open to obstruct its passage in the opposite direction. The lymph courses through its channels as a result of pressure. This pressure is maintained by the lymph which is constantly forming in the vessels which spring from the capillaries, and this pressure, aided by the valves, easily overcomes any resistance presented by the blood vessels into which the lymph is discharged.

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Solid, and usually bean-shaped, bodies, which vary considerably in volume, are seated in the lymphatic system. A lymphatic vessel is occasionally obstructed in its course by a lymphatic gland, and this impediment must be passed through before the lymph can continue its journey. A gland of this character acts as a filter, and prevents microbes from entering into the blood system, while it is also the birthplace of the white blood corpuscles. Each of these glands consists of a network of delicate connective tissue, in which immense numbers of lymph corpuscles lie crowded together. These leucocytes, or white corpuscles, are smaller than those found in the blood. In truth, they are baby corpuscles, that are continually dividing and re-dividing, and thus increasing in number. As the lymph pushes itself through the lymph-gland's network, and then flows onward, it carries with it a fair proportion of these infant corpuscles. In this manner is the blood supplied with its colourless corpuscles. As we have seen, these little bodies are largely essential to the well-being of the organism, as they prove formidable foes to the baleful microbes which invade the animal system. All these colourless corpuscles appear to be generated in lymphatic glands, or in tissue of a kindred character situated in other parts of the human body.

T. F. PALMER.

Acid Drops.

At the request of the Pope, the Allied Commanders agreed not to bomb Cologne on Corpus Christi Day. So the Colognese on that day were able to go about their religious performances with easy minds. But the big German gun continued bombarding Paris, and on Whit-Sunday London was raided by German aeroplanes. Such are the amenities of Christians at war. For nearly four years millions of Christians have been engaged in killing each other by some of the most brutal and most horrible methods conceivable. Christian belief could do nothing to bring war a day nearer the end, but it could hold up the bombardment of one city out of respect for a religious festival. This triumph of Christian belief is remarkable.

It is a strange thing, said Mr. Smallwood, M.P., that after nearly four years of war, the Churches are empty. We think the strange thing would be if they were full. Four years of this War are not likely to impress any sensible person with either the truth or utility of religious beliefs. The German attack on Belgium destroyed more than a "scrap of paper"; it was the beginning of an awakening for thousands who had hitherto troubled themselves but little about religion. The War has made them think, and that process is always more or less fatal to religious beliefs.

A panic was caused in a church near Subiaco, Italy, by a woman shouting, "Save yourselves! Help!" Nearly 200 people were killed or injured. The woman was found to be suffering from delusions. But if all those suffering from delusions stayed away from church, very few would attend.

Providence does not appear to have any great regard for religious buildings. A fire took place at the St. Joseph's Convent, Hackney, and one of the inmates was fatally burned. At St. Cuthbert's, Bowes Park, fire caused damage amounting to £600.

A profane story was printed recently in the *Evening Standard* (London). A Canadian soldier was so ill that visitors were denied. This restraint proving irksome, he induced another patient to get him some telegraph forms. Next day the nurse found on his bed the following official wire: "Your crown is not ready. No hurry. Gabriel, Heaven." The Archangel is still waiting, as the patient recovered.

"The strange thing about the Churches to-day is that after nearly four years of war they are empty," says Mr. E. Smallwood, M.P. It would be a stranger thing if the Churches were full.

The Roman Catholic procession of the Society of Our Lady of Lourdes, which took place at Westminster, is a further proof that the Catholic clergy are making a bid for popularity. The London press gave a lot of space to this revival of superstition, but their accounts differ considerably. One paper declared that 20,000 persons took part, and another 12,000; but all were exceedingly polite. What a lot of water has passed under London Bridge since the old anti-Popery days.

The *Church Times* says that during the past few days some Parisians have been wearing little green and yellow dolls as protectors against bombs and shells. It adds, sarcastically, that "while it is legitimate mascotry to wear these, it is drivelling superstition to set a little figure of St. Christopher on a motor car or to invoke St. Genevieve, patroness of Paris." We quite agree there is no distinction between the two, although our point of view is different from that of the *Church Times*. We believe the *Church Times* would agree with the invocation of saints, while we hold that the wearing of the yellow doll is quite as good as that of prayers to St. Genevieve. The real moral is that there is an immense amount of latent superstition among the people, and under emotional tension it will out. That, indeed, is an ever-present danger facing civilization.

About sixty parsons in London have "expressed their intention of joining the Army for combatant service." It is a dazzling record—after nearly four years of a world-war. "Onward, Christian soldiers!"

A correspondent of a London paper describes a sermon of Billy Sunday's as "the most athletic speech" he had seen. Surely this describes to a nicety the perambulations of this pious, perspiring, peripatetic, pulpit-puncher.

Dr. Jowett, speaking at Westminster Chapel, compared the Church of Christ to a "great shining light" throwing its beams over a very naughty world. Unfortunately, few consider the Church's wax candles as being a modern illuminant.

A correspondent wishes to know whether the Bishop of London ever issued a public statement of his income and expenditure? Such a statement was issued by the Bishop towards the end of 1904. Here it is:—

	£	s.	d.
Fulham Palace and London house rates taxes	848	12	6
Queen Anne's Bounty	422	4	7
Income tax	500	0	0
Household expenses, including the keeping up of a house with 44 bed-rooms and the entertainment of candidates for ordination	1,678	9	5
Repair of houses	1,190	7	3
Coal, gas, and electric lighting	379	9	5
Stabling account	895	0	4
Garden and farm	723	9	6
Stationery, printing and postage	388	9	4
	7,026	2	4

So that after deducting the cost of rent, rates, taxes, garden, food, postage, etc., all the poor Bishop has left is a paltry £2,973 17s. 8d.—presumably, for pocket-money.

The innocent manner in which the clergy often give their case away is highly amusing as well as deeply significant. Preaching in London recently, the Bishop of Oxford said that "power" is "the last word which we should naturally choose to describe the Christian Church in the whirl of our present civilization." What a terribly humiliating confession for an orthodox bishop to make! Did not his lordship realize that he was undermining the belief in the proper Deity of Jesus Christ as well as that in the Divine origin and authority of the Church?

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Of course, Bishop Gore *explains* the present impotence of the Church; but his very explanation is even more damaging to the cause than the confession itself. His lordship's strange contention is that in apostolic times the Church possessed and exercised supernatural power, but that in these modern days she has lost it. What he does not see is that the Church's impotence disproves her Divinity as well as the truth of her Founder's brilliant prophecy concerning her victorious career in the world.

Mrs. Despard, President of the Women's Freedom League, placed a laurel-wreath on the statue of John Stuart Mill in Temple Gardens, to commemorate the fifty-first anniversary of his championship of the women's cause in the House of Commons. A tardy recognition of the work of the man whom Gladstone called "the saint of Rationalism."

A star-turn at the West London Mission recently was Mr. F. W. Murtfeldt, Secretary of the American Y.M.C.A.

The will of the Rev. H. A. Starkie, of Settle, Yorkshire, has been proved for £293,922, and the late Rev. J. Chapman, of Retford, Notts, left property to the value of £49,210, whilst the Rev. H. L. Fanshawe, of Chilworth, Oxfordshire, left £24,389. All should have a very warm reception in the next world.

We see from the *Poor Law Officer's Journal* that the Mayor of Bishop's Castle, at a recent meeting of the Board of Guardians, moved that, in view of the need for economy, a paid chaplain is no longer justified, and that any such services required be of a honorary character. But the chaplain declines to resign, and it seems that the guardians have not the power of dismissal. So there the matter stands, and one may trust parsons to hang on to jobs where any salary is attached. For our part we see no reason why, when religious services are needed in workhouses or other public institutions, these should not be undertaken by "nearby" clergymen as part of their ordinary duties. In the majority of cases, these religious services are not demanded by the inmates, they are forced on them. And the clergy are foremost in seeing that the pressure is maintained. They are equally insistent that the public shall pay for their services.

The promised revival of religion is long overdue, but there is a noticeable friendliness between the ministers of the Government religion and the Free Church clergy all over the country. So true is it that adversity makes strange bedfellows.

Parents no longer give their children Bible names as they used to, and people are unfamiliar with them. A witness in a law case at Willesden remarked that he was baptized Jehu, but folk made such a mess of it, so he called himself John.

Canon Meyrick, speaking at Norwich, pleaded for simpler bishops. Isn't the Bishop of London as simple as a South Sea Islander?

From the *Greenock Telegraph* of May 28, we learn that a speaker at the U.P. Assembly declared that "men in the dug-outs in France were living under happier conditions than some of the families in this land, and that a South African kraal was no worse than some of the houses in the Western Isles." We do not doubt the substantial accuracy of these statements, and as they stand they throw a strong light on the professed interest of the Churches in the welfare of the working classes. In any but a Christian country, such things would have been—to Christians—proofs of the need of Christian teaching. What is the moral in this country?

The Bishop of Durham, in inviting the younger clergymen to volunteer, declared that if he had been twenty-five years' younger he would have offered himself for service. The Church is generally too late.

The Irish Presbyterian Church has had a pleasant windfall of £6,000 from the estate of the late Mr. J. C. Fulton, of Armagh. The "Chinese Presbyterians" will be jealous.

Field-Marshal Hindenburg's daughter, Elsie, has written a hymn, beginning "Christ Jesus gave His life for me," and containing the line "He (Jesus) to the bayonet thrust gives vigour." Another striking example of German "Atheism."

Religion is not always a blessing and a comfort as the clergy pretend. In the case of Florence Hazell, a domestic servant, whose body was found in the Bell Weir, Egham, it was stated that she suffered from religious mania. The jury returned a verdict of "suicide whilst of unsound mind."

On the authority of Lady Hope, a religious publication recently asserted that Charles Darwin abandoned his Agnostic position. A copy of the publication was forwarded to Sir Francis Darwin, who replied in the following letter to M. A. Leivre, Secretary of the Protestant Press Bureau:—

> Lady Hope's account of my father's views on religion is quite untrue. I have publicly accused her of falsehood, but have not seen any reply. My father's Agnostic point of view is given in my *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*. You are at liberty to publish the above statement. Indeed, I shall be glad if you will do so.

We are afraid that "lying for the greater glory of God" is still too vigorous a profession for us to hope that this particular falsehood will cease to be told. All experience proves that religious writers will go on lying just so long as it pays them to do so.

Ordinary Christians appear to strongly object to their co-religionists who possess consciences, and Conscientious Objectors at Wakefield have sent a letter of complaint to the Home Secretary and some Members of Parliament, setting out the difficulties they have to encounter. They object to being badgered to make a Wakefield holiday.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll is of opinion that "the best thing we can say about God is that he is like Christ." Unfortunately, nobody knows what Christ was like, for the pictures of him are innumerable, and they are all fundamentally different. To which of them is God like? The only rational inference is that both Christ and God are purely imaginary beings, of whom no knowledge is procurable on any terms.

Church Bells.

If Life were Joy: if Truth relieved the Earth,
And fat stupidity, deprived of breath,
Gave place to Mirth—
And Man had conquered Death.
The Church, with solemn majesty would tell,
How "God" had died, and ring its little bell.

If multitudes of Life-starved, simple folk,
Were blessed with Reason, and a sense of Right,
To cast the yoke—
Of "Sin" into the night.
The Church would hope that all might *yet* be well,
Would drape the Cross, and ring its little bell.

If War was vanquished, or the Sword laid down,
And dreams of human Liberty were born,
While every town—
Laughed servile fools to scorn,
The Church would pray "Deliverance from Hell,"
Would play a tune, and ring its little bell.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

The necessity for external government to man is in inverse ratio to the vigour of his self-government. Where the last is most complete, the first is least wanted. Hence, the more virtue the more liberty.—*Coleridge.*

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Concerning the "Freethinker."

A NEW Paper Order prohibits the sending out of any paper or journal "on sale or return." This means that all who want a paper must order it beforehand, for newsagents will not stock papers if there is a chance of their being left with unsold copies.

This will not greatly affect the present circulation of the *Freethinker* (it is likely to suffer far more from the wholesale call up of men for military service), although it is pleasing to record that more and more newsagents are displaying this paper. But, then, we are not satisfied with the present circulation of the *Freethinker*, and should not be if it were five times as great. The new Order will prevent one method of securing new readers—and it is new readers that an Editor is after all the time. So we venture to suggest a plan whereby, at the cost of a couple of coppers per week—and probably without any cost at all—the *Freethinker* may continue to appear in the windows of as many agents as will display it.

We want in every town two or more readers of this paper to enrol themselves as members of a *Freethinker* League. We will then see that they are made acquainted with each other. That done, let them see which newsagents who already supply the paper on order will take extra copies and display them for sale, the members of the League buying back the unsold copies. By this plan the newsagents will be guaranteed against loss, and the guarantors will at most have to pay a copper or so per week, and most probably nothing at all. For where the *Freethinker* is displayed, it soon secures purchasers.

Another way would be for the members of the League to themselves act as agents or distributors of the paper among their friends. This is a most effective way of gaining new subscribers, and is already being done in many cases.

Yet a third plan. Members of the League should send us the names and addresses of all whom they consider likely to become subscribers. We will then send them specimen copies, free, for six weeks. If they do not subscribe by the end of that time, we give them up as hopeless.

Our readers have helped so well in the past that we count on their help here with confidence. Some time back we asked for 1,000 new readers, and we got them —we mean that the circulation actually increased by 1,000 per week. Then we asked for a second thousand, and we have made some progress in getting that number. Now we are guarding against losing, and are out for a still further increase.

There is only one *Freethinker* in the world for all who know it. We think we may all safely claim that it is doing a great work in the country, and that its influence bites as deeply as any journal published. We are working like the proverbial "nigger" at our end, and under conditions of unprecedented difficulty. We therefore feel warranted in asking all who value the paper to do what they can on the lines suggested.

So please send along your names and addresses as volunteers for the *Freethinker* League, and we shall then hope to soon announce that we have added a full second thousand to the circulation of a paper that plays to no party, and fans no passion save that of truth and justice.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

When shall the saner, softer polities
Whereof we dream, have play in each proud land,
And patriotism, grown God-like, scorn to stand
Bondslave to realms, but circle earth and seas?
—*Thomas Hardy.*

To Correspondents.

T. FOWLER.—Thanks. We hope to see the Coventry Branch very active during the coming autumn. If we can help in any way, please let us know.

W. BARTON.—Paper being sent to the soldier's address supplied.

E. TAYLOR.—We are glad to learn that the Huddersfield paper reprinted our notes on "Man Power and the Clergy." We, of course, prefer that, in such cases, acknowledgment of origin should be made; but the chief thing is for the opinions to gain publicity. Your own letter, however, corrects the omission, and adds some shrewd and well said comments on your own account. We agree with what you say as to the influence of politics on intellectual candour. The one is usually fatal to the other. We also agree that the cause of Freethought can never be advanced by coarseness or vulgarity. Such things attract a class that any movement is better without.

J. H. LANGFORD.—Your good wishes and congratulations are greatly appreciated.

R. J. BENSON.—Sorry we do not know enough of the system about which you enquire to express an opinion.

PTE. J. MORGAN.—Sorry that want of space prevents printing your interesting letter. We have kept it, however, with a view to future use. You have made a brave stand for your opinions, and we feel sure must have gained the respect of the best of the men around you. You have our admiration at all events.

E. L. LINTHORNE.—We fail to catch the drift of your letter.

E. E. STAFFORD.—Thanks for portrait. Hope you will continue to keep "fit" to the end.

R. NEWTON.—Pleased you have found the tract *What is the Use of the Clergy?* so useful. We should like to see a hundred thousand in circulation within the next three months.

T. DENNIS.—Glad to know you had a good meeting last Sunday. Sheffield badly needs rousing.

G. E. RULE.—Pleased to learn that you had a good meeting at Victoria Park, and to know that you are keeping active in other directions.

G. T. WHITEHEAD AND W. BRIDEN.—Have sent on your names to the correspondent. 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.

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.

Owing to the new postal rates, every copy of the *Freethinker* sent through the post must have stamped on it the name of the paper. If this is not done, the postage will be one penny. We shall continue sending out copies in the ordinary way, except in such cases where the extra postage is prepaid. This will mean 2s. 2d. per year, or total subscription 12s. 8d. Those who do not mind the name of the paper being displayed on the wrapper will receive it at the ordinary rates.

A curious blunder occurred in last week's "To Correspondents." Mr. A. S. Pickering wrote us, forwarding on Sir A. Griffith Boscawen's statement that "We have all got to be Christians if we are going to win the war." Mr. Pickering's comment was that for all to become Christians would be as great a calamity as Germany winning the War. We wrote

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that we agreed with the comment; but, by the omission of a few words, we were made to say that winning the War would be a great disaster. Which is quite the reverse of what we meant. Most of our readers will, we have no doubt, have detected the nature of the blunder.

We have received a number of soldiers' addresses for the thirteen weeks' free copies of the *Freethinker* that was recently offered by one of our readers. The number to be paid for was twenty-one, and we still have several vacancies. If more than that number is received, we will send them on our own account. So no one need hesitate to send the name and address of a soldier to whom a copy of the *Freethinker* would be acceptable. Our offer of sending a small parcel of literature, free, to the troops also holds good.

We are glad to learn that the new Portsmouth Branch is planning some serious and sustained work. An inaugural meeting is to be held to-day (June 9) in the Trades' Hall, Fratton Road, at 6.30. Mr. F. N. Crosby will address the meeting, and important business is to be transacted. May we ask all Portsmouth Freethinkers to make a point of being present. Mr. Crosby has hitherto acted as Secretary, but owing to his many engagements, Mr. F. C. Ryan, of 48, North End Avenue, has undertaken the post of Honorary Secretary for the time being.

The Swansea Branch of the N. S. S. is desirous of availing itself of the services of any Freethought speakers who may be near that district during the summer months. Their services are required for open-air work. Will any who are spending a holiday in the neighbourhood of Swansea be good enough to communicate with the Secretary of the Branch, Mr. B. Dupree, 12 Short Street, Swansea?

We publish this week *The Philosophy of Secularism*, by the late G. W. Foote. The pamphlet has been out of print for some years, and we feel sure that its reissue will be appreciated. It is among the finest and the most dignified writings of one whose power as a writer was admitted by his enemies and warmly admired by his friends. It is an altogether admirable exposition of the groundwork of Secularism, and should serve as a useful propagandist pamphlet. It is issued at twopence, postage one halfpenny. In these days of dear labour and costly paper, this is practically bidding farewell to anything in the shape of profit; but we never hesitate to sacrifice profit to propaganda. Every *Freethinker* reader should send at once for a copy of this pamphlet.

The West Ham Branch has arranged for an outing to Epping Forest to-day (June 9). Members and friends will meet at the "Bakers' Arms," Leyton, at 10.30, and will then proceed to Chingford Mount. It has not been found possible to arrange anything in the shape of refreshments except hot water and milk; so those who join in the outing must bring their own rations.

By the death of Mr. Thomas Christian Andersen, an Australian member of the National Secular Society, the Secular Society, Limited, and the Rationalist Press Association are made joint residuary legatees to the deceased's estate. The residue is expected to be nearly £4,000 which will be divided between the two societies.

Popular Tales for the Copts.

THE Copts represent the ancient Egyptians modified by intermarriages with neighbouring peoples. When the Christian legend first made its way into Egypt, it received a philosophic form among the learned circles of Alexandria, but the Coptic multitude had no brains for that type of religious speculation, and preferred stories that were vivid and picturesque. To meet this simple taste, the story-writers of the early Christian centuries —corresponding with our novelists and ballad-mongers —prepared such tales as we find in the Coptic manuscript, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*. A complete copy has not yet come to light, but a considerable number of fragments have been translated and printed by various scholars since 1900. I give here a few notes on Dr. Revillont's edition.[1]

This Gospel gives details concerning Judas the Traitor which would naturally interest the Egyptian crowd. For example, when the people are about to be fed by Jesus in the wilderness, all the apostles receive bread for distribution, except Judas; and Jesus, in a sort of stage whisper, tells Andrew that the omission was intentional. Later in the story, we hear that Judas was led into sin by a wicked wife. It was she who gloated over the money which he stole from the common purse of the Twelve Apostles. When he came home without loot, she ridiculed him. It was she who put it into his head to betray his Master to the Jews for thirty pieces of silver. To her Judas took the money, and through her his soul dropped into Amenti,—that is, the Egyptian hell.

We have all heard of Doubting Thomas. In the Coptic legend, Thomas is curiously introduced into the account of the Raising of Lazarus from the dead. The Doubter was not satisfied with having seen the widow's son at Nain restored to life. He wanted a severer test of the Wonder-worker's capacity. He demanded that Jesus should raise up a man whose body had already (unlike the widow's son) begun to decay. So, at Bethany village, where Lazarus was entombed, a crowd assembled to see the experiment performed, and Thomas was himself appointed to remove the slab of stone which covered the entrance to the sepulchre. It is said that Thomas wept as he obeyed, for he now felt ashamed of his unbelief.[2] Of course, he is convinced (more or less!) when Lazarus issues from the tomb, and the people swarm round (as this popular Evangel expresses it) like bees round honey.

A somewhat mysterious anecdote is inserted about an Imperial officer, who had travelled from Rome to Judæa by order of the Emperor Tiberius, and who had been commissioned to choose a fresh king in place of the incompetent Philip. The officer, named Carios, heard of the miracles worked by Jesus, and rather hastily concluded that this Man of Prodigies would very well suit for the vacant throne. (The unlearned Copts would find no difficulty in such a legend, for it was exactly the way they would themselves have acted!) However, when Carios began to collect evidences, he found that Jewish priests told one tale, and Joseph and Nicodemus, personal friends of Jesus, told a contrary tale. On the whole, Carios was inclined to report to the Emperor in favour of Jesus; but a golden bribe from King Herod (Philip's brother) closed the project, and Cæsar never read the interesting report.

Much importance is attributed to the apostle Peter. To him are entrusted the Keys of Heaven; on him, as a rock, the Church will be built. When these privileges have been announced, Peter looks up, sees the seven heavens opened, and vast troops of angels flying down to salute him, and also sees Christ lifted to the sky by a sudden motion and sitting at the right hand of the "Good Father." Angels and æons (a Gnostic term) then cried,—

"Holy, holy, holy Peter, High-priest!"

Whereupon the face of Peter shone like the face of Moses.

[1] Issued in French (1904) by Dr. E. Revillont, Professor and Conservator at the Louvre; in vol. ii. of the series *Patrologia Orientalis*.

[2] The Gospel of *John* states that Jesus wept.

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When the Twelve Apostles sat at the table for the Last Supper, Matthias placed a dish before Jesus. On the dish was a cock.

"Rabbi," said Matthias, "here is a cock which I killed. When the Jews saw me killing it, they taunted me, and threatened that my Master would be killed in the same manner."

"Yes," replied Jesus, smilingly, "it is true; and I shall rise again from the dead like this creature."

So saying, he touched the cock, and the bird flew from the chamber.

Owing to the fragmentary character of the remains of this Gospel, we have only a very disconnected narrative of the Crucifixion. The romantic portions that have survived make us wish (so Coptic are some of us!) to hear more. For instance, take the legend of Ananias of Bethlehem.

No sooner had Jesus died on the Cross than Ananias rushed forward from among the multitude and clasped the body of the martyr. He held the hands of the dead in his own, he pressed his living heart against the dead heart, and then he shouted to the hostile Jews:—

"Liars and lewd men! Kill me, for that would be better than to kill my Lord and God. He is the Christ!"

Then a voice came from the crucified body promising that the soul of Ananias should not go to Amenti but rise to Paradise.

The mob stoned Ananias but could not kill him. They kept him in a fire three days, but he was not burned. Finally cold steel dispatched him, and the Saviour carried the soul of Ananias to heaven.

The last fragments of the Gospel, now extant, relate the story of the Assumption of Mary, the mother of Jesus. In what is, apparently, an appendix, we have the report of supposed eye-witnesses who say: "We," "we saw," "we heard," and so on.

They affirm that a tremendous noise occurred at the Virgin Mary's tomb, and a sweet odour was exhaled. Fire flashed around, and the blare of trumpets sounded. A chariot of light and flame descended from the sky:—

> We looked. We saw the Lord Jesus stretching forth his right hand. He embraced us. He pronounced peace upon us. After that he called towards the tomb: "Mary, my mother, my place of repose in which I once existed, rise! Leave the grave-clothes and come! As my Father raised me so do I raise thee in order to lead thee forth with myself." We beheld, and lo! Mary carried the cerements in which she had been wrapped. And the Lord Jesus gave her his hand and drew her into the chariot of light; and choirs of angels went before them even into heaven.....We, the apostles, testify these things.

Certain traditions point to the existence of a *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* at so early a time that the author of *Luke* may have had it in mind when he spoke of many persons undertaking the task of writing orderly histories of the life of Jesus. It would not follow that this Coptic form dates so far back; that is to say, so far back as *Luke's* time in the first half of the second century. But some of the legends contained in it may have been current as folk-tales then, or earlier. The story of the resurrected cock is a sort of fireside or evening entertainment legend; but one would suspect the stories of Peter's Transfiguration and of Mary's Assumption to be later additions. One singular anecdote of the Devil fishing in a dry desert, and carrying on a half-chaffing conversation with the apostles, is, unfortunately, broken off in the middle, and one hardly knows whether to class it as a folk-tale or an allegory invented for use in the pulpit.

I have always esteemed the author of *Luke* as one of the most judicious and tasteful writers in the Biblical library. Out of a mass of popular legends he selected those which appeared to him as most instructive and the most free from crudities. I believe he did this as spontaneously and consciously as Bunyan did when choosing illustrations and metaphors for his *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Holy War*. In other words, the author of *Luke* was an artist and a poet. So far as he and the authors of the three other now-accepted Gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark*, and *John*) displayed superior literary judgment, to that extent they justify their reception as "canonical." The Four Gospels of the New Testament stand on a higher level than the many pamphlets on the same subject which the Catholic Church finally declined to recommend, but which, nevertheless, often enshrine isolated passages of excellence. Except, however, for such considerations, I perceive no difference in historical value between the so-called Canonical Gospels and the so-called Apocryphal Gospels.

F. J. GOULD.

Writers and Readers.

As a relief from more necessary, if more tedious, literary tasks, I have been reading Mr. Asquith's *Occasional Addresses* (Macmillan), which represents a politician's intellectual interests during the last twenty years. Among other things, they have set me wondering why men of literary and philosophical tastes have, as a rule, given practical politics a wide berth, and contented themselves with leaving the good things they bring with them to dull lawyers and duller business men. There is surely no easier way of making a more or less honest living, if you are not anxious for great riches; and even if you are, the £400 a year provided by the grateful taxpayer is not only a good stand-by, but it is a sure stepping-stone to higher things. All you need do is to satisfy the party you elect to serve that you are quite safe; that you will give those important gentlemen, the Whips, no trouble; that you will never ask awkward or pertinent questions—in fact, that you are content to have no mind of your own. The promises you have made to your constituents need not trouble you, for no intelligent elector will expect you to do more than silently support your party. There is one drawback, however; you cannot get someone else to do the work for you. But although you have to be on the premises, there is no reason why you should not spend your time in the library, working out a new theory of "Natural Ethics" or the "Influence of Marlowe on the Early Plays of Shakespeare." As a relaxation from the mental strain of your studies, you have billiards and other harmless amusements. Indeed, for the average man of letters, membership of the House is just an ideal job; far preferable to the Education Office or the Board of Trade, where you are expected to do a little work. With a measure of healthy cynicism, the responsibility of making a country's laws will sit lightly on your shoulders, and you will see the foolishness of working hard for an easy-going master.

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In the early eighteenth century the man of letters was alive to the advantages of political occupation. Dozens of minor poets, essayists, and dramatists had pleasant little sinecures under the Government. Addison, Gay, Congreve, Prior, Vanbrugh, secured the big prizes. Nowadays, the man of letters seems to be less ambitious or (shall I say?) more conscientious. Out of the six hundred and odd members of the House, there are, perhaps, a dozen men of letters of more or less distinction. Mr. Asquith, although by profession a lawyer and politician, is by nature a man of fairly broad humanistic culture. His addresses here reprinted are carefully written studies in criticism, admirably adapted to the different sorts of audiences before whom they were delivered. His style is natural and easy, at times a trifle rhetorical and full—super-fatted, I might even say; but if he does not always go to the bottom of a subject, he is never irritatingly superficial, like Mr. Birrell, who gives us the im-

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pression of being terribly at ease in the Zion of letters. The addresses cover a number of interesting subjects: Criticism, Biography, Culture and Character; the English Bible; Omar Khayyam, Benjamin Jowett, and others.

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The address on "Criticism" was delivered to the students of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching (1898), and is in itself an excellent example of what criticism ought to be. The criticism Mr. Asquith has in mind is not merely the criticism of literature, but that of philosophy, sociology, and religion; that is, criticism in the broadest sense of the word. He begins by telling us that it is not an attitude of disparagement, a science of finding fault. This is a common, but stupidly erroneous, notion. It is sometimes the duty of the critic—to some of us it is often a pleasure—to show a writer that he would be more profitably occupied in weighing up pounds of sugar; but this is far from being the whole of criticism, which should be interpretative rather than denigratory. Another delusion is that criticism is not constructive; that it is opposed to creative work. We ought, then, to have periods of criticism alternating with perionds of creation. But really they coincide. The great ages of English Literature—the Shakespearean, the Augustan, the Romantic Revival—were periods both of critical and creative expansion. This truth is so obvious to anyone who knows the history of our literature that it would be tedious to support it by examples.

> Criticism (Mr. Asquith says) in the true sense has a positive as well as a negative function.....It performs the double duty of solvent and stimulant. To take a single example, it was the essentially critical speculations of Hume which, as we know from their own avowal, awoke Kant from his "dogmatic slumbers" and first "caused the scales to fall from the eyes" of Bentham, and thereby became, at any rate, the indirect occasion of two rival schemes of constructive philosophy. There is no emptier fallacy than to suppose that criticism is merely a form of intellectual gymnastic—the appropriate pastime of epochs of temporary stagnation—the business of second-rate minds in the relatively barren intervals which separate the great vintage years in the history of human culture.

This is a fine tribute to the seminal influence of the critical method employed by one of our greatest philosophers, and most thorough-going of Freethinkers.

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Mr. Asquith is pleased to fall foul of æsthetic criticism which is often enough mere vague and eloquent balderdash; but there is no reason why it should be condemned wholesale. In the hands of a Lessing (another robust Freethinker) it has helped many of us to clarify our notions on art and letters. Ruskin's impressionism, certainly, has done not a little harm; yet there is little of what is called the scientific method in the critics for whom Mr. Asquith has strong, if not unqualified commendation. De Quincey had too good a conceit of his own opinion to be an impartial judge; Hazlitt sacrificed truth to acrimony and epigrammatic points; Arnold's sympathies were too limited; and R. H. Hutton who is strangely singled out as the greatest of Victorian critics, never really came within sight of literature. It is characteristic of the narrow outlook of the academically trained mind that it can praise the dull editor of an influential paper at the expense of Pater and J. A. Symonds. There is nothing in Hutton, or even in the much greater critic Stevenson (another of Mr. Asquith's favourites) to compare for genuine insight with James Thomson's studies of Shelley and Blake.

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In another of his addresses Mr. Asquith's affects not to understand the force of the word "academic" as applied to much modern criticism. It implies that a writer is both pontifical and not over-intelligent. His own judgment on Hutton is a good example. The curious in these matters can amuse themselves by looking out equally good examples from the Cambridge *History of English Literature* or the works of Mr. Saintsbury. Mr. Asquith gives instances in which good critics have gone wrong through a lapse of the sympathetic imagination, without which there can be no criticism worth having. Voltaire wondered how any man in his senses could prefer what he called the "bouffoneries" of Shakespeare to the plays of Corneille and Racine. Goethe found "the *Inferno* of Dante abominable, the *Purgatorio* dubious, the *Paradiso* tiresome." Lamb saw nothing in *Faust* but a vulgar melodrama of seduction. Dr. Johnson fell foul of Lycidas. Joanna Baillie was for Scott, in 1810, the highest genius of the century. We recall the vinegar, vitriolic, abuse of an infinitely greater poet—Whitman, by Swinburne, when his literary judgment was controlled by that complacent prig, Watts-Dunton. Admiration for Poe's stories was for Henry James clear evidence of literary incompetence. M. Anatole France assures us that we may take it from him that Flaubert had no intelligence. Perhaps the most wrongheaded judgment ever made was one by Robert Buchanan, an erratic Scotsman, who was half Freethinker and half mystic. He wanted to discredit Ingersoll's attitude to Religion and Science. Ingersoll was no poet, and to "understand Religion a man must have the heart of a poet," or a Buchanan; and science the benighted Atheist confused with mere invention, the hard-working handmaid of science. Then comes the conclusion which was to finish poor Ingersoll. "But Invention-worship is fetish-worship, and Colonel Ingersoll is a fetish worshipper—that is to say, an individual exactly at the savage state where neither religion over science begins."

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The address on *Biography* is noticeable for the attention it draws to the autobiography of Haydon, a bad painter, but a particularly acute appraiser of human character. The other addresses to University students at Glasgow and Aberdeen are eloquent pleas for a humanistic culture, for disinterested study of literature and history. On such a subject Mr. Asquith writes with conviction, for on many occasions in his political career has he turned from the worries of office, the barrenness and unreality of political debate, to the quiet pleasures of the library. It is noticeable that it is literature that affords the solace when the waters of life are troubled—not religion. There is no doubt that this attitude is partly due to the influence of Jowett, the Master of Balliol, who could reject or explain away every dogma of Christianity and yet lay claim to a belief in what he called its fundamentals of the creed. I cannot understand the tribute Mr. Asquith and others pay to Jowett's wisdom. He had certainly a pragmatic wisdom, but that is not what is implied. It is hard to understand how Mr. Asquith, who is no bad judge of men, cannot see that Jowett was a "trimmer" in religion, and socially a plebeian with the plebeians irrational worship of a lord. You remember the answer of a Balliol man who had been asked by a friend if he had been intimate with Jowett's "Good God, sir!"? He said: "What do you take me for—a peer or a pauper?" There is the same non-committal attitude to religion in Mr. Asquith as in Jowett. It is hard to say what he is on the face of his writing. Anyhow, he is a man of culture and refined tastes, which is something to be thankful for.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Confidence.

THERE is no despot like want of confidence. How well the plunderers of the poor know it! Nothing more depressing was to be observed in the Victorian era than the abject and stupid reverence which parents in what are known among the *elite* as the lower-middle class and the working-class inculcated in their offspring for "constituted authority." This, combined with a poor education, rendered the average lad in the humbler walks of life a ready prey to petty tyrants, and often a life-long victim to a sordid and ill-paid vocation. Even if he had ambition, it seldom soared above being a petty tyrant himself. When he met his "betters," his right hand involuntarily sought his forelock, and he was ill at ease. He felt his want of confidence because he was in the presence of people who had *more knowledge and power* than he had.

The nobility and gentry are at pains to make *their* offspring feel that their rights and responsibilities carry with them as an essential to the proper exercise of power—confidence—confidence in the presence of all, with the addition of conscious superiority when they are exercising *judicial*

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power in determining as to the crave of the timorous bucolic suppliant that cap in hand awaits the decision of the greater than he who, by divine appointment (or the accident of birth), is invested with this potent superiority.

Free men's minds, and you open their eyes to the glory of an enlarged liberty, in which cringing and toadying find no place. Free men's minds, and you free all their faculties for natural use in an enlightened world. Free men's minds, and the bogeys of superstition and fear and submission and servility and charity vanish in the dawn of a new age.

Christianity has been guilty of many social crimes, but none so heinous as that of making impossible the possession by men of respect for their own manhood. With the decay of Christianity, we see a nobler idea of man's individuality taking root in many minds. Mutual aid and mutual service become imperative duties in the age of Humanism. But it is a condition precedent that man shall respect man—neither bully nor cringe to him. He cannot do the one or the other *if he respects himself*. In the Golden Age only justice will be recognized—charity will be unknown.

Religion has for countless ages been utilized by the "Upper Ten" to keep the mass of the people "in order." It has built fences to restrain them, and wrought cunning goads to drive them withal. But the fences are rotting—the hands that once grasped the supernatural goads are relaxing. People are no longer sheep to be shepherded. They are growing out of the puny conceptions they were taught in the Victorian era. And as they grow, their knowledge increases; their horizons enlarge and expand; their resolution to secure individual independence may not be gainsaid; and this because they have learned, or are learning, *self-confidence*.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

GOD IN GERMANY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A fellow-passenger in the train regaled me with the assertion that the Germans had forgotten God. When I reminded him of the Kaiser's constant efforts to keep the name before his people, he retorted that at least the Kaiser was not referring to the God we worshipped, for it would be noticed that the Kaiser never mentioned Jesus Christ.

But can the Kaiser help including Jesus Christ when he speaks of God? In the Creed which we thundered forth in unison in our best Gregorian last Sunday (Trinity Sunday), Saint Athanasius bade us say that "the Father is God, the Son God, and Holy Ghost God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God," "None is afore or after other," "In majesty co-equal," etc. If the Kaiser is not referring to the same God as ours (just as when he speaks of the sun he refers to the same sun as ours), surely we shall be forced to admit that he is more liberally endowed by Providence—that he has at least one God to the good. For there must be in Germany (1) the Catholic God, whose Corpus Christi procession through Cologne the Allied Governments agreed to respect, and (2) the Kaiser's God, to whom he has so generously given the credit (overlooking the poor deluded common Fritzes) for the recent "victories." We might, perhaps, add (3) Allah, the God of the Balkan peoples. Upon that showing, the Central Powers are watched over by three gods.

"And yet there are not three Gods but one God," thunders Saint Athanasius. It is all very puzzling to the simple Chorister whose only god is

A MUSICAL SERVICE.

Society News.

The Secretary of the North London Branch reports that Mrs. Rosetti is setting a good example to out-door speakers by giving special attention to the question of Secular Education. This lady gave a spirited address on Parliament Hill on Sunday last to a large and attentive audience, which resulted in an improved collection. I take this opportunity of reminding all Branches that any report of work, present or future, intended for this column, should be sent direct to me not later than the third Monday in each month. The *habitues* of Regent Park are requested to note that future meetings will take place at 6 p.m. instead of 3.30.—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.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Edwin Fagg, "Tradition in War Pictures."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.15, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley Road): 11.30, Mr. G. Rule, "Christian Inconsistencies."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. H. B. Johnson, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, Messrs. Yates, Norman, and Doughty.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, F. Shaller, A Lecture; (Clapham Common): 6.30, F. Shaller, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Trades Hall, Fratton Road): 6.30, Important Business. Address by Mr. F. N. Crosby.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion in the School—The Editor	325
Christian Otherworldliness.—J. T. Lloyd	326
Thomas Scott, of Ramsgate.—Mimnermus	327
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	328
Chance and the Cosmic Process.—A. E. Maddock	332
A Little Homily.—A. Millar	333
To the Owl.—J. Fothergill	333

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion in the School.

A few weeks back we warned Freethinkers that movements were going on behind the scene concerning the maintenance of religion in State-supported schools. We have not had to wait long for confirmation of what was then said. The Bishop of Oxford, in a "Charge" to the clergy of his diocese, says much which bears out what we said, and hints at still more. The Bishop points out that the Education Bill now before Parliament does not directly affect religion, but "the Government are understood to be anxious for an agreement if possible between the different religious bodies as to the lines of re-settlement, so far as religious education goes." That is substantially what we have said was taking place. The Government has been "pulling the strings" in order to get the various denominations to establish some sort of a concordat; then, when the present Bill is out of the way, the Minister for Education will come forward with a measure which it will be pretended all the sects have agreed to suggest as a basis of settlement, and a new bar will be set up to the secularizing of the schools. France, after its defeat in 1870, paved the way for a re-birth by curtailing the power of the priest in the school, and by finally abolishing him altogether. English Conservatism—the craftiest in the whole civilized world—aims at turning the War to its own advantage by giving the priest a still firmer hold on the mind of the child.

* * *

The Bishop of Oxford's Scheme.

The Bishop of Oxford gives some indication of the form the agreement between the sects is likely to take. He suggests the establishment in each district of an "interdenominational Council," which is to be given statutory powers, and which is to have the controlling power over religious instruction in both schools and training colleges. It is to be made obligatory on every school, elementary and secondary, to assign "a reasonable time" every week to religious instruction, the religious instruction to be given by a teacher of "certified competence." (At present religious instruction is not obligatory. Any Council may, if it thinks fit, eliminate it altogether.) The obligation to confine religious instruction to the first or last hour of school time is to be abolished; it may be given at any time. This means in practice a policy of permeation, the creation of a religious atmosphere which would quite do away with the protection of the "Conscience Clause." If this plan is adopted, it will represent "a very great gain," and would give "a basis on which further teaching in church and Sunday-school could be built." So that while in Germany the schools were made "training stables for the Army," with liberal doses of Christian theology—the results of which are now before the world—in England, while *our* militarists are aiming at military drill in the schools, our parsons will do their best to see that every child leaving school offers suitable material for church or chapel. Nor would it be surprising to find that militarists and pietists are working together with all their old-time friendliness and co-operation.

* * *

A Parson's Question.

This is a parson's proposal. It is suggested by a parson; it is an appeal to parsons; none but parsons and the interests of parsons are considered. The Bishop says that "the number of parents who are prepared to demand any particular kind of religious instruction for their children is lamentably small." And although "the rights of the parents" has been one of the cries of the clergy, the Bishop of Oxford admits that "the claim for parents' rights has not been made good among the population generally." The overwhelming majority of parents do not care whether their children get religious education or not. They do not see the dangers of religious education, but they certainly cannot see any obvious benefits therefrom. They are content if their children get a decent education, and we venture to say that those who care most for genuine education bother least about religious instruction. It is a parson's question. They must get the children ready for the operations of church or chapel or they lose the adult. They are not really interested in the child, they are not really interested in education. They are interested in getting supporters for their Churches. The professional interest is open and avowed. As our militarists are interested in the child only as he promises material for the Army, so the clergy are interested in the child only so far as he may be turned into material for exploitation in church or chapel. It is a sordid struggle for power and pelf.

* * *

The State and the Child.

Naturally, the Bishop of Oxford quite fails to realize the higher and better aspects of the question. To him it is a sectarian question. It concerns the various sects only, and it may well be that *if* "Churchmen and Nonconformists had reached agreement, and their agreement had been ratified by the Government," many people would regard the question as closed. But the question is larger than the trickeries and back-stairs policies of the Government and the Churches. The demand for Secular Education in State schools is not based upon the necessities of sects but upon the rights of citizenship. It is a question of the modern versus the mediæval State, of a conception of the State based upon

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the equal rights of all citizens, versus that of privilege for this or that sect. And, as Freethinkers, we are far more concerned for the genuine rights of the child than we are for the assumed rights of the parent. The fundamental claim of the child is for protection—not merely protection for the body but also for the mind. The one should be encouraged to grow as healthily and as vigorously as the other. And an interdenominational council decreeing the imposition on children of doctrines which are at best unverified and unverifiable speculations, which are rejected as false by millions of educated men and women all over the world, represents as gross an outrage on the helplessness of childhood as anything that can be conceived.

* * *

A Time for Action.

The question is one immediately for Freethinkers, since they, of all classes in the community, are most alive to the nature and dangers of clerical aggression. But ultimately it is one that concerns all parents and all citizens. And the danger, we must again point out, is real and pressing. The Bishop of Oxford's address confirms what we said as to the arrangements that have been proceeding, unknown to the public, between the Government and the Churches. At the proper moment the final arrangement will be produced—and the Government will be greatly "surprised" at the agreement brought about between the sects by its own connivance. If Freethinkers and reformers are not to be caught napping they must bestir themselves. They must make the demand for Secular Education as forcible and as widespread as possible. Members of Parliament can be written to, and the Press can be utilized by letters urging the justice and benefits of ending this sectarian squabble once for all. We have been using this latter channel of publicity ourselves, but we have not the time to do all that might be and ought to be done. Freethinkers all over the country can do something to counteract the underhand activity of the Churches. We claim that our soldiers are fighting for the benefit of civilization abroad. We ought not to be found wanting in our efforts to guard the welfare of civilization at home.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christian Otherworldliness.

CHRISTIANITY is pre-eminently an otherworldly religion. Even in the Sermon on the Mount the whole emphasis is laid upon the world to come. Virtue's reward is to be reaped, not on earth, but in heaven. The kingdom of heaven, so earnestly preached by the Gospel Jesus, was declared not to be of this world, and entrance into it was possible only at death (Matt. vii. 21-23). The sayings of Jesus were to be done simply in order to inherit endless bliss beyond the tomb. In a Manual of Membership, entitled *The Religion of the Church*, the Bishop of Oxford teaches that the Christian life "is to draw all its motives and power from that heavenly place where Christ is seated at the right hand of God," and this is in full agreement with St. Paul's teaching in Colossians iii. 1-4. On one point, however, the Bishop is at variance with the Apostle. His lordship maintains that all this otherworldliness, so far from making Christians "indifferent to this world, is only to make them feel the importance of everything that happens in this world, because of its divine origin and eternal issues"; but St. Paul holds that the affairs of this world are not worthy of the least attention, heavenly things alone being of real value. Surely, Dr. Gore cannot be ignorant of the fact that the Apostle is merely echoing his Master's saying in Matt. vi. 19-21. Ideally, the believer's only treasure is in heaven, where his heart also must be.

Chapter vi. in the Bishop's Manual is devoted to what he calls "Christian Morality." Curiously enough, his lordship admits that Jesus "never occupied himself with social legislation or reform," "said nothing to inspire patriotism or to justify war," but claims that "what he sets himself to do within the Jewish people is to restore and perfect the spirit which lies behind legislation—the spirit of humanity." In substantiation of this claim, however, the Bishop advances neither argument nor illustration. We contend that nowhere does the Gospel Jesus endeavour either to restore or to perfect the spirit of humanity, or even show that he possessed such a spirit. As a matter of fact, the Sermon on the Mount is full of legislation, not for human society as such, but for the subjects of the kingdom of God. Dr. Gore attributes to the Gospel Jesus ideas and ideals which he himself harbours in this twentieth century, his only argument being that there is no evidence that Jesus did not cherish them. The Bishop says, for example:—

> It seems to me to be idle to argue from what our Lord says about personal submission to injuries that he would have refused to allow a man to defend either his wife and children or his country.

To others, on the other hand, it seems equally idle even to imagine that resistance of any kind can be in harmony with the disposition which he both enjoined and exemplified. Now, while admitting that "so far as he contemplated the future, he (Jesus) seems deliberately to have abstained from making laws for his disciples in the main," Dr. Gore asserts, in the absence of all evidence, that "he intends his society to legislate in his own name and Spirit after he should have gone out of sight." Consequently, by Christian morality the Bishop clearly understands the moral code formulated, in the course of history, by the Christian Church. What Jesus presented to the world was not Christian morality, but the moral spirit. What the moral spirit, as distinguished from the moral act, is, we are not told. Of course, everybody knows that moral acts are but so many expressions of a moral disposition, in the absence of which we do not usually find them; but we are too apt to forget that the connection between them was clearly recognized thousands of years before Jesus was ever heard of, and is being emphasized to-day in many entirely non-Christian communities.

In point of fact, there is no such thing as Christian morality. Morals are not even exclusively human. They are common to all stages of social life, animal as well as human. Without morals, social life would be absolutely impossible. In Egypt, two thousand years before our era began, morals were very highly developed, and moral standards existed not one whit inferior to the most perfect to be found in Christendom at the present time. Both Confucianism and Buddhism, which are two thousand and five hundred years old, are moral systems of astounding perfection; and it is a well-authenticated fact that the followers respectively of Confucius and the Buddha have in all ages been noted for the exceptionally high tone of their moral character. To a certain extent the same thing is true of the Greeks and Romans prior to the appearance of Christianity. Impartial students of Greek and Roman history are profoundly convinced of the essential injustice of representing either nation as ethically inferior. We have the highest warrant for affirming that brotherhood and universalism were the two main planks in the Stoical platform, while slavery was denounced as a crime against Nature. And yet Dr. Gore has the audacity to assert that "it was the love of Christians for one another—the care of all for each—

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which was one chief cause of the rapid spread of the Church." He adds: "Men were drawn out of a loveless world into the warm and comfortable fellowship."

In the chapter on "Christian Morality," the Bishop makes many statements, which are either tragically or beautifully true; but his theory of morals is fundamentally false. It is simply not true to say that "all real morality lies in a right relation to God in the heart." All real morality lies in a right relation of man to man. It has nothing to do with God at all, either directly or indirectly. Jesus taught neither the universal Fatherhood of God nor the universal brotherhood of man. Most angrily did he decline to acknowledge any brotherly relationship between himself and the Pharisees. He could find no terms scathing enough to denounce them as the offspring of the Devil. The Bishop tells us that "he loved every man," but his lordship is as fully aware as we are not only that he did not love, but that he hated with perfect hatred, the Scribes and the Pharisees, and positively refused to gather them to his bosom as deeply loved brothers. Indeed, neither Jesus nor his apostles evinced anything like "a positive enthusiasm for humanity—for every man as such." Man as man is not a child of God, for "the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the possession of each member of Christ, is the gift of liberty and Sonship." What is brotherhood?

> The principle of brotherhood means that there is to be asked of each the utmost service which each can render, and that there should be given to each according to his need, because if one member suffer, or is in want, the weakness or suffering of each is the weakening of the whole body. Suffering indeed will be the lot of the whole body and of every member of it, but not the misery of being forgotten or despised by the brotherhood (*The Religion of the Church*, pp. 111, 112).

To that definition of the nature and obligations of brotherhood we have no objection to offer, but the Bishop does not omit to assure us that "the Christian Church is 'the body,' or 'the brotherhood,' because here only, where the Spirit dwells, can men realize in sonship to God the brotherhood which is meant for all." The Bishop's view, we grant, is in strict accord with Scripture, according to which God is by nature only our Maker and Preserver, and becomes our Father only in Christ, and in him only when we accept him as Saviour and Lord. There is, therefore, no such thing as the natural brotherhood of man, but only the brotherhood of believers.

After all, otherworldism is the only thing that really matters in the Christian religion. We become brothers only when we realize our heavenly citizenship. This earthly life has significance only as an introduction to and preparation for the eternal life. Christianity is the direct negation of Naturalism, and, as such, it does the greatest injustice conceivable to our own nature. It teaches us to neglect and despise the only world of which we possess any knowledge, and to set our affection upon and live alone for things of which we know absolutely nothing. Those who profess to accept that teaching become, of necessity, despicable hypocrites, because they pretend to be what, in the nature of things, it is impossible for them ever to become, and almost wholly neglect the only duties for the discharge of which their very constitution qualifies them. Even this terrible War testifies to the absurdity as well as essential insincerity of religious professions. It was undertaken and is being consistently prosecuted in the name and for the glory of God, and it is largely the belief that God is in it, and will end it in his own good time that is responsible for its continuance.

J. T. Lloyd.

Thomas Scott, of Ramsgate.

> Ireland is still Catholic: the Cevennes still Protestant. It is not a basketful of law papers nor the hoofs and pistol butts of a regiment of horse that can change one tittle of a ploughman's thoughts.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

At a time when the Secularists had started their modest task of converting the English-speaking world to Freethought, a kindly, handsome Englishman conceived the idea of devoting himself to Rationalistic propaganda among what has been called the "hupper suckles" of society. This man was Thomas Scott, of Mount Pleasant, Ramsgate. He had charm, he had that chivalry for principle which represents the highest manhood, and he did his work joyously. His memory is kept green for what he was; his memory is treasured for what he did; and the record of his life's work lifts the mind like the sound of martial music.

Thomas Scott had an adventurous career. Born in 1808, he was, in his youth, a page to King Charles X., of France. A great traveller, he journeyed in all parts of the world. Well educated, he knew the world of books, and he also knew the book of the world. In the later years of his life he devoted his leisure, money, and abilities to the furtherance of Freethought, and proved himself a prince among propagandists. During the years 1862 to 1877 he issued from his pleasant seaside home a very large number of pamphlets, printed and distributed at his own expense, the total collection making twenty stout volumes. The writers he gathered about him were men of outstanding ability, and among them were Moncure Conway, John Addington Symonds, Sir R. D. Hanson, Judge Strange, Dr. Zerffi, Bishop Hinds, and Sir G. W. Cox. Mrs. Annie Besant contributed an *Essay on the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth*, "by the wife of a beneficed clergyman." This led to the Rev. Mr. Besant insisting on his wife taking the communion, or leaving, and, brave woman that she was, she chose the better course. Afterwards she wrote more tracts for Mr. Scott, since reprinted in *My Path to Atheism*.

It is difficult to imagine now the flutter caused in sheltered homes and country vicarages by Thomas Scott's persistent propaganda. In the "stormy seventies" of the last century, Freethought views had an air of novelty, and the clergy had not then realized that discretion was the better part of valour in their particular case. For Scott levelled his guns at the clergy, and bombarded them through the post with pamphlets and tracts. One of them was entitled *213 Questions*, to which answers were respectfully asked, and each one was well calculated to turn a clergyman's hair white, and curl it afterwards. The most ambitious work Scott issued was the *English Life of Jesus*, which was designed to do for British readers what Renan had done for France and Strauss for Germany. It was a "thunderous weapon of revolt," and was written in conjunction with Sir George Cox, who, being a Bishop of the Established Church, was unwilling to put his name to the volume. In laying down his life work, Scott said: "The only true orthodoxy is loyalty to reason." He died at Norwood in 1878, and he deserves a niche in the Freethought pantheon because in his day he did valiant work for human emancipation. Animated throughout by high ideals, and supported by a strong character, he had the true courage which sweeps away selfishness, weakness, and fears in discharging what he felt were moral obligations.

The work done by Thomas Scott and his circle of friends is an important chapter in the history of the popularizing of Freethought principles. During the forty years which have elapsed since Scott's death, great and far-reaching changes have taken place. The most

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important are the safeguarding of bequests to Freethought; the right of Freethinkers to sit in Parliament without taking an oath; the right of affirmation, and the ever-increasing number of ladies associated with its propaganda. In the days of Holyoake, Southwell, and Bradlaugh the audiences at Freethought meetings were almost entirely composed of men, whereas to-day the position is very different. Under Mr. Cohen's administration, the Freethought Party is increasing in numbers and influence. Owing to his enterprise, too, in the most difficult period of its history, it is still in the vanguard of progress, sheltering behind it all the weaker heterodox people, who otherwise had been crushed by the weight of orthodoxy.

Secularists have a right to be proud of their history. As the little *Revenge* earned an undying name by hurling herself against the great battleships of the Spaniards, so the Freethinkers have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the heart of the more formidable 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 knowledge that their action would diffuse the blessings of Liberty. For in that happy time the stormy note of battle will be changed to the triumphant music of victory.

MIMNERMUS.

A Search for the Soul.

IN commencing this quest, the first point to be noticed is that Christian preachers and writers never define what they mean by the "soul" or "spirit," but take it for granted that their hearers or readers know what that supposed indwelling entity of the human organism really is. The same is the case with the New Testament statements; no definition or description of this alleged immortal portion of the body is anywhere given. Looking through a commentary of the Four Gospels, we find the same reticence; evidently the writer knew nothing definite about the matter. Turning next to a dictionary, I read: "Soul, the spiritual part of man, the seat of reason and conscience; the intellectual principle, or understanding, the vital principle; spirit," etc. Lastly, opening the last tract sent by an old friend for my conversion, I find the following:—

> What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?.....But the better to understand our Lord's words, it is necessary to ask, What is the soul? The soul is the spiritual and immortal part of man, capable of the most perfect happiness or intense misery, and exists eternally. Such a treasure every child of Adam possesses, but few are sensible of its worth, or the danger of its being lost.

In the foregoing quotation from the New Testament the word "soul" is *psyche*, and signifies "life"; it is so translated in the Revised Version. Thus, so far, we have no answer to the question, "What is it that believers in immortality think will survive death?" To say that it is "the spiritual and immortal part of man" displays no knowledge whatever, and merely begs the whole question. Science knows nothing of any such "spiritual and immortal part" of man. What is there, then, in the human organism which we are asked to believe will survive death? There exists, we are told, something called a "soul" or "spirit," apparently without any material substance; that is to say, a kind of phantom, which has a human form and personality, a memory of the past, consciousness, and the power to think. Though without any physical sense-organs, vocal organs, nerve substance, or brain, this apparition is assumed to be able to see, hear, feel, think, and perhaps even to speak, just the same as when it was in the body during life. Nothing, in fact, is too absurd to be imagined by the credulous people who believe in an "immortal soul." If they only took the trouble to think, they would soon perceive that no action of what is called "the mind" can be performed without material organs, and would then understand that a soul without a body, or a spirit without tangible substance, could no more exist without the cerebral organ than gravitation could continue to act without the existence of bodies which mutually attract each other.

Christian believers have very little to say about the soul or spirit save that it is something immortal within the human body which survives death; but those among the Spiritists who claim to have the "gift" of clairvoyance profess to be able both to see and receive messages from this discarnate "spirit-form," notwithstanding the fact that it is invisible to all other persons who do not possess that "gift." Thus, in a pamphlet by the Editor of the *Two Worlds*, the writer says:—

> 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 to it 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.

Andrew Jackson Davis was a religious crank and Spiritist in America, who lived more than half a century ago. He claimed to have clairvoyant visions, and is said to have written twenty-seven volumes of spiritistic nonsense, an epitome of which has been recently published. In the Spiritist organ called *Light* (Feb. 24, 1917) there appeared a short article, entitled "Through Death to Life," by a lady (name not given) who is stated to be "one of a large number of persons in whom psychic powers have awakened spontaneously." From this article I make the following extract:—

> There is no death; what seems so is transition. This is a plain statement of fact. That transition I have often seen. For something like a score of years I was a professional nurse. Many deaths I witnessed. And many times I beheld the spirit-body rise from the discarded earthly body, in appearance an etherealised glorified replica of it. No trace of suffering or disease did I ever see on the radiant faces of those thus transformed.

This lady further said that she had also seen some of "those who have come from the realm of spirit-life" enter the chamber of the dying person just before a death. Of these ministering spirits she said:—

> Clearly visible they have been to me, though unseen by the other human occupants of the room or hospital ward, save by the dying persons, who have often recognized them as friends or relations who had preceded them to the other world, and have greeted them joyously.

The most charitable view to take of these statements is that the visions mentioned were purely subjective. But for the lady having taken up with Spiritism, she would probably never have imagined that she saw what she describes. Again, one may see at a modern spiritist meeting a lady or gentleman, professing to be a clairvoyant, who declares from the platform that he or she sees a discarnate "spirit" standing behind the chair of one of the persons present, and then, after naming the sex, goes on to describe the apparent age, height, dress, and general appearance of the alleged apparition. This performance is repeated in the cases of several other persons seated in the room; so that there would appear to be a number of "spirits" present who had come direct

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from "spirit-land"—wherever that may be—in order to be "seen" by the clairvoyant and their presence made known to the relatives behind whose chairs they stood. Needless to say, no one among the audience see any of the so-called "spirits." This is one of the many weak points in modern Spiritism; for no satisfactory or adequate reason can be shown why the "clairvoyant" is able to perceive what no other person in the room has the power to see. Neither physically nor psychically has the medium keener sense of vision, or higher mental faculties than many of the educated people present. I should not have referred to this matter but for the fact that no other believers in immortality have ever claimed to have *actually seen* the supposed disembodied soul or spirit.

Another point in this connection which should be noticed is, that not only is the discarnate spirit said to be an exact representation of the deceased body in form and feature, but, like the body, *it wears clothes*. In all the descriptions of the spirit-forms in the lecture-room the "spirits" are assumed to be dressed in similar clothing to that worn by the persons from whom they have emanated, and this outward dress is often described. On October 25, 1917, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle delivered an address on Spiritism, which was noticed in the *Daily Express*. Some days later, in reply to criticisms in that paper, Sir Arthur said: "The reason spirits wear clothes is because modesty does not cease with this life." This statement implies that the spirit-form is an exact counterpart of the body; if, however, we consider a moment, we shall see that this idea is simply ridiculous. What is called the "soul" or "spirit" is said to be an immaterial entity; that is to say, it is more attenuated and rarefied than the air we breathe. But the atmosphere, though rarefied, *is* a form of matter; the spirit-form must, therefore, be of a still more rarefied nature, and, to prevent being dispersed, it should have some kind of outer covering corresponding to the skin of the discarded body. When this integument is added—and the "spirit" could not hold together without something of that nature—the spirit-form would then become visible to every one in the meeting-room; and if to this the clothes be added, the phantom would be still more plainly perceived. Since, however, it is not visible, it is "something which is really nothing."

Again, when the spirit left the body it had no clothes: where did it get them? It could not make them itself for many reasons—one being that it had no muscles, and was unable to move any of its intangible limbs. Moreover, it did not need clothes, for having no organs of any kind, it would be a sexless phantom, powerless to do anything whatever. Hence, the "immortal soul" of the Christians, and the "discarnate spirit" of the Spiritists may be set down as pure nonentities; both are unthinkable as sentient beings.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

"THE PARAGON OF ANIMALS."

Like the Roman emperors, who, intoxicated by their power, at length regarded themselves as demigods, so the ruler of the earth believes that the animals subjected to his will have nothing in common with his own nature. Man is not content to be the king of animals. He insists on having it that an impassable gulf separates him from his subjects. The affinity of the ape disturbs and humbles him. And, turning his back upon the earth, he flies, with his threatened majesty, into the cloudy sphere of a special "human kingdom." But Anatomy, like those slaves who followed the conqueror's car crying, "Thou art a man," disturbs him in his self-admiration, and reminds him of those plain and tangible realities which unite him with the animal world.

—*Broca.*

Acid Drops.

When the War is over, Mr. Lloyd George may, perhaps, find time to brush up his knowledge of history. In that case he may be prevented rushing into the absurdities he did in the course of a speech delivered on June 7. Then he informed his audience that the Christians once before saved civilization by stemming the tide of Saracenic invasion, which left behind it ruined cities and destroyed civilization, etc. Mr. Lloyd George has evidently got gloriously mixed up between the early Saracens and the later Turks, and, as they were both Mohammedans, lumps them into one whole. Which, as anyone who knows could have told him, is absurd.

That is why we say that when Mr. Lloyd George has the time to read a little on the subject, he will know better than to talk in that loose way. As a matter of fact, for several centuries the only civilization in Europe worth talking about was "Saracenic." The Saracens provided the rest of Europe with the starting-point for the Renaissance. They preserved and revived the science of antiquity, which the Church was trying to destroy. They were the teachers of Christendom in chemistry, in astronomy, in ship-building, and in various sciences. They practised religious toleration while Christendom practised persecution as a religious duty. They were civilized while the rest of Europe were next door to savages. If Mr. Lloyd George can find time to glance at the pages of Buckle or Draper, or look through Lea's *Moriscoes in Spain*, he will hardly venture to speak of mediæval Christians as the champions of civilization against a "Saracenic" invasion.

A soldier, who was tried at the Old Bailey for bigamy, was stated to have given his age at his first marriage as twenty-four. At the second marriage, which took place seventeen years later, he stated he was twenty-two. A man who grew younger in this fashion might have emulated the Bible Melchisadech, who had neither beginning nor end of days.

The Salvation Army has had its War flag days under royal and distinguished patronage, and it is now trying to raise the wind in other directions. Advertisements have appeared in the press headed "The End of the War," and informing the generous alms-giving public that the Salvation Army is still grappling with the "Old Social Evils"—presumably on the old familiar cash basis.

Providence, according to popular belief, has a peculiar fondness for stone statues and religious relics in the fighting lines, but this tenderness appears to be limited to inanimate objects. During the annual pilgrimage near Subiaco, Italy, the Church of the Trinity was the scene of a panic, in which seven persons were crushed to death and 120 injured. Afterwards it was found that the panic was caused by a mad woman suffering from delusions. "His tender mercy is over all his works."

The clerical attitude to the War has aroused much feeling, and even archbishops are not above criticism. Dr. Lang, Archbishop of York, is quite irate with his opponents, and points out that he resents being attacked for opinions he never held. It is a novel position for a parson of his rank, but many will see the humour of an engineer being hoist with his own petard.

"If the Church keeps aloof from questions of social reform," said Canon Adderley, "it won't be listened to any longer." Unfortunately, when the Church does interfere with social matters, she is always on the wrong side.

The clergy are always insisting that religion is a great consoler, but it is not all Christians who take this view. An advertisement, in a provincial paper, refers to a theological lecture, entitled "God to Destroy the European Nations." Lest any of the faithful should be unduly despondent, the notice adds: "All seats free. All cordially welcome."

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Man's first disobedience was occasioned by an apple, but to-day there are so many stumbling blocks. The dear clergy, for example, constantly ignore the injunction concerning the laying up of treasure. One of the latest cases is that of the late Rev. W. Lenwood, a Congregationalist minister, of Sheffield, whose will was proved for £51,833.

A conscientious objector, just released from Wormwood Scrubbs, has been on hunger-strike since January, 1917. This seems to upset the record of the founder of Christianity.

Marvellous stories of the miraculous deliverance of religious statues on the Continent are printed in parish magazines, pious periodicals, and other repositories of wisdom. Sir R. M. Hyslop, however, states that many churches are in ruins in the War zone, and soldiers have used some of them as stables for their horses.

In an appeal for the support of the public, the Salvation Army claims to have ministered to thirty millions of soldiers. It reminds us of the modest claim of an obscure provincial paper, which used to state that it circulated among three millions of people.

According to ecclesiastical tradition, Saint Boniface was canonized for converting the Germans. It is a pity that the saint cannot meet those dear clergymen who maintain, with unblushing effrontery, that the Germans are Atheists.

A religious contemporary contains the information that the output of coal in the United Kingdom during 1917 was 248,499,240 tons. Considering the audience, information concerning the output of coal in Hades would have been more to the purpose.

Bold advertisements: "Christ is Coming," appeared in the newspapers recently. It was disappointing to find that they referred to a series of addresses at a London hotel.

What heroes the Bishops are! The Bishop of Peterborough announces that he contemplates another pilgrimage this month—in his own diocese.

A really good story of conversion was told at a recent Mansion House meeting by the Archbishop of Westminster. A soldier on the West Front told a chaplain he intended to marry a French girl. The padre remarked that she must be a Catholic. "Well, sir, she was," replied the soldier, "but I made that all right. I took her into a church and showed her the statues, and said, 'Napoo, pas bon!' And now she's a Protestant."

The Advisory Committee of the Military Tribunal of Penzance passed the following resolutions on May 25:—

> (1) That the Advisory Committee to the Military Tribunal for the borough of Penzance fully endorse the popular resentment against the action of H.M. Government in withdrawing from the Military Service Act of 1918 the clause, introduced by themselves, to secure the military services of the clergy and ministers of religion, thus granting complete and unqualified exemption to a whole class of the community; and they protest against a continuance of so undemocratic a policy as that of selective privilege, through the period of the acutest crisis humanity, with its civilization, has been called upon to face and to overcome.
>
> (2) That, consequent upon the inequality in the incidence of service protested against in the foregoing resolution, the Advisory Committee hereby place on record their sense of the increased difficulty attaching to the just discharge of the duties entrusted to them.

The resolutions were adopted unanimously. We should like to see other Committees and Tribunals follow this excellent example.

The Bishop of Oxford, in a University sermon, asked whether the attitude of Christ towards patriotism would escape the attention of D.O.R.A. (the Defence of the Realm Act). Frankly, we give it up. Christ and Dora is too much for us.

Sometimes pious penmen let the cat out of the bag without realizing it. Describing the Mohammedan pilgrimage to what is called, facetiously, "the tomb of Moses," a writer in the *Daily News* says: "In the past the time of the pilgrimage was one of danger, for there was a great influx of Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem, and there was apprehension among the Moslems lest the Christians should take advantage of their numerical superiority for acts of hostility."

Clerical humour is not so robustious as it once was, but a story told by the Rev. G. W. Leachman is good. A church had a splendid new banner, flashing with gilt and tinsel, and with the design of the Lion of Saint Mark, depicted as a ravenous-looking brute, upon it. Below the design was the text, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

An Italian editor informs his readers that Signor Bioti, the creator of "Mefistofeles," is dead. We may next hear that the Devil himself is dead.

Plain speaking is sometimes indulged in by parsons. Canon Adderley says that "Christian congregations are not remarkable for their charity and loving action." The Canon ought to know, for he has been in touch with Christians all his life.

A writer in a daily paper refers to militarism as "the medicine of God." Some critics prefer to regard it as a pill to purge pietism.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who is a Spiritualist, considers that the next life is both shorter and happier than this, and is a step to still another future life. The distinguished novelist might send Sherlock Holmes to find out fuller particulars.

In view of a recent lawsuit, it is amusing to find a daily paper referring to a librarian who indexed Oscar Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest* as theology.

Finance and faith often run in double harness. At the Liberation Society meeting it was pointed out that when the Royal Assent was given to the Welsh Disestablishment Act the value of each £100 of tithe rent charge was £74, and to-day the value was £109, and within two years would increase to £130. Thus, owing to War conditions, the money paid to the Church authorities would be half as much again as was intended. The dear clergy will forget these figures when they next parade their "poverty."

United intercession is extremely likely to end in something very like comedy. The latest victims of this pious craze are Irish women who are petitioning the Throne of Grace for deliverance from conscription.

The faith of some Christians is quite simple and childlike. Sir Donald Maclean says that "the only thing that can heal the woes of this world is the Gospel." The quaint thing is that the celestially minded Christians will enforce the Beatitudes at the point of the bayonet.

As an offset to the booming of the clergy who are entering the Army—mostly as non-combatants—the Rev. Thomson, of Glasgow, declared that the younger men "seemed to prefer working with a corkscrew and a lemonade bottle in Y.M.C.A. canteens." He would refuse, he said, to fill the pulpits with such men. Plain speaking of this kind from the pulpit is as welcome as it is uncommon.

From the *Daily Chronicle*:—

> The Bishop was addressing the Sunday school. In his most expressive tones he was saying: "And now, children, let me tell you a very sad fact. In Africa there are 10,000,000 square miles of territory without a single Sunday school where little boys and girls can spend their Sundays. Now, what should we all try and save up our money and do?" And the class, as one voice, replied in ecstatic union: "Go to Africa!"

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To Correspondents.

C. F. BUDGE.—Readers who send us newspaper cuttings are always conferring a favour and helping us with our work.

H. HIGGINS (Motherwell).—Shall be pleased if you will act for your town as you suggest. We lectured in Motherwell some years ago, and hope to do so again. When we next come to Glasgow we will try and arrange for several week-nights in the district.

F. A. OVERIN, A. D. CORRICK, AND OTHERS.—Paper is being sent to the soldier's address as given.

V. H. SMITH.—Thanks for what you are doing on behalf of the *Freethinker*. For the moment the situation is a little more troublesome than usual, but we are not at all discouraged.

H. HIGGINS.—The authentic history of Babylonia goes back to about 1,200 B.C. Professor Petrie places the first Egyptian dynasty at about 4,777 B.C. Chinese and Indian history also takes us farther back than the date you name. *A Short History of Ancient Peoples*, by R. Souttar, will supply you with all the facts you need.

T. MORLEY (Wigan).—Your suggestion is a good one, and, as you will see, we have acted on it. Three new readers in a month is very good work. Hope you will soon better it, though.

J. S. N.—Thanks for cuttings. Very useful.

G. B. TAYLOR.—A capital plan. We know we can depend upon you doing your bit. And years are nothing so long as one *feels* young.

E. E. STAFFORD.—Sorry your paper has not reached you. It is sent regularly, so the fault is not ours. Will see what can be done.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Mr. M. J. Charter, 10s.; Mrs. F. Whatcott, 5s.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Mr. M. J. Charter, 10s.

H. DAWSON.—Quite acceptable. Many thanks.

W. E. BRUCE.—The Secretary of the Liverpool Branch is Mr. W. McKelvie, 21 Globe Street, Liverpool.

W. TAYLOR.—Sorry, but we know no more than the announcement disclosed.

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.

We have had a gratifying number of replies to our article last week on the formation of a *Freethinker* League. Quite a number of towns are represented, and more will, we are sure, be coming along in the course of the next week. When we get a further instalment of names, we will commence classifying and arranging them, and the League can commence its work. And there is no reason why there should not be representatives of the *Freethinker* in fifty or sixty towns in Great Britain. Next week we will write more fully on the matter, and also on the way in which our readers may help towards guaranteeing a future supply of paper wherewith to print the *Freethinker*.

An Exeter reader sends us £1 10s. to be expended on the distribution of 2,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's Pioneer Tracts—*What is the Use of the Clergy?* and *What Will You Put in Its Place?* We propose sending them out in parcels of not more than 200—100 of each sort.—We shall be pleased to receive postcards from readers who will undertake their distribution.

The Pioneer Press has added to its list of books for Freethinkers three volumes of special interest. *The Grammar of Life*, by G. T. Wrench, aims—to use the author's words—at giving "a complete but short exposition of the principles of life in all its bewildering vicissitudes." And the programme is well realized. The work covers every aspect of life, and is uncompromisingly freethinking in both spirit and substance. The volume was published at 6s. net, and is being sold at 2s. 6d., postage 6d.

Those who are familiar with Mr. Carveth Read's *Natural and Social Morals* will not need much pressing to secure a copy of his *Metaphysics of Nature*. To those interested in the more fundamental questions of science and philosophy, we commend this volume as a thorough-going piece of work. It is uniform in appearance with *Natural and Social Morals*, was published at 10s. 6d. net, and is being sold at 3s. 6d., postage 6d. The third work is Mr. H. Croft Hiller's *Against Dogma and Free Will, and For Weismannism*. This is an ably written and suggestive work, and contains in an appendix the author's discussion with Mr. J. M. Robertson on Weismannism. Originally published at 7s. 6d. net, the price is now 2s. 6d., postage 6d. Only a very limited number of each of the above three works are available.

We have received a number of new addresses of soldiers who are to receive free copies of the *Freethinker* for thirteen weeks. One of our readers was good enough to pay for twenty-one copies to be sent in this way. That number is now completed, but we do not mind adding a few more on our own account. We are sure it is an excellent method of propaganda.

The New York *Truthseeker* reprints our "Views and Opinions" of March 31, on "Truth and the Press," with due acknowledgments. We are glad to see the *Truthseeker* is getting through the War period with little apparent discomfort, although we have no doubt that, behind the scenes, it has its share of anxiety. Only those "in the swim" can properly appreciate the worries involved in carrying on a weekly Freethought paper, even in peace times. Still, New York without its *Truthseeker* is as inconceivable as London without its *Freethinker*; and when the War is over, we have every confidence that each journal will be able to congratulate the other on having survived.

We are asked to call the attention of Freethinkers to the fact that the Kingsland Branch of the N.S.S. has changed the time of its Sunday meetings from evening to morning, and that many of the usual attendants do not appear to have accustomed themselves to the change. There was a good meeting on Sunday last for Mr. George Rule, and we hope that Freethinkers in the locality will support future meetings as well as they can. There ought to be a goodly number of Freethinkers in this district, and an hour devoted to propaganda once a week will be time well spent.

The friends of South Shields Branch have dismissed *pro tem.* all more important and weighty matters, and to-day (Sunday, June 16) have arranged to foregather at Dee Street Car Stage, Jarrow, for a short summer evening ramble by St. Bede's Well, Monkton Gardens, Hedworth Hall, and home, in place of the usual indoor meeting. Mr. J. L. Carr, 37 Britisher Street, Helbron, acts as leader, and the party will be whipped in by the Secretary and other local veterans. Visitors and old acquaintances are sure of a hearty welcome.

No answer has come through the ages
To the poets, the seers, and the sages
Who have sought in the secrets of science
The name and the nature of God. —*John Hay.*

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Chance and the Cosmic Process.

THE universal operation of law in the natural world has become such a common conception in modern thought that few, even among theologians, now venture to question it. No advocate of the "Design" argument (except, perhaps, an occasional Christian Evidence lecturer) now imputes to the Rationalist the fallacy of holding that the cosmic order has been brought about by "chance," meaning by this a negation of law. All persons with any pretensions to philosophic thinking acknowledge that there is no such condition or agency—or rather, absence of agency—as chance in this sense. On the contrary, they are ready to agree that chance or probability, in the scientific sense of the term, so far from assuming a negation of law, is based on a recognition of it. For the chance or probability of an event is merely our ground of expectation of its occurrence under conditions in which the operation of a causal law or laws may, so far as we know, bring about several equally likely results. It is, therefore, not an expression of a belief in the absence of law, but an expression of a belief that the laws governing the results apply equally to all cases, and may, therefore, be expected to bring about results which are equally likely or probable.

Yet, though this conception of chance is so widely recognized, its recognition is frequently accompanied by a curious fallacy. This takes the form of an assumption that any result brought about under conditions of chance, even as thus scientifically understood, must always be of an irregular and capricious character—that merely because we happen to be ignorant of the exact conditions governing a set of causal operations, and have, therefore, no ground to expect one result more than another, such results can in no case be expected to exhibit the characteristics of law or order, but must always present an appearance of fortuity or accident. And, of course, the conclusion drawn from this assumption is that a result which *does* present this condition of order, harmony, and fitness for the development of moral and intelligent beings must have required for its production some further cause, different in kind from all the others, viz., an intelligent "design" or "purpose." Thus the theologian, while acknowledging, perhaps, the universal supremacy of law and causality, and while agreeing that among the uncountable millions of nebulæ and stellar systems scattered throughout space, evolutionary results of numberless kinds must be brought about, yet insists on the necessity of "intelligent design" to account for the one evolutionary result he happens to know, merely because it presents what he understands as a physical and moral "order." And he may, perhaps, attempt to clinch his argument by bringing forward that time-honoured illustration about letters of the alphabet being thrown down at random, and the absurdity of supposing that they would ever be found grouped in such an order as to form a "poem." This is a favourite illustration with the Christian Evidence lecturer, and is supposed to result in the immediate collapse of any Rationalist within hearing. Nevertheless, I cheerfully proceed to take up the challenge.

In the first place, it has to be observed that since, in the scientific view of probability, all the possible events or results contemplated are regarded as equally probable, it is obviously inadmissible to regard any one result as less probable than any other. In the second place, it must be observed that, whatever the value of the probability may be, this value approaches certainty as the number of instances under consideration increases, and would reach absolute certainty if the number of instances became infinite. The argument falls under these two heads, and it will be made clearer by a simple illustration.

Suppose someone shuffles a pack of playing-cards and lays the fifty-two cards out in a row. The order in which he shall lay them out is strictly determined by law. Given the weight, the thickness, the smoothness, etc., of each card, the sensitiveness of the dealer's fingers in touching them, the firmness of his muscular movements in shuffling them, and so on, some definite order of disposal in the pack will be the sure and inevitable result. Yet, to us, in our ignorance of these antecedents, any one order of arrangement out of all the possible orders is as likely to result as any other, for unknown and incalculable though the several sets of causal antecedents themselves are, we know that the conditions of their operation apply equally to any given instance. The case, therefore, comes under the theory of chance, for chance or probability may be described as an estimate based on an equality of conditions governing a known number of possible events, whence it is concluded that the occurrence of any one of these events is equally probable with that of any other. In the case of our illustration, the chance that any given order of sequence will occur among the fifty-two cards is expressed by a fraction of which the numerator is unity, and the denominator is the whole number of possible sequences of the fifty-two cards. This is a number of such enormous magnitude that no real conception can be formed of it, but some dim idea of its vastness may be derived from the statement that the number of seconds in a million years would form but a very small fraction of it. Yet of course it is a *finite number*, and moreover an easily calculable one, being merely the product of all the integral numbers from one to fifty two.

Now, supposing that the cards, on being laid out on the table, become ranged in a regular order of succession—say one suit following another in an unbroken group, and each of the four suits having its thirteen cards in serial order from ace to king. Very few people would fail to express utter incredulity as to this result having been due to chance, or would hesitate to attribute it to a deliberate "design" on the part of the person who shuffled the cards. And if he had had the temerity to lay bets on the occurrence of this particular result, the "purpose" attributed to him would certainly not be of "moral" character—indeed, it would take a deal of persuasion to convince the losers of the bet that he was not a cardsharper of the sharpest description.

And yet the arrangement of the cards in this orderly sequence would not have been a whit less probable than any other arrangement, and therefore should not have excited any unusual surprise at its occurrence. The "orderliness" of the arrangement would have nothing whatever to do with the probability of its actual occurrence, for this "orderliness" is merely something which is imputed to the arrangement by the spectators themselves. The particular order in which the cards have become grouped *happens to correspond with an ideal order existing in the minds of the spectators, and thus gives rise to the notion of design.*

We now come to the second consideration mentioned above, which deals with the number of instances involved in the occurrence of a chance event. The intrinsic probability of the occurrence of such an event on any one occasion has just been referred to, but a chance can also be expressed in terms of the probability of its occurrence once, twice, thrice, etc., in some given number of trials. It is obvious that a probability as thus expressed increases with the number of instances considered; and as this number approaches infinity, the corresponding probability approaches an actual cer-

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tainty. Hence, to revert to our illustration, if the process of shuffling and laying out a pack of cards could be repeated "to infinity," the probability of their orderly arrangement in suits and sequences would be increased to an indefinite extent. Or if we wish to pay the theologian the compliment of using his own illustration, we may say that if an infinity of Christian Evidence lecturers, provided with bags containing all the letters of the alphabet in, say, Milton's "Paradise Lost," were to employ themselves for all eternity in scattering these letters out in rows, that celebrated, if somewhat tedious, poem would stand a good chance of being produced. For the number of ways in which the letters might happen to fall, however vast, is still a finite number; *and every finite number shrinks into insignificance in comparison with infinity.*

In the light of these considerations, the notion of design in Nature seems to lose even the fictitious plausibility which the theory of chance is mistakenly supposed to allow it. In the first place, the necessity of positing the existence of a controlling purpose, which is alleged to be imposed on us by the order prevailing in the minute portion of the universe within our ken—is seen to be due to a mere fallacy of thought. We ourselves being part and product of this order, it appears to us to occupy a unique position, and to stand on a different footing from any other set of causal sequences, while in truth it is no more exceptional and no more in need of special "explanation" than any other manifestation of the cosmic process. In the second place, the infinitely vast scale on which this process operates profoundly affects the question. When we realize that it is without beginning or end—is infinite in space and time—we see that the evolution of any possible order or mode of being passes from the region of probability to that of certainty. Whatever result the cosmic process *can* achieve, that result, somewhere and somewhen, it *will* achieve, for its field of operation is the infinity of existence.

But none the less do we recognize that this aspect of the question in no way precludes our belief in the existence of universal law—in now way negatives that grand conception of the fundamental unity of Nature which forms the basis of our Monistic philosophy. The sphere in which chance may be said to operate lies amid the infinite complexities and diversities, the numberless mutual actions and reactions of causal processes. But every deepening of our knowledge of Nature strengthens our conviction that underlying all these complexities and diversities there exists one supreme and eternal law —some one primordial Law of Energy.

A. E. MADDOCK.

A Little Homily.

I READ in an old book many years ago—an ancient primer whose secular page has become sacred in my eyes, and on which is founded as upon a rock all my wisdom, virtue, learning, and philosophy. My *all* of such things may be very little; that is not the point. The lessons found there, confirmed by experience, adapted and assimilated by the passing years, accompany me still on my journey, a very present help in time of trouble; and the more I ponder each wise remark, the more I am inclined to say, This is a faithful saying! I read this in the old book long ago. I quote from memory:

Form the most amiable opinions you can of nations, of communities, and of individuals; if they are good, you do them only justice; if they are not, you yourself are the more lovely for entertaining such sentiments.

There, you see, is the skilled appeal to self-approbation; but as the mind matures, it would extend the reasons for this gentle judgment. Men, in their moral and intellectual qualities, are not distinctively black and white, but rather of a mixed grey, shading off into what they are. So it is not only that we ourselves may be the "more lovely," though that vanity is a universal and wise provision of Nature, but that we ought to make the best of our fellow-beings as we find them, always remembering that we ourselves may not be quite perfect specimens of the genus *homo*. Burns was a great philosopher in little. For instance:

Then gently scan your brother man,
And gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennan wrang,
To step aside is human.

Rash judgments are to be deprecated, as we will find they are nearly always to be deplored—even from our own selfish point of view. The old book says: "A word dropped by chance from your friend offends your delicacy. Beware of opening your discontent to the first person you meet. When you are cool it will vanish and leave no impression." But what hurts even more than that is our occasionally bitter and barbarian attitude towards certain quite amiable persons who happen to be diametrically opposed to us in matters of sentiment and opinion. As a writer quoted lately in the *Freethinker* from Voltaire: "It is the part of a wise man to have preferences but no exclusions." But not only in our anger or dislike are some of us prone to ill-considered (sometimes ill-conditioned) speech and action, but in our loves and confidences and conceits we often "give ourselves away."

And here, again, the philosopher in fustian comes to the rescue. Says Burns:—

Aye free offhand your story tell,
When wi' a bosom cronie;
But aye keep something to yoursel'
Ye wadna tell to ony.

The conclusion of the whole matter seems to be that, while the cold, calculating, crafty, cryptic, cunning mind is unpleasant at the one extreme, the rash, sweeping, dogmatic, condemning, or too-confiding, incontinent mind is foolish at the other. But, as Burns said to my unknown namesake long ago:—

Adieu dear amiable youth, (and age!)
. . . . .
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may you better reck the reed
Than ever did th' adviser.

To complete the thought, and round off the idea, it ought to be added that quickness and *correctness* of judgment, and even instant decision, are not incompatible with this cautious and kindly attitude of the really cultured man. The latter is born of knowledge, experience, and understanding, and grows with practice till it becomes a second nature, or new and higher kind of "instinct" itself.

A. MILLAR.

To the Owl.

DEAR MR. OWL,—I have long respected you. In my world of fancy you have always appeared to be the emblem of wisdom. My earliest recollection of you was when you calmly volunteered to dig the grave in the great tragedy of "Poor Cock Robin," and my respect for you was heightened. All my life I have wanted to commune with you; I felt as though you knew such a lot of things. I have seen you in various places, but you never anywhere seemed very different. You seemed to bear the change from the aviary to the museum as well, if not a good deal better, than your neighbours. In either place, I have always viewed you wistfully. But I have had a somewhat rude awakening. You spoke to us in the *Freethinker* on May 19, 1918. The Editor must have had similar impressions to mine, and so could not resist you. But I want to tell you candidly that I am entirely disillusioned; you are an old croaker. You ask us, "What is Nature?" and then you proceed to answer it very confusedly. Poor old bird! You say you don't want to "follow Nature." You are indeed in a quandary. Are we to suppose that you will look "beyond the clouds, beyond the tomb," as so many misguided beings have looked in vain through the ages.

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I have heard that your favourite haunt is an old steeple; and perhaps you have lived too long with the people :—

Ah! the people,
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone.

I would like to hear you again after you have shaken yourself. I believe you are all right at bottom; something has gone temporarily wrong—"a rather tough worm," or something of that sort. You say that Nature is "the sum-total of things," "Nature is what brings the flowers in the springtime, and the rain, and the fruits, and all the sweet things of life." And yet you don't want to follow Nature. You are indeed a puzzle—a "Riddle of the Universe," in fact. You say that to an educated man, Nature means the observed order of things. But you again say "there is no law." What do you mean? I am inclined to think you are overfeathered. What harm is there in assuming our existence to be in accordance with law? Listen to what Ruskin says :—

Do we want to be strong ... We must work.
To be hungry ... ... We must starve.
To be happy ... ... We must be kind.
To be wise ... ... We must look and think.

Surely these are laws self-evident and imperative enough. Not human made, true; but unmistakable, not whimsical as based upon intelligence. Dear old biped, I would not flurry you, but I would earnestly rally you. You do not seem to have fully appreciated the work of Secularism; you rather petulently set yourself up to be the measure of things. Perhaps a few words of the dear old Pearsian may convey a few seeds of wisdom to you :—

And the inverted Bowl they call the sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not your hands to it for help—for it
As impotently moves as you or I.

You personify Nature and label her as "horribly cruel." You rail at her because she is "red in tooth and claw," and you inconsistently refer to the "law"—"eat or be eaten." You say that that Nature has no blind asylums or benevolent institutions. "There is no Namby-Pambyism about Nature." "She's a real dandy." Wonderful bird! I think we shouldn't complain about her want of "Namby-Pambyism." I would suggest that when you resorted to the personification of Nature, you may as well have described her as "wondrous kind." Has she no blind asylums or benevolent institutions? If not, how do all the little blind things survive? Lots of things are born blind. How does that most helpless of beings—the human child—survive? Have you overlooked that great principle of motherhood, among the fishes, the birds, and, in fact, all over the world, as well as human life? A contemplation of which always sends a thrill through our frames. And while we are on that line, may we not as well remember the long story of humanity—all in Nature—not that childish story of tradition which, like you, as it were, has to have a super-Nature, but as told by the great benefactors of the race too numerous to mention, but should be tolerably well known to a Secularist, especially to a writer in the *Freethinker*, even though a bird. I hope you will "look and think," and write again for our future edification. Cynicism is a doubtful exchange for superstition; it may be a "getting rid" of some illusions, but we should be careful that other and even, perhaps, more dangerous illusions do not take their place. Secularism faces all the facts; it is a message of joy and hope to humanity, otherwise we may as well hold our peace, and let the race tread its more weary path with all its perplexities. It is useless to throw epithets at Nature, she is our only hope and guide, all else is illusion :—

—— Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean; over that art
Which you say adds to Nature, is an art
That Nature makes.

Secularism is the most ambitious movement in the history of the world; it asks humanity to shed its illusions. Secularism thus asks the best of its followers, each of which must look carefully to their equipment.

J. FOTHERGILL.

Correspondence.

DIVORCE AND THE CHURCHES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Now that all the bishops and clergy have been heard on the grave and growing problems of the Divorce Laws, and have frankly stated the attitude of the Churches on this question, and towards "the few and exceptional" cases of extreme suffering, it is due to Divorce Law Reformers that their position should be presented to the large public which will ultimately have to decide what it requires of its representatives in Parliament, when the matter of the reform of the existing law is before the House of Commons, as it must be in the near future.

It should be perfectly clear to anyone who reads the daily papers that this question, so far from affecting a very small minority of the people of the country, is one that is ruining the lives of countless thousands, and it must be handled without prejudice, and with a view to sweeping away the mass of corruption and hidden vice which is the result of our rigid Divorce Law.

While I think it extremely unwise to augment the discussion of the operation of the Divorce Laws in America, I feel justified in quoting some remarks made to me a few days ago in a conversation with Judge Lindsey, the eminent authority and promoter of some of those laws, the founder of the Juvenile Courts of America, on which our own have been modelled, and the Courts of Domestic Relations, which we so sadly need to establish in our great towns.

Judge Lindsey emphatically declared that the extension of grounds for divorce in America had unquestionably established a cleaner and more wholesome national life, in that a vast amount of corruption and hypocrisy had been swept away, and he expressed himself as strongly opposed to the proposed unification of the laws governing the various States.

Judge Lindsey is a representative of the United States Government, and an honoured visitor to our shores. The attacks made on the Divorce Laws of America have induced him to promise to speak on this subject before his return.

The Divorce Law Reform Union, in proposing to break up the system of permanent separation without the power to remarry, has only taken action on one of the findings of the Majority Report of the Royal Commission, viz., that :—

> The conclusion of the Commissioners is that the remedy of judicial separation is an unnatural and unsatisfactory remedy, leading to evil consequences, and that it is inadequate in cases where married life has become practically impossible.

The importance of this finding was shown when, at the commencement of the War, Mr. Asquith found it necessary to ask Parliament to pass a measure to provide a separation allowance for the many thousands of unmarried wives of the men joining the Army.

It is inconceivable that an organization such as the Divorce Law Reform Union should be charged with a desire to promote periodic marriages of three years.

The demand that separation of three years and upwards should be a ground for divorce was based upon the most careful consideration of the facts of thousands of cases examined by them, in which there was ample proof that reconciliations were very rare after three years of complete separation, and that the dangers of prostitution, promiscuity, irregular unions, and illegitimate births often appeared at that period. Large numbers of deserted men, and still larger numbers of women of the working classes, with young families, have struggled under great difficulties to keep home and family together for two or three years, when failing health and desperation on the part of the women, and a desire to get their children cared for on the part of the men, has led to irregular unions and illegitimate births. These people, to-day, are praying that the Bill will pass which will allow them to marry; it is a cruel lie that they are satisfied with their condition.

The opponents of the measure know full well that the case is not overstated, and to say that these people are living in sin is to beg the question.

If a marriage "is really the Union of two souls in Love,

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sympathy, and agreement with one another," to quote the Bishop of Birmingham, then certainly no extension of the Divorce Laws can affect it one way or the other; but where a marriage is marriage in name only, where drunkenness, cruelty, vice, insanity, or hatred, have effectively destroyed the possibility of a common life, and where an atmosphere has been created in which children are permanently maimed physically, mentally, and morally, then, surely, in the interests of the highest morality the marriage should be dissolvable.

The Churches appear to have a very great fear that a measure which would give new life and hope to a large section of the community would open the door to abuse by the remainder.

The hold of the Churches on their members must be very slight indeed, if they truly believe that "any extension of the grounds for Divorce will be the end of Christian Marriage." No more ridiculous supposition could be put forward than that persons accidentally separated by reason of absence through "unavoidable causes" under the proposed measure will be certain of turning such a separation into a Divorce. In every case either party must present a petition to the court, and the presiding judge must be satisfied that there is justifiable reason for the application.

That the demand for greater facilities for Divorce has been established no one will deny in face of the number of cases disposed of by Mr. Justice Horridge during the past three weeks, and the number is small compared with the need. The majority of the cases have been undefended, brought by husbands, and this fact has been largely commented on in the Press. Women are said to have used the absence of the men at the Front to indulge in every form of license and vice, but it must be understood that there are thousands of women sufferers in the country who could bring actions if offence and relief were equal as between the sexes.

Let us rid our minds of all cant and hypocrisy on this question, and recognize that there are many causes which as effectively break the contract of marriage and make a common life impossible, as the one which is at present the only ground on which an action can be brought.

The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1884 abolished the power of enforcing a decree for Restitution of Conjugal Rights by attachment of the person. Men and women cannot be compelled to live with their spouses; when this is recognized it will be seen that the tendency is towards more and more separations.

During the War large numbers of young people have married who are already separated, and if permanent separation is to continue these people are a menace to society.

Every measure for the true welfare of the community has been opposed by the Churches. We are only asking for a remedy for a cancer that exists in our national life. We want cleaner marriages, fewer or no irregular unions, and a legitimate birth-rate, instead of opposing a reform of the present iniquitous divorce law, and advocating the perpetuation of a system which is responsible for a vast amount of avoidable misery and crime, the Churches would, indeed, do well if they would forthwith undertake to educate the young children and adolescents that come under their influence into the true meaning of marriage, in its physical, mental, and spiritual aspects, then we shall have reason to hope that the higher ideal of marriage, about which we are as keen as they, will be realized.

Ours is the remedy; their's the opportunity.

M. L. Seaton-Siedeman, *Secretary*.

Divorce Law Reform Union,
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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and the State.—The Editor	337
"The Church and the League of Nations."—J. T. Lloyd	338
"The Great Achilles Whom We Knew."—Mimnermus	339
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	340
Concerning the "Freethinker."—Chapman Cohen	343
The Story of the Tea Plant.—T. F. Palmer	344
"The World Needs Us!"—Ignotus	345
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

Religion and the State.

In criticizing, last week, the Bishop of Oxford's proposals for maintaining religion in the schools, we dealt with the concrete proposals made, and ignored a vital principle that underlay the whole question. This is, the relation of religion to the modern State. And here there are only two logical positions. One is that religion is essential to right character; it is, therefore, a legitimate concern of the State, and cannot be neglected without risk of disaster. As the Bishop of Oxford puts it:—

> Education is the process of training the faculties, especially of the young, to enable them intelligently to live their lives and correspond with their opportunities. And plainly, if we believe in God, the most important function of education is to train the young to correspond with the purpose of God, so far as we can know that.

If we accept this, there is hardly less justification for the State teaching and enforcing religion than for teaching arithmetic. Opposed to this position is that which says the State has no business whatever with a person's religious opinions. Whether he has any or none is his own business. Each one, to quote Heine, has the right to go to hell in his own fashion—provided that in selecting the route he does not interfere with the freedom of locomotion of other people.

* * *

Theocracy or Atheocracy.

Religion exists in the State under two conditions. Either social affairs are judged from the point of view of religion, or religious beliefs are judged from the standpoint of social requirements. Either a Theocracy or an Atheocracy. The first is that for which genuine believers have always striven, and it is responsible for many of the evils associated with religion in general, and Christianity in particular. Jew hunts, heresy hunts, witch burnings, etc., have all resulted from the attempt to rule society in accordance with religious belief. And it is no more than just to point out that the evils of religion were consummated by men who were often actuated by a high sense of duty. To them the heretic was a plague spot, a centre of contamination, and the necessity for his elimination appeared the greater as religious belief was stronger. The consequences of attempting to regulate life by religious beliefs are written in some of the most deplorable chapters in the history of the world. Its condemnation is now so complete that one can scarce find a single responsible person who will stand as its champion. The other condition, that religious beliefs are to be judged from the point of view of social utility, is quite as fatal to religion. For there are none of the functions of life that cannot proceed as well without religion as with it. The proof of this is that it occurs. Believers are neither wiser nor better than unbelievers. The secularization of life is not a theory, but a fact, and a religion that cannot prove itself to be true has small chance of continuing its existence on the plea that it is useful.

* * *

A Vicious Unity.

It is worth noting that the separation of religion from the State, even in theory, is a modern doctrine. Although the Greek and Roman conception of social life was too sane to permit its being subordinated to so grossly and crudely conceived a supernaturalism as afterwards obtained under Christian rule, still the worship of the gods remained a part of the general functions of the State. Splendidly tolerant as Rome was of differing creeds and gods, the head of the State, as such, was the head of the national religion, and officiated as such on occasions of State. And certainly nothing would have been deemed more impious by the early Christians than any separation of the two functions. Their objection to obeying the State in matters of religion was not based upon the belief that it was overstepping the functions, but that it was teaching the wrong religion. The Catholic Church has never receded from the position that the State ought to enforce *the* true religion; nor has it taken much pains to hide its intention of enforcing it if ever it has the chance of carrying this into practice.

* * *

Nonconformist Cant.

Protestantism in its early stages showed no departure from this principle. None of the Protestant leaders believed that the State ought not to teach religion; all they said was that the State ought to teach only the *true* religion—theirs being, of course, of the correct brand. As a matter of fact, the establishment of a State Church is entirely owing to Protestantism. But the duty of the State to enforce the true and suppress the false was held by all the Protestant leaders, and all used the civil power as occasion offered. And in every instance where Protestantism succeeded Catholicism was forcibly suppressed, and the newer form of faith forcibly imposed upon the people. Nor could anything be more false, and (in the case of modern Nonconformists) more hypocritical, than the claim that the Puritans and the seventeenth-century dissenters generally fought either for real liberty of conscience or for the separation of Church and State. Nothing was farther from their thoughts. It was merely a repetition of the historic struggle—a desire to replace one form of religious belief by another, and to impose the same penalties upon dissentients. The reign of Puritanism in England and America, with its lengthy and savage list of imprisonments, nose,

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tongue, and ear-slittings, brandings and whippings—all for religious offences—is surely enough to give the lie to the modern Nonconformist claims. That those who make these claims *know* better there can be little doubt. That they do not speak more accurately betrays a lively faith in the ignorance of their congregations and in the power of impudent reiteration. In practice, Nonconformists are as anxious as Catholics or Episcopalians to secure State support, and quite as willing to take all that is offered. They support heartily all statutory measures for the prevention of anti-religious propaganda, they protest energetically against the abolition of religious services at all State and Parliamentary functions; they take readily all the solid cash the State cares to give them in the shape of a remission of taxes, and they advocate the teaching of religion in all State schools. In the face of these facts it requires impudence of no mean order to claim that Nonconformists do not believe in the alliance of religion and the State.

* * *

The Causes of State Neutrality.

Two causes are responsible for the modern doctrine that the State should not interfere in matters of religion. The first is the growth of sects. If the limits of Church and State were conterminous; if, that is, only one religion existed in society and all people belonged to it, there would be nothing politically unjust in all contributing to its maintenance. Injustice commences when from a multitude of religious sects the State selects one and uses the whole of the social forces for its maintenance. Dissatisfaction, springing in the first instance from religious rivalry, arises, and later an elaborated political expression of this discontent gives birth to the theory of State neutrality in religion. But State neutrality means, in practice, State indifference. It means the State saying publicly, "We do not care whether you believe in religion or not. So far as we are concerned, it does not matter. We are convinced that you can carry out all the functions of a good citizen without any belief in God or a future life. We are no more concerned with your going to church than with your attending a cinema show. Religion is a matter we decline to enforce, because it appears to us a matter of indifference whether you believe in it or not." And in this the State is a reflection of life. For it is life that gives the lie to religion. The Freethinker does no more than record the fact.

* * *

Religion and the Logic of Life.

The second cause is the growth of unbelief. In a State where all believe, it would be impossible for it to stand aloof. No one who really believes that Christianity is essential to right living could advocate the State leaving it alone, while enforcing other things. And, so far, men like the Bishop of Oxford, who believe in the State teaching religion to both children and adults, have all the logic on their side. It is true that this ideal is a more or less hopeless one, but it is quite logical from the believer's point of view. It is impracticable, because heresy and unbelief can no longer be suppressed or ignored. The State to-day comprises men and women of all kinds of religious belief and of no belief at all. The man with three gods rubs shoulders with the man with no god at all. They join each other in a hundred-and-one different social enterprises, and find a lack of religion no obstacle to efficiency as a citizen. Under such conditions the State patronage of religion becomes both absurd and unjust. The enforcement of religion is no longer possible, because the world no longer believes. And when a religion cannot be imposed upon an adult, it becomes a cowardly tyranny to force it upon the helplessness of a child.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Church and the League of Nations."

THE above is the title of a notable article in the June number of the *Welsh Outlook*, from the pen of Major David Davies, M.P. The writer is a member of a well-known Welsh family of colliery proprietors, and the *Welsh Outlook* is a youthful monthly magazine of exceptional merit, devoted chiefly to matters relating to Wales. It deserves a much wider circulation than it enjoys at present, but we are confident that the interesting variety and excellent quality of its contents will 'ere long secure for it a high position of directive influence in the intellectual, political, and social development of the Principality. Major Davies' article is marked by the serious, sane, view it takes of the peculiar situation created by this great World-War, and it affords us sincere pleasure to express our warm appreciation of the entirely fine spirit that animates it from beginning to end; but our object in reviewing it is to call attention to an obvious fallacy which underlies its whole argument. Major Davies writes from the standpoint of a deeply convinced Christian who is confronted by the undeniable fact of the total failure of the Christian Church. Than this no fact could be more perplexing and humiliating to a sincere believer in Christianity, not only because Christianity claims to be a supernatural and consequently infallible religion, but also and chiefly because the Church is represented to be its supernaturally appointed and endowed agent or instrument, so that there is no possible escape from the conclusion that the failure of the latter of necessity involves the failure of the former. In the New Testament both are described as being equally of Divine origin, and as equally possessing Divine power. It is true that the Church is composed of ordinarily weak and fallible men and women, but as a Church, indwelt by the crucified and ascended Christ, and omnipotently energized by the Holy Ghost, they are absolutely irresistible, all-conquering. Beyond a doubt such is the New Testament conception of the Christian Church, and this Major Davies, as an honest man, is bound to admit. And yet it is absolutely incontrovertible that the Church "has lost her hold upon humanity," with the inevitable result that Christianity, contained within her as a sacred deposit, has come infinitely short of fulfilling its promised mission.

At this point Major Davies introduces several irrelevancies, such as that "man must have a religion of some kind," that "the sense of worship is part of his being, and he cannot divest himself of it," and that even the keen scientist "in his innermost mind is a devotee of some creed or other," and our only purpose in alluding to them is to point out that, as put by him, they are as untrue as they are foreign to the subject under consideration. Equally irrelevant is the reference to the French play, known in English as *False Gods*. It is only in the fifth paragraph of his article that Major Davies comes into direct grips with the question at issue. In the past the Church has, admittedly, not been what she always prides herself upon being, she has not set a disjointed world right, she has not established the reign of universal brotherhood, she has not succeeded in even teaching professing Christians to love one another, and dwell together in beautiful unity. All this is not formally admitted by the writer, but it is surely implied in the following passage:—

> This is the Church's opportunity. Will she take it? Will she rise to the occasion? Will she point to the goal? Will she cast away all reservations and throw herself into the fray? Will she rest until the ideal is achieved, so that to future generations her teachers will

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be able to point the moral?.....Will it not be truthfully said that if the Church loses this opportunity, our profession of religion is a sham and an illusion? If she hesitates to put the Gospel first, last, and all the time in the forefront, if she seeks, for selfish purposes, to place the nation before the nations, if the Church is to be the tool of the State, then indeed will the people have finally lost all confidence in the message of the Church and we shall inevitably relapse into the barbarism of past ages. What then is the goal? What is the land of promise? What is the special mission? What is the Holy Crusade? What is the vindication of the faith in these days of fire and sword? (the *Welsh Outlook*, vol. v., p. 179).

Such is the fifth paragraph in Major Davies' article; and it is the only truly relevant portion. Futile and false is it to assert that the religion of Christ is "acknowledged by believer and unbeliever alike to be the purest and highest standard of conduct offered to mankind," the only true statement being that this religion "has suffered a set-back," and that "there has been a reaction to Materialism." The so-called "sublime principles of Christianity" have lain, quiescent, as a Divine deposit in the Church for nineteen long and dreary centuries, and Major Davies himself cannot be blind to the fact that the millionfold tragedies of the present War are utterly inconceivable "if there is really a Divine Providence guiding the destinies of mankind." Of course, there is another side, a more satisfactory one, to the picture; but both sides represent two sets of good and evil tendencies in human nature for which the appalling curse of war serves as an outlet, and it so serves in the evil instances quite as much as in the good.

But what about the League of Nations, the object of which is to prevent future wars? Let it be borne in mind that Major Davies is a wholehearted believer in Christianity and in the Divine mission of the Church. Let it also be remembered that between his song of praise of the Gospel and his advocacy of the League of Nations there is no logical connection whatever. All he says about Christ and the sublime principles of his religion is totally irrelevant to his argument for the League of Nations. As a matter of fact, were it not for his formal avowal of Christian belief, we could not find the remotest hint of it in his reasoning. On the contrary, his support of the idea of the League of Nations is such as to imply either the non-existence or the complete collapse of the Christian religion. With the argument itself, as well as with his rhetorical commendation of the League, we are in full accord. The following statement is a wholly rational one:—

> There can be no permanent peace unless all the nations of the world agree to general disarmament. This is the crux of the whole question.

Such is the next also, which we put in italics:—

> *Complete disarmament involves the establishment of an international police force, which means that the nations have resolved to pool their resources in order to maintain law and order among themselves.*

Judge Wadhams was perfectly justified in saying that "when you see a constable you behold the incarnation of the Magna Charta and the British Constitution"; but is it not equally evident that the existence of a police-force, national or international, is a perpetual reminder of the colossal failure of the Gospel either to set or to keep the world in peaceful order?

J. T. LLOYD.

GOD AND MAN.

An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.

BY CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE THREEPENCE. POSTAGE ½D.

"The Great Achilles Whom We Knew."

> The man who feels that he has truth on his side must step firmly. Truth is not to be dallied with.—*Goethe.*
>
> In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them.
>
> —*Bernard Shaw.*

AN interesting feature at the public meeting at the last Congress of the National Secular Society was the reading by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner of one of her father's speeches, originally delivered at a similar function many years before. As the stately and statesmanlike sentences fell from her lips, I recalled the striking and magnetic personality of Charles Bradlaugh, "the great Achilles whom we knew." Whatever may have been thought of Bradlaugh's significance as a politician and thinker, whatever may be the influence he wielded in public affairs, the memory of his personal career must live while anyone has an eye for the dramatic and romantic in English history. The story of his meteoric rise is like a leaf torn from the pages of Plutarch; the story of his untimely death is as moving and as poignant as a tragedy of Sophocles. He will live with Cromwell, Cobbett, and Gladstone as one whom a vivid and forceful personality must always make interesting. The years since he died have quieted the shoutings and tumult of his strenuous time, but they have left the heroic figure of Charles Bradlaugh clear-cut for our regard. Not only was he a great man; he was a man of real distinction in aspect and carriage. The fight he made in Parliament and outside against an overwhelming majority of opponents was one of the bravest ever fought, and his triumph in the hour of death was as complete as that of Nelson on the deck of the shot-riven *Victory*. Thanks to Bradlaugh's courage and devotion, heterodoxy is no longer a serious bar to the citizen, and ecclesiastical authority has been shorn of its dangers.

It is strange that people are only now beginning to see that Bradlaugh's attitude to religion was actually forced upon him. He had no wish to fight the clergy and their supporters; he did not want to waste his time arraigning the polygamy of the Patriarchs, the gallantries of David, and the absurdities of religion. But he saw clearly that priestcraft was the bulwark of tyranny. It was precisely because the Christian religion was the shield of injustice that he challenged it; and if he seemed to those outside of his influence a mere iconoclast, he has in this only shared the fate of the world's greatest reformers. He died early because of the ill-treatment he received. Dead, he remains a living force by the nobility of his life and the consistency of his example.

"Thorough" was his motto, and throughout life he acted up to it. He was no dreamer of dreams, leaving others to translate his ideas into deeds. First and last, he was a man of action. In his earlier days the Freethinkers were feebly led and fitfully inspired. Without his leadership their stay in the desert might have been prolonged many years. It was he, most ably seconded by men of real talent, doubtless; but, again, first and foremost, he who made the Freethought Party as we know it to-day.

What a price he paid for his leadership! The last time I heard him lecture at the old Hall of Science, I realized that he was a broken man. For a whole generation he had led the forces of Freethought, but the Philistines were too much for even his iron constitution. Brave to the last, he kept a bold front to the enemy, but he was bleeding to death beneath his armour.

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Some of his cheering audience nearly broke down, thinking of the fierce old fighting days, when there was no thought of anything but the fight itself. Had his assailants known Bradlaugh as he really was, they could never have hated him as they did. Jealousies and unkindness and bitterness of spirit are in most human labours; but religion, with its insincerities and intellectual meannesses, seems to hold a poison of its own which narrows the vision and blunts the edge of principle.

Bradlaugh fought for liberty, and his life struggle was as heroic as that of the Spartan heroes who held the pass of Thermopylæ against the Persian hosts. He stood like a stone wall against the hordes of priestcraft. Bradlaugh grows larger to one's mental and moral vision the more distant he becomes. The best views of the Alps are to be gained from a distance, and we get the better view of Bradlaugh as we recede from him. A hero in action, he was chivalry incarnate. He was never the man to say to others: "Go on," but he always said: "Come on." Now he is no longer a presence, but a memory, we are free to look at him, free from controversy, and to estimate him at his true worth. Shall our lives not be nobler also because of his worthy example? He fell, prematurely, alas, worn out by hard work and harder usage in that great battle-field of humanity, whose soldiers fight not to shed blood, but to dry up tears; not to kill their fellow-men, but to raise them up. Labouring not for himself, but for others, he made an imperishable name, and gave the world "assurance of a man." Let us salute the memory of one of the truest that ever drew breath.

MIMNERMUS.

A Search for the Soul.

II.

(Continued from p. 329).

BEFORE proceeding with this subject farther, it may be well to glance for a moment at what is known to be the undoubted origin of the soul. In the later part of the Old Testament times, we find that many Jews had come to believe that man possessed within him a counterpart of himself which was able to leave the body during sleep and go roaming about the country at pleasure. This idea originated in dreams, in which the dreamer met and conversed with deceased friends, or fought with enemies no longer living. Upon awakening and being assured that he had never left his couch, he thought the matter over, and ultimately arrived at the conclusion that there must be a second indwelling self that had the power to quit the body for a time and afterwards return to it. The only point upon which he had any doubt was, as to whether this soul or spirit would die with the body. In course of time, however, it came to be the general opinion that all these "spirits of the dead" would go to a place prepared for them under the earth—that is to say, "Sheol," or the Underworld—and would there remain in an eternal sleep to the end of time. The latter place is referred to in the books of Isaiah, Job, Ezekiel, and some of the Psalms.

Upon this subject Tylor, in his *Anthropology* says:—

> What, then, is this soul or life which [the primitive man thought] goes and comes in sleep, trance, and death? To the rude philosopher, the question seems to be answered by the very evidence of his senses. When the sleeper awakens from a dream, he believed he had really somehow been away, or that other people had come to him. As it is well known by experience that men's bodies do not go on these excursions, the natural explanation is that every man's living self or soul is his phantom or image, which can go out of his body and see and be seen itself in dreams.....That men have such unsubstantial images belonging to them is familiar in other ways to the savage philosopher, who has watched their reflections in still water, or their shadows following them about, fading out of sight to reappear presently somewhere else.....Here, then, in a few words, is the savage and barbaric theory of souls, where life, mind, breath, shadow, reflection, dream, vision, come together and account for one another in some such vague confused way as satisfied the untaught reasoner.

That this was how the idea of man possessing a soul originated there cannot be the shadow of a doubt; for it arose in an age of ignorance and credulity, when nothing certain was known of the functions of the human organism, or of the causes of natural phenomena. A similar idea of invisible demons entering the body came later, and was suggested by the violent convulsions in cases of epilepsy (see Mark ix. 17-27).

Returning to history, we find that among the fourteen books called the Apocrypha, which were written during the interval between the Old and New Testaments, there are three which contain passages indicating a belief in a new kind of immortality. In two of these books the spirits of "the righteous" were supposed to be translated to an abode of bliss, and those of the non-righteous were to be left in Sheol for ever. In the third book (that of 2 Esdras) there was to be immortality for all mankind—to be passed either in a heaven of delights or a hell of torments. This last was the immortality adopted by the Essenes and Nazarenes and by the Christians in apostolic times—whence the doctrine of the soul and its imaginary "eternal life" was handed down the ages by the Christian Church to the present day.

Let us now look at the subject a little closer. We are told that man is of a tripartite nature, made up of body, soul, and spirit; but no one now believes that when the body has perished and undergone disintegration, it will ever be raised to life again, though such was the belief in apostolic times. The only hope for immortality, then, is the survival of what are called "soul" and "spirit"; and these are merely the *names* of two imaginary entities (or two aspects of the same entity) which are believed by Christians and Spiritists to dwell within all human organisms during life, and to survive them at death. Science, however, knows nothing of them; they have never been seen or met with in any of the thousands of surgical operations performed on the human body during life, nor have they ever been seen to leave the body by doctors or relatives at death. The reason of this, we are told, is because they are of so attenuated and intangible a nature as to be invisible—like the imaginary evil spirits in the New Testament. But it is quite evident that any so-called "entity" that could quit the body without being perceived by the relatives in attendance upon the dying person could not possibly represent the personality of that person when in life. Besides many other essentials, personality certainly includes life, consciousness, intelligence, and memory; but no one with a grain of sense could imagine an attenuated, invisible nonentity to possess any of the attributes named; these are the resultant of activities generated by the living organism, and are never found apart from that organism.

In *Man and the Universe*, Sir Oliver Lodge makes the following remarkable statement:—

> Though it by no means follows that Mind is itself dependent on matter as we know it, it will probably be still by means of something akin to matter that it will hereafter be manifested.....Christianity clearly supplements the mere survival of a discarnate spirit, a homeless wanderer or melancholy ghost, with the warm and comfortable clothing of something that may legitimately

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be spoken of as a "body".....an ethereal or other entity constituting the persistent "other aspect," and fulfilling some of the functions which atoms of terrestrial matter are employed to fulfil now.

Here Sir Oliver evidently sees that a "discarnate spirit" is really nothing in itself, and requires "something akin to matter," not only to hold it together, but to do the mental work previously performed by the material brain. He does not, however, gain much by appropriating the "resurrection body" described by Paul, which now forms part of the Christian Burial Service. The reasoning of that apostle is:—

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 (1 Cor. xv. 35-44).

The foregoing prognostication, as everyone must perceive, is pure nonsense. The corrupt natural body will never be raised an incorrupt spiritual body; of this there is no doubt whatever. There can be no resurrection. When once committed to the earth, the corpse will never be raised to life in any form, as Sir Oliver Lodge well knows. Why, then, does he refer to this text as giving the discarnate spirit a "warm and comfortable body"? Sir Oliver is quite welcome to an "ethereal body"; but when we know that what is called "ether" is supposed to be many million times thinner than atmospheric air, it is really astonishing to hear it called "warm and comfortable." Compared with ether, the tepid air that leaves the lungs is thick and warm as a blanket.

In his notice of a recent work on "Immortality," by V. F. Storr, Canon of Winchester, the reviewer, T. G. Bonney, D.Sc., says: "Perhaps Canon Storr might have insisted more strongly on the difficulty of conceiving an individuality as wholly disembodied, even in the intermediate state. Consciousness of individuality can hardly exist without a consciousness of limitation, within the boundary." Just so; a soul or spirit which leaves the body must have some kind of outside covering to hold the spirit-form together and keep it separate from the space around it. Such a membrane the "spirit" could not take from the body. Where did it get this covering? Where, also, did it get the spirit-clothes which clairvoyants describe it as wearing? I will leave these questions for Spiritists to answer.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Eternal Beauty.

SPRING, with her love, hath decked the orchards gay;
The drowsy bee to apple blossom wings;
The orchards sing of Autumn gatherings,
And lovely night gives birth to lovelier day.

Of late I've seen a broken apple bough
With bloom all dead in dew-besprinkled green,
The flying steel had severed its gay sheen,
And it lay dead as fickle lover's vow.

Say, who shall weep, what tears shall we let fall
For Beauty sundered from its beauteous stem?
Shall we cry out like misers o'er lost gem
Who, for some paltry worth, had staked their all?

Nay, nay; the lamp of Beauty brightly burns
Forever god-like as the god-like sun;
So will it burn when rusty sword and gun
Shall be as dust in unremembered urns.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

Ever since the War commenced, Christians of all kinds have been trying to explain why God permitted it. There is something significant even in the attempt, for war is not a new thing in the world. Putting aside war between the great Christian Powers—and if they were out of the way there would be fewer wars in the world—there is nearly always a war going on somewhere. True, these are generally "little" wars; but, although our Bishops don't grow rhapsodical about them, still one may assume that, when men are killed, the distinction between being killed in a "great" war or in a "little" one, is not important. And if all that a people possess are rude huts and primitive furniture, to them their destruction means much what the destruction of a home means in Belgium or France, or elsewhere. We know this is an unchristian way of looking at the matter, but we are built that way.

Now, Miss Esther Mayman comes along with another explanation. "War is God's surgery." "There is a point in man's transgression of spiritual law which we cannot pass and live, and to save the race God cuts men off in millions—not by a miracle, but by the operation of natural causes." All we can say on this is that God bungles as badly as a surgeon as he does in other directions. What would be said of a surgeon who, because one man broke his leg, cut off another man's arm? Yet this is what occurs. The millions who have died have certainly not all broken those "spiritual laws" which produced the War. German territory has suffered least of all; Belgian territory most of all—and the Belgians simply had nothing to do with it. Those who transgress most suffer least. God kills the more innocent to teach the more guilty a lesson. Good God!

The woes attendant upon the possession of riches do not seem to frighten the clergy. The late Rev. G. B. Morley, of Bournemouth, left £32,148.

Up to a month ago 22,000 out of 42,000 elementary schoolmasters have joined the Army, and 5,000 more have been called up, says Sir James Yoxall, M.P. What a contrast to that of the clerical profession, which has so far been exempted from military service.

The modesty of parsons is proverbial, but journalists sometimes lay the flattery on with a trowel. A London newspaper, referring to Dr. Jowett, the Nonconformist minister who has recently returned from America, says that he has "clearly come back" as an "interpreter of the two Anglo-Saxon peoples to one another." If Dr. Jowett wants an interpreter's job, he might translate the choice Americanese of Billy Sunday for English readers.

Although Freethought is treated very cavalierly in the press, Superstition is always sure of a welcome. In a column review of Sir A. Conan Doyle's spiritist book, *The New Revelation*, the writer refers to Sir Arthur's statement that spiritualistic manifestations are among the fundamental things in the Bible. It is not edifying to find the author of a "new revelation" searching in the dustbins of departed ignorance.

The Rev. John McNeill, who has always been a notorious egotist, whose self-imposed mission seems to be to safeguard God's reputation, is now surpassing himself in the art of saying silly things. Speaking at the Mansion House the other day, he undertook the task of putting the Lord "in the right place" in his relation to the War; and this is how he is reported to have done it:—

Think of him in the right place, and that is at the heart of it, all its issues held and securely held, and guided and unerringly guided, by his hands. He is awaiting the moment to arrive when in his wisdom and purpose he shall lift his hands and say, "Thus far and no farther." Then not another shot shall be fired and not another soldier fall.

Not even the Bishop of London can beat that!

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"The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire" bids fair to embrace almost the whole population, excluding children. The latest list of awards includes about 6,000 names, and among those honoured are some Salvation Army officials, several railway station-masters, a police superintendent, typists, princesses, telegraphists, photographers, nurses, and munition girls.

The United States is generally considered to be the home of fancy religions, but consciences appear to have small market value in the land of tall buildings and tall ideals. Forty-five conscientious objectors to militarism were sentenced to imprisonment for life in Texas, but on a merciful reconsideration of their cases the sentence was reduced to a quarter of a century each.

At a meeting of the committee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel it was stated that an offer was made to supply one of the bishops with an æroplane to enable him to visit his overseas diocese. The right reverend Father-in-God declined the offer. Maybe he was not anxious to meet his Saviour in the skies.

A Local Preacher asks Professor David Smith, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for June 13, what "the functions of the Trinity" are, and, of course, the Professor has no difficulty in giving the desired information. The Head of the Trinity is the Father, whose supreme ambition is to be made known to mankind. For that purpose he sends his Son into the world, who there becomes man and acts the part of the Father's advocate with men. Then he returns to heaven to be men's advocate with the Father, and sends the Holy Ghost to continue his earthly ministry as the Father's advocate with men. Dr. Smith writes as one who knows all about the subject, and the Local Preacher will no longer have any doubt as to what "the functions of the Trinity" are.

The *Daily Telegraph's* brave boast that "King George reigns over an educated people" is sometimes contradicted by facts. At Nottingham Police Court a man complained that his wife had been to a sorceress to have a curse put upon him. The Bench stood the shock like the rock of Gibraltar.

A *Daily Telegraph* reviewer writes, in the course of a notice of a book on Spiritualism by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, that the War has deepened people's interest in the question of a future life. As a statement of fact, that may be true, although we are not aware of any decisive evidence on the point. It is just as likely that what is happening is that a number of people are taking advantage of the War to talk about a future life, in the hope of a more attentive audience. We do not believe that the War will have removed disbelief or created belief. Certainly the destruction of life now going on is not likely to increase the sense of its value.

But the important thing is whether the War has brought any new facts to light bearing on a future life. Quite clearly it has not done this. Death, even death of all sorts of horrible and painful means, did not begin with the War, and it will not end with it. There is no increase of anguish in connection with the War; there are only more people suffering in a given time. And those who suffer find no comfort in a future life—unless they believe in it beforehand. The comfort felt is little more than a conventional expression. As a matter of fact, there is plenty of evidence that the way people face the loss of their loved ones is quite independent of religious belief. It is a question of education, temperament, and native disposition.

The Archbishop of Canterbury asserts that forty-four years ago he and others were trying to get people to understand the same ideals for which we were now fighting. It would have been far better if His Grace had devoted himself to the better education of the clergy in the "same high ideals." The anxiety of the clergy that others should do the fighting is wonderful.

The Rev. Mr. Stockley, vicar of St. Paul's, Burton-on-Trent, is candid enough to confess that "terrible troubles surround the Church of God, and seem every moment about to submerge the Sacred Ship." Mr. Stockley's only hope is fixed on Christ, but he forgets that Christ promised to dwell in the midst of the Church to the end of time. If he spoke the truth, it follows that he, too, is now about to sink with his Church. Consequently, so far as the Divine Being is concerned, the Church is absolutely without hope.

Dr. Campbell Morgan is admittedly an exceedingly able man, and naturally his explanation of what is described as the signal failure of the Church is the very best that can be offered. Preaching at Newport, Mon., the other Sunday morning, he asserted that only those who do not know what the Church's mission in the world is declare that she has failed. He admitted, however, that during this War, in particular, Catholicism has exemplified its utter impotence—has, in fact, been guilty of plainly showing its sympathy with Austria, but claimed that the various Protestant communions, at least, the Nonconformist sections, have been and are fulfilling their mission right nobly. They have sent hundreds of thousands of their best young men to the Front, and they are administering tea and coffee and spiritual consolation to wounded soldiers, as well as reliable guidance to those who come home on leave. And, in addition, are they not kept busy comforting the bereaved parents, brothers and sisters, widows and children, and sweethearts, of those who fall in battle?

Such was the best apology which so eminent a preacher as Dr. Campbell Morgan could suggest for what is universally spoken of as the dismal failure of the Christian Church; and we do not hesitate to affirm that in offering it he but culpably trifled, or palpably juggled, with the subject. The Gospel Jesus likened his kingdom unto "leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." We are assured that the Church is in charge of that Divine leaven, having been Divinely appointed and equipped to hide that leaven, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, in the human meal till the whole is leavened. Has Dr. Morgan the hardihood to declare that the whole of humanity has been leavened with the kingdom of heaven? If not, is he not bound to admit that the Church has not fulfilled her mission?

Instead of facing that question Dr. Morgan slips off on a tangent and says: "See, the reality of Christ is being demonstrated during this War as it was never demonstrated before. Everywhere there is sorrow, and everywhere men and women are triumphing over their sorrow because Christ is with them." Does Dr. Morgan really imagine that only Christian believers keep their troubles under, and are able to sing in tribulation? If he does, then his taunted knowledge of human beings is an illusion. Myriads upon myriads of non-Christians are morally strong enough to gain the victory over their sorrows without supernatural aid. It is easy enough to say that to give a cup of coffee to a returned soldier is a *Christly* act; but we prefer to call it an eminently *human* act. The reverend gentleman says that the call to hope and heroism is always Christ's call; but, being himself a fair scholar, he knows that the saying is false. Purity, hope, and heroism are distinctively human virtues, which were in active existence thousands of years before Christ was heard of, and are being practised to-day in lands where his name is not known.

The *Daily Sketch* says that the pay of fourth-class Army chaplains is to be increased from 10s. 6d. to 13s. 6d. per day. "Tommy" gets along on considerably less. But we suppose the increased pay will further stimulate the "patriotic" ardour of the "Black Army."

Cardinal Bourne, speaking at Hampstead in defence of the Pope's attitude on the War, said that in the early days of the conflict the Pope had no first-hand information. Poor papa! His infallibility does not seem worth a straw.

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Concerning the "Freethinker."

WE are pleased, but not surprised, to be able to report that our proposed League for guarding the interests of the *Freethinker* is making headway. We have now, excluding London, the names of representatives in eighteen towns who have promised to help, and we see no reason why we should not quadruple that number before long. We made our appeal feeling that it would be well received, and we are not disappointed.

What the members of the *Freethinker* League are asked to undertake is this. They order through their newsagent one or more extra copies of this paper, which are left for display. If they are sold, there is an end of the matter. If they are not sold, the member or members of the League pay for the copies ordered. In the latter case they lose two or three coppers per week. If they are sold, they lose nothing, and have probably gained one or more new subscribers. Some members of the League are undertaking to secure new readers among their friends and acquaintances. This is not by any means so difficult a task as may be imagined. There are thousands who are only waiting for an introduction to the *Freethinker* to become regular readers. We have secured a large number of readers by this method, and we are quite certain we shall get more by the same plan.

Where neither of these plans can be adopted, send *us* on the names and addresses of likely subscribers, and we will send free specimen copies direct for six weeks.

But we want a register of the names of this band of voluntary workers, and we want them as quickly as possible. We may then be able to suggest other ways in which help may be given with no other expenditure than a little trouble. *We want a representative of this paper in every town and city in Britain.* We are out for a big circulation, and we mean to get it.

One other matter. We have not only to sell *the* paper, we have to buy paper in order to sell. And that is growing more and more difficult. Paper, when it can be bought, is now nine or ten times the pre-War price. And it is getting scarcer and dearer week by week. The only way to make sure of paper now is to supply the mills with materials for making it. So, in addition to our ordinary work, we have now to act as a waste-paper merchant. And that is where we are quite dependent upon our readers.

We want all our readers to save all their papers and magazines. Save them until they can be dispatched in about 56 lb. parcels. We will send on labels on receipt of a card, and will pay full price for all sent. But we must have the waste paper, and we need as much as we can get to keep going. Paper we must have, and our only source of supply lies with our readers. We feel quite confident that we shall be able to secure an adequate supply of the raw material with their help. They have stood by us loyally and well during these four year's of War. We are confident we shall have their warm support to the end.

When peace *does* arrive we shall be able to smile at all the shifts we have made to keep the old ship afloat. At present the work is grim and earnest. But the reward is well worth the striving after.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Let us never forget that an act of goodness is of itself always an act of happiness. It is the flower of a long inner life of joy and contentment; it tells of peaceful hours and days on the sunniest heights of our soul. No reward coming after the event can compare with the sweet reward that went with it.—*Maeterlinck.*

To Correspondents.

L. ARMSTRONG.—Why not ask your friend to define what he means by a "Christian hospital"? We have never come across one. We know of hospitals to the maintenance of which Christians—and non-Christians—contribute, but the treatment is non-Christian, even non-theistic. And that is the decisive test.

W. J.—Too late for last week's issue. (1) Is there any reason why you should answer every impertinent question that a Christian cares to put to you? We are doing our own work in our own way. (2) Mr. Cohen does not issue challenges to anyone. He is not a prize-fighter. He has never had, and has not, an objection to meeting in debate any reputable Christian representative. But he does not issue "challenges."

A. PARTON.—Your help is of a very practical kind. It is good news that you made such a success of your canvass for new readers. We are sending on to all the addresses enclosed. Many thanks.

GREEVZ FYSHER.—Paper being sent.

D. D. B.—Your cheque for two guineas received. Thanks.

A. M.—Shall appear as early as possible. But we have a pile of unpublished articles that dumbly reproach us as we write.

J. CORNWALL.—We are glad to know that your newsagent has increased his sale from six to ten copies during the past month. Keep pegging away.

E. K.—Pamphlets sent, and name entered. See our "Special" in this issue. You can distribute where you please.

K. KNIGHTON.—Winwood Read's *Veil of Isis* is out of print, and can only be obtained as a second-hand copy.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: R. B. Harrison, 5s.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: "G. W. R.," 2s.

C. MURRAY.—There is no doubt as to Shelley's rejection of all religion. Here are his own words: "My rejection of revealed (religion) proceeds from my perfect conviction of its insufficiency to the happiness of man—to this source I can trace murder, war, intolerance. My rejection of Natural (religion) arises wholly from reason. I once was an enthusiastic Deist, but never a Christian."

H. SPENCE.—Next week. Much obliged.

T. O'NEILL.—Will find room in our next issue. Our regards to your son in his affliction.

AJAX.—We are obliged for what you are doing to introduce the *Freethinker* to new readers.

JOHN'S GRANDPA (Bognor).—We are looking into the matter, and will write you further. Your newsagent should have little trouble in disposing of the extra copies.

T. DENNIS.—It is quite interesting for Mr. Cohen to learn, on the authority of a Christian Evidence lecturer, that he had not been in Sheffield five minutes before he wanted to go to a public-house. Those who know Mr. Cohen best will appreciate the story.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

After June 24, by the order of the Paper Controller, it is not allowable to send out papers on sale or return. We hope that all our readers will bear this in mind, and will see that an order for the *Freethinker* is placed with their local newsagents.

The Exeter reader who paid for the distribution of 2,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's "Pioneer Leaflets" will be pleased to learn that applications for considerably more than that number have been received. We have, however, supplied every applicant with a parcel. We hope their distribution will do good.

We were pleased to note a discussion in the columns of the *Leeds Mercury* on "Science and Christianity." In the issue before us there are two good letters from Mr. J. M. Blakey, and "Atheist Incognito." Such correspondence is certain to do good, and quite apart from its bringing new ideas before many Christians, it helps to break down the press boycott, which is still fairly well maintained.

Mr. D. Keir writes that he was successful in getting a resolution in favour of Secular Education—on the lines suggested by us—passed by the Paisley Trades and Labour Council. The resolution was sent to Mr. Fisher, the local M.P., and others. We again venture to suggest to advanced Societies of all kinds that they should lose no time in seeing that a similar resolution is passed.

One of our soldier readers, Mr. E. Starling, writes:—

> There is a big scope for work in the Army, and many have lost what little faith they had in the Christian religion and he power of prayer. A little timely talk, and the man goes away thinking; he gets interested with the views expressed regarding Freethought. A leaflet or two, and he comes back for more for his pals. They start discussing the question. My copy of the *Freethinker* is eagerly sought for, and some "book it" beforehand, so that their turn comes early to have it.

This is one of many letters of a similar kind received. We may pride ourselves on having taken long views in connection with the War and Freethought, and we are certain that our systematic distribution of literature among the soldiers will have a growing influence for good.

MIRACLES.

We do not say that a miracle is impossible, we say only that no miracle has ever yet been proved. Let a worker of miracles come forward to-morrow with pretensions serious enough to deserve examination. Let us suppose him to announce that he is able to raise a dead man to life. What would be done? A committee would be appointed, composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons accustomed to exact investigation; a body would then be selected which the committee would assure itself was really dead; and a place would be chosen where the experiment was to take place. Every precaution would be taken to leave no opening for uncertainty; and if, under these conditions, the restoration to life was effected, a probability would be arrived at which would be almost equal to certainty. An experiment, however, should always admit of being repeated. What a man has done once he should be able to do again, and in miracles there can be no question of ease or difficulty. The performer would be requested to repeat the operation under other circumstances upon other bodies; and if he succeeded on every occasion, two points would be established: first, that there may be in this world such things as supernatural operations; and, secondly, that the power to perform them is delegated to, or belongs to, particular persons.—But who does not perceive that no miracle was ever performed under such conditions as these?—*Renan.*

The Story of the Tea Plant.

THAT divine drink, our tea, is threatened by the rationer's vigorous hand. If the contemplated restrictions are imposed, each of us will have to be content with a niggardly two ounces per week of a commodity that was until recently within the reach of all. Our sufferings from the sugar shortage, the beer scarcity, the naked and unashamed appearance of Government ale, the deterioration of coffee, the inferior quality of the wine, the enormous increase in the price of cocoa, and the liberally watered condition of all distilled liquors, were largely alleviated by an unlimited supply of Indian tea, while, until recently, that delicate beverage, China tea, was still available for the more fastidious palate. Yet, amid all the vanished and departing glories of more opulent days, we may still dwell in memory on the good old times before the World-War, when we could select our favourite liquids from a fine array of excellent beverages, and placidly regard our planetary abode as a fair place of residence for reasonably thirsty men.

In the spacious period of artful Elizabeth, when the creator of that genial rascal, Falstaff, presumably himself partook of the sugar and the sack so pleasant to the taste of the portly preceptor of Prince Hal, then, the cups that cheer but not inebriate were rare, if not entirely unknown, in England.

Tea appears to have been introduced into our island in 1610, six years only before Shakespeare's death. Its price at that period was prohibitive to all but the very rich, who were prepared to pay ten guineas a pound for the luxury. According to one authority, the East India Company imported tea into England as early as 1571, but the first important consignment of that commodity arrived in London in 1657. A little later, during the Restoration, the consumption of tea was confined to a favoured few. At that time Thomas Garway opened premises in London City, near the Royal Exchange, for the sale of the prepared drink. Tea was an article of domestic consumption in the home of the delightful Pepys in 1667. "Home," writes that prince of diarists, "and there find my wife making of tea, a drink which Mr. Pelling, the potticary, tells her is good for her cold and defluxions."

Tea-drinking became fashionable in the reign of Charles II. Catherine, the Portuguese consort of the Merry Monarch, was accustomed to the beverage in her native land, and the Queen's example was eagerly followed by the leaders of fashion. The Court poet, Waller, celebrated the virtues of the heavenly herb, and his tribute to tea is one of the earliest in English literature.

In 1740, the choicest teas were sold at twenty-four shillings a pound, while the cheapest was Bohea at seven shillings. The tea-gardens in London and its suburbs were numerous, and both prosperous and popular. Next in importance to Garway's, or as it was called "Garraway's Coffee House," was Twining's, in the Strand. This renowned resort was situated between the Strand and Devereux Court. Twining's Bank was slowly evolved out of the old tea house after this had been carried on for over a century by succeeding generations of the Twining family. The tea house was opened in the reign of Anne, while the Bank which emerged from it is stated by Walford to date as a separate institution "from the commercial panic of 1825."

According to one Chinese tradition, the tea shrub was made known to the Celestial peoples by an Indian ascetic, but this story is doubtful. It is certain that tea was enjoyed as a beverage in the sixth century A.D., while it was in almost universal use in China by the

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eighth century of our era. To the Chinese the Japanese seem indebted for their acquaintance with tea. "It is somewhat curious," writes Mr. McEwan,—

> that although many of the products of China were known and used in Europe at much earlier times, no reference to tea has yet been traced in European literature prior to 1588. No mention is made of it by Marco Polo, and no knowledge of the substance appears to have reached Europe till after the establishment of intercourse between China and Portugal in 1517. The Portuguese, however, did little towards the introduction of it into Europe, and it was not until the Dutch established themselves at Bantam early in the seventeenth century that these adventurers learnt from the Chinese the habit of tea drinking and brought it into Europe.

Only as a cultivated shrub is the tea plant found in China. In truth, the plant is nowhere known in a wild state save in the forests of Assam. This wild variety is a shrub of vigorous growth which rises to a height of about 40 feet. The cultivated variety of China is a smaller growth which rarely exceeds a height of 15 feet. It was long supposed that black and green tea were the products of distinct plants. Fortune, however, proved that both these teas are yielded by the same plant, their differences being obtained by different processes of production.

The constantly increasing demand for tea in the United Kingdom, coupled with the inferior quality of the commodity imported from China, upon which country we were entirely dependent for our supplies, induced the Bengal Government in 1834 to appoint a committee charged with the duty of elaborating a scheme for the introduction and cultivation of the tea plant in India. As a result of their inquiries, the authorities decided to plant tea estates in the Upper Assam region. "In 1840," Arthur Reade informs us in his *Tea and Tea Drinking*, "the 'Assam Company' was formed, and it is claimed for them that they possess the largest tea plantation in the world." Since that date the progress of tea culture in India has been great, and probably the Peninsular of the Orient will ultimately provide us with the vast bulk of our imports.

Indifferently made tea is a prolific source of dyspepsia. The dreadful decoction served up in metal tea-pots in most of our restaurants until recently was enough to make an alligator miserable. To-day, in London, and other leading centres, tea of fair quality is provided at a reasonable charge in innumerable tea-rooms. The metal tea-pot has been superseded by well-made stone tea-pots, and the horrible liquid carefully boiled with the tea leaves to provide a high colour and rank flavour, has almost disappeared.

To secure an ideal cup of refreshing tea the water should be boiled in a kettle kept scrupulously clean. The earthenware tea-pot should be warm and dry when the boiling water is poured into the vessel. Five minutes is ample for the infusion of the herb, and then the liquid should be poured into the cup. When the tea is permitted to stew the tannin is extracted, and then the beverage is little better than poison.

Dr. Edward Smith was an eminent authority on tea, and he assures us that—

> the aim should be to extract all the aroma and dried juices containing theine, with only so much of the substance of the leaf as may give fulness, or, as it is called, *body*, to the infusion.
>
> The kind of water is believed to have great influence over the process; soft water is preferred. The Chinese direction is, 'Take it from a running stream; that from mill springs is the best, river water is the next, and well-water is the worst'; that is to say, take water well mixed with air. Hence avoid hard water, but prefer tap-water or running water to well water.

Many Western visitors while in Russia have learnt to appreciate the Russian fashion of preparing tea. The beverage is served up with a slice of lemon slightly sprinkled with sugar candy, to which no cream or milk are added. In England and elsewhere the use of tea is occasionally condemned. But as Florence Nightingale once wrote:—

> A great deal too much against tea is said by wise people, and a great deal too much of it is given to the sick by foolish people. When you see the natural and almost universal craving in English sick for their tea, you cannot but feel that Nature knows what she is about. But a little tea or coffee restores them quite as much as a great deal;.....yet a nurse, because she sees how one or two cups of tea or coffee restore her patient, thinks three or four cups will do twice as much. This is not the case at all: it is, however, certain that there is nothing yet discovered which is a substitute to the English patient for his cup of tea.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

"The World Needs Us!"

So says a clergyman in the *Scotsman* newspaper of May 22. A small "w" for "world," Master Printer, and a big "U" for "Us"—the great "We Are"—if *you* please!

The conceit of those who imagine that they are indispensable almost passes belief. Great vanity and little wit are always to be found in association. And the small mind seldom has the saving grace of a sense of humour. The heavy solemnity of the supernaturalists is enough to make the angels weep.

At the moment there are urgent calls for Church union. The Scotch Press assures us this is the only topic of supreme importance. But how to herd the voluntaries and the grandsons of voluntaries into the fold of the Establishment without losing some sheep—ah, there's the rub! Or one of the rubs. It is easy to get enthusiastic about union, particularly when the precarious conditions of the present make combination at all costs so eminently desirable—so highly expedient! But is it wise to ignore the formidable difficulties? Can the inheritor of Auld Kirk traditions get the combination of "Crown and Covenant" out of his blood and bones? Can the descendants of the men who came out of the Establishment, and who would not look the side of the road the Erastian was on, wholly forget the past? It is not in Nature to suppose it. We have not yet observed that the Auld Kirk has evinced any burning desire to sacrifice her State connection. She may be open to consider some modification of the form of the bond by which she is united to the secular government; she will, in our opinion, never agree to its complete severance. That must be done by secular reformers—Infidels and Atheists. For truth to tell, we begin to perceive that this War has made many Scottish Presbyterians who are outside the pale of the Establishment willing to consider proposals for coming within it. These have no ancestral memories to restrain them; no voice from the past to rebuke them. They have been picked up by the wayside from here, there, and everywhere; they have entered by all sorts of sideways—Salvation Army, Mission Hall, Y.M.C.A., Yankee revival meetings. Scotch Christians who are keen for union are confronted with a curious dilemma. They stand between two alternatives: on the one hand, the Devil of Rationalism; on the other, the Deep Sea of Disestablishment. And the Devil of Rationalism is, you know, a very real difficulty—a perfect deuce of a fellow; though—

> Of course we never mention him
> His name is never heard.

Notwithstanding, he bobs up at the most inconvenient times, and proves himself to be a veritable hair raiser in ecclesiastical circles.

As regards Disestablishment the *mot d'ordere* is—"Wheesht!" But there are, unhappily, some young Scots whose attitude to the Government religion is so hostile that they would even go the length of smashing their own

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sect to destroy the Establishment. And where are we all then, oh? These young fellows are bound to the verities of their fathers' faith by a mere thread. *Some* of them will, without much trouble, in the near future prefer a rationalistic humanism to State-endowed ecclesiasticism; just as there are others who so dread and detest the advance of Freethought that they would rather be Greek or Roman Catholics than Freethinkers.

It is incumbent upon all lovers of freedom to watch this situation with vigilance. But we also think they are justified in contemplating it with equanimity, courage, and hope. It portends the disappearance of the primitive mind.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

ST. GEORGE OF ENGLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I feel that I owe some apology for the delay in availing myself of your courtesy to offer your readers a brief account of England's Soldier Saint, but ill-health and overwork are, I hope, valid excuses. I will not elaborate or say all that could, and perhaps should, be said concerning one who, apart from religion, compels admiration and respect for his manly courage and steadfast devotion to principles, even unto death. "Who was St. George?" has long been the theme of endless, not to say acrimonous, controversy and discussion.

Time, the great destroyer of truth as of fiction, has left us but little beyond the bare facts, and that little, unfortunately, has been overlaid and obscured by monkish and other fairy tales more easily rejected than accepted. But such stories surely were based upon facts, and had some figure around which to cling, just as the parasitic ivy attests the existence of the tower it conceals from view. Professor Owen, the eminent ornithologist, was able, from a single bone, to reconstruct the bird of which it originally formed a part; and from what is actually known of St. George, we are enabled to conjecture what manner of man he was, and how eventually he became the special Patron of Chivalry and the titulary Saint of England, whose exemplary life and virtues were worthy of all emulation and have exerted, and will continue to exert, a widespread and inspiring influence over our countrymen.

The identity of St. George, the special Patron of Chivalry, has been clearly established. Briefly, he was of Greek origin and Christian parentage, and born at Lydda in Palestine, in the beautiful vale of Sharon (famous for its roses), on April 23, A.D. 270. He held high military command under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, during whose reign he died a Christian martyr at Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, on the anniversary of his birth (Good Friday), A.D. 303, and was buried at the place of his birth. Although the memory of St. George was highly revered by the valorous King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table—in Saxon times—and our chivalrous crusading King Richard I., it was King Edward III., of glorious memory, who first proclaimed him "Patron of the right noble Roialme of England," founding in his honour, in 1347, the Noble Order of the Garter—the Blue Ribbon of Chivalry.

It is surmized that St. George was sent on a mission to Britain, where, at that time, Constantius, the joint Emperor, with Diocletian, held his Court at his capital city of York (Eboracum). Courtantius had married Helena, a British princess, born at Colchester, and the borough seal (over 500 years old) bears the inscription: "Colchester is the birthplace of Helena, whom the Cross makes glorious." Not without reason, it is surmised, that St. George converted to Christianity, Helena, who, in turn, caused her son Constantine—born at York—to embrace that faith. He, as Constantine the Great, founded Constantinople, and became the first Christian Emperor of Rome, an Englishman, or, shall we say a southern Briton?

As, already stated, St. George was martyred at Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, whence, after some years, his body was brought to Lydda, his place of birth, and interred with great pomp and ceremony. Now, if we look at the map of Asia Minor, so familiarized by this dreadful War, we can easily follow the course of the vessel bearing the remains of St. George.

Starting from Nicomedia, at the eastern extremity of what is now the Sea of Marmora, the vessel would sail through the Dardanelles, afterwards known as St. George's Arm, and calling at Thessalonica, where a church was dedicated to St. George, it would sail along the Ægean Sea, past the south-eastern point of Thessaly, know to this day as St. George's Cape, thence by the Isle of Scyros, where is situated the town of St. George, skirting the southern shore of St. George's Bay, to the beautiful city of Beirut, whose inhabitants were, and still are, mostly Christians, and where, and in the district, many churches were built in honour of our Saint. Arriving at Joppa, there are but nine miles inland to Lydda, in the vale of Sharon, where, in one of the most beautiful spots in all Palestine, repose the remains of the Patron Saint of England. Sharon, as recorded in Holy Writ, was celebrated for its roses, and may we not from this fact reasonably infer that the rose—the lovely Queen of Flowers—thus so happily associated with our Patron Saint—became, as it will ever remain, the national emblem of England!

This is the story of St. George. Should the evidence adduced be deemed inconclusive, it follows that much of ancient history must be regarded as unintelligible and fabulous. Gibbon, the great historian of the Roman Empire, unaccountably confused St. George with George, the fraudulent army contractor, who, by devious ways, ultimately became the Arian Archbishop of Alexandria, where his infamous conduct caused him to be slain by his own people, A.D. 362, *nearly sixty years after* the death of our patron.

Those who have adopted the careless and sneering assertions of Gibbon have, I fancy, done so because they found in him a writer whose position and general accuracy were unchallenged, and whose opinions upon so vexed a subject coincided with their own churlish desire to belittle, with apathetic indifference, or jealous and splenetic envy, the titulary soldier Saint of England.

HOWARD RUFF, *Hon. Sec.*,
Royal Society of St. George.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

SIR,—Your correspondent of June 2 appears to have had *very* little experience during his service, and I would suggest, if I may, that, having spent three and a half years in the Army, in varied circumstances, that his statements are hardly correct descriptions of the thoughts of the majority of men in khaki. If they are not indifferent, they must either believe in Christianity or fail to do so. It would greatly help others, perhaps, if they decided to—in the event of their thinking in the latter way—refrain from classing themselves as Church of England men, stating that they were Atheists. Apparently, they have not the courage of their convictions. During the past three years I have had an opportunity of seeing for myself a few things, and I should like you to read them once again, for I am sure that I am not the only one who has written you in this strain. I was sent, while at a General Hospital in France, to receive treatment at a Convalescent Depot, where I found that a service was held each evening in three places—usually open for concerts at other places—where we had a very large congregation, always far exceeding the quarter spoken of. During my stay here, I have had the opportunity of going voluntarily to a service held in the town, roughly a mile from camp, on each Sunday evening, and this place has been full to overflowing. Does this prove the value that the men place on the *Freethinker* and its contemporaries?—for I might add that there are within easy reach a large number of places of entertainment. As for a number of N.C.O.'s making fun of a parade, I can attribute that alone to ignorance, and feel positive that you will agree with me in this. Although I have only looked at your paper, I found a reference in the last one *re* Mr. Smallwood's remark "that the churches after four years of war are *empty*." The last illustration I gave is quite a good enough example for most people that men in his position say a good many things they know nothing of.

E. COMLEY.

[Judging from our correspondence, we should say that Mr. Comley's experience is unique. Many clergymen have borne testimony in quite the opposite direction.—ED.]

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Judgment.

WHY don't Gawd give the world a 'Oliday,
Wiv Swings, an' Roundabouts, an' 'Appenny Shies?
But 'ee don't seem ter mind some'ow ter day;
'Ee sits up lazy somewheres in the skies.

I see a picture larst week in a shop;
There wasn't arf a battle goin' on!
Big guns—an' gas, an' sojjers fit ter drop.
An' Jesus in the sky sed "Carry On."

A lidy ses ter me, "My little man—
Your Poppa's in a place like that you know;
And Jesus tries to help him all He can.
So if your Poppa dies to Heaven he 'll go."

An' then I see some 'osses lying dead,
Wiv legs up in the air orl stiff an' straight.
A sojjer sed they'd copped a dose of lead,
They won't pull no more bloomin' waggins, mate!

An' Jesus in the sky sed "Carry On,"
"I am the Way, the Truth, the Light," 'ee sed.
An' that ole lidy ses ter me, "My son:
As Gawd knows every drop of blood wots shed,

Gawd knows abaht each pore 'oss wots done in,
An' 'e remembers every sojjer's face.
An' Gawd," she ses, "fergives us every sin,
Because," she ses, "'ee made this bloomin' place."

But if, I ses, 'ee made them 'osses die;
An' if 'ees up in 'Eavin a lookin' down;
I ses let 'im stop up there in the sky—
Or take 'isself ter Jerico—an' *drown*.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE CHRISTIAN BLIGHT.

The "mighty Julius," the first Cæsar, the greatest of earth's rulers, who swayed the destinies of the civilized world before Christ was born, was far above the superstitions of his age—above the superstiton of *all* ages. Could he "revisit the glimpses of the moon," and behold a great English statesman [Gladstone] gravely discussing a story of devils being turned out of men and sent into swine, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect in two thousand years: And were he to learn that such stories are contained in a book which is regarded as divine, which is placed as such in the hands of our children, which is paraded in all our courts of justice, and is deemed the very basis and security of our civilization, he would be at no loss to understand why the greatest rulers and statesmen of modern Europe look small and effeminate beside the best emperors of pagan Rome.—*G. W. Foote, "The Grand Old Book."*

Science is the real redeemer. It will put honesty above hypocrisy; mental veracity above all belief. It will teach the religion of usefulness. It will destroy bigotry in all its forms. It will put thoughtful doubt above thoughtless faith. It will give us philosophers, thinkers, and savants, instead of priests, theologians, and saints. It will abolish poverty and crime, and greater, grander, nobler than all else, it will make the whole world free.—*Ingersoll.*

Obituary.

On June 8, after a long and painful illness, Robert Taylor, an old member of the Birmingham Branch, passed away. When in good health he worked energetically in the cause, and, at one time, was President of the Birmingham Branch. About two years ago his health broke through heart failure, and since then he was untiringly attended by his wife through a very trying period. Due respect was paid to his wishes, which were that he be cremated and a Secular Service be used on the occasion. Both were carried out at the crematorium, Perry Barr, on June 14.—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.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C): 11, Dr. Marion Phillips, "Bureaucracy and Common Sense."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Collette Jones, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and Cleanliness.—The Editor	349
"The Popes and Their Church."—J. T. Lloyd	350
Henry Stephens Salt.—Mimnermus	351
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	352
The Story of the Tea Plant.—T. F. Palmer	356
Miracles and Omnipotence.—Agnostic	357
S. P. C. K.—Henry Spence, B.Sc.	358

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Cleanliness.

Arising out of a police court case in the North of England, the Vicar of Burton Wood, Lancashire, writes to the *Yorkshire Evening Post* that "religion and dirt are strange bedfellows," a statement somewhat discounted by the Vicar's admission that two of the most godly women among his own personal acquaintances were among the unwashed. These ladies, it appears, strictly confined their washing to hands and face; no other part of the body received attention. Probably the number of the unwashed is much greater than many people imagine—certainly so far as the unseen portion of the body is concerned. Anyway, the Vicar of Burton Wood is clearly wrong in declaring religion and dirt to be strange bedfellows. They are not. Historically, so far as Christianity is concerned, the relation is of the closest. To-day, cleanliness has become a religion—to use a cant expression. But time was when the lack of it was one of the accepted marks of godliness.

* * *

The Order of the Bath.

Everyone who knows anything of the life of the old Roman Empire knows what a prominent part baths held therein. They were numerous, they were for all classes, and all classes used them. Even in their ruins the baths of Rome appeal to the imagination, and enable one to form some idea of their extent. The baths of Caracalla are said to have contained over 1,600 seats, those of Diocletian over 3,000. Nor were these baths confined to a class. They were open to the whole of the population, and Gibbon tells us that the meanest Roman could purchase a bath at the cost of about half a farthing of our money. Wherever the Romans went, they took their baths; and their ruins meet us in various parts of this country. To-day we know the old Roman bath as the *Turkish* bath, and the changed name is illuminating. The use of the bath died out with the Christianizing of the Empire. It flourished elsewhere; it was unknown among Christians. For seven hundred years Christian Europe was without a public bath; the first public one in England was opened in Liverpool less than a century ago. The public bath reappeared in Europe when the Crusades and later Mohammedan influences brought the Christian world into touch with a saner and cleaner civilization. And Christendom, which had inherited the old Roman civilization, straightway convicted itself by calling it the *Turkish* bath. Christians had forsaken its use and forgotten its origin. Christianity and dirt are not strange bedfellows; historically, they are the closest of room-mates.

* * *

Piety and Dirt.

Two causes are responsible for this alliance of Christianity and dirt. The first was the intense hatred of everything Pagan—science, art, literature, sanitation. The second was the division of life into spiritual and material, helped by the conviction of the approaching end of the world. To shun the world and all it offered became the sign of spiritual rebirth. Pleasure and sin became synonymous terms. Asceticism, imported into Rome from the East, gained ground as the mass of superstitions grew that were afterwards consolidated as Christianity. The figure of the monk and the ascetic dominated the stage; and to approach as near the beast as possible became the pious method of showing oneself superior to ordinary human nature. We read of whole communities, 20,000 and 30,000 strong given up to ascetic practices. And the behaviour of these almost passes comprehension. St. Jerome says that he knew of one man who lived on a piece of bread and a drop of water per day, another who only cut his hair once a year, who never washed himself, and whose skin grew like pumice-stone. Some carried heavy weights or sat in constrained and unnatural positions after the manner of Indian Fakirs. Others threw off all clothing and ran about like wild beasts. In Syria one sect ate grass like cattle. St. Anthony, the founder of monasticism, never washed his feet. St. Abraham went one better and never washed at all. St. Euphraxia belonged to a convent of nuns who never washed. St. Simon Stylites lived in such a state of filth that even his adoring visitors often found the "odour of sanctity" too much for them. He is said to have lived for thirty years on the top of a column, his body covered with ulcers, and swarming with vermin. And on his death his funeral was attended by some of the greatest dignitaries in Christendom. Bathing among nearly all the monastic orders was forbidden, or only allowed under stringent regulations. Lecky sums up the period in the comment, "A hideous, sordid, and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without natural affection, without patriotism, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the phantoms of his own delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero, and the lives of Socrates and Cato." It is said that Augustus found Rome brick and left it marble. Christians took all that Roman civilization had acquired, and buried it beneath superstition, filth, ignorance, and disease.

* * *

Christian Civilization.

Neglect of cleanliness was not confined to professed monks. It was common to all—more or less. Some of the highest dignitaries of the State were often found in a

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filthy condition. As an example, one may cite the case of Thomas Becket who, after his murder in Canterbury Cathedral, was found to be wearing a hair shirt that was swarming with vermin. The following is a picture of Christian cities at the close of the sixteenth century as drawn by Draper :—

> In Paris and London the houses were of wood daubed with clay, and thatched with straw. The luxury of a carpet was unknown; some straw, scattered in the room, supplied its place. There were no chimneys; the smoke from the ill-fed, cheerless fire escaped through a hole in the roof. No attempt was made at drainage, but the putrefying garbage and rubbish was simply thrown out of the door. Men, women, children, slept in the same apartment; not unfrequently domestic animals were their companions; in such a confusion of the family it was impossible that modesty and morality could be maintained.....Personal cleanliness was utterly unknown.....To conceal personal impurity, perfumes were necessarily and profusely used. The citizen clothed himself in leather, a garment which, with its ever-increasing impurity, might last for years.....The streets had no sewers; they were without pavements or lamps. After nightfall the chamber shutters were thrown open, and slops unceremoniously emptied down, to the discomfiture of the wayfarer, tracking his path through the narrow streets, with his dismal lantern in his hand.

It is not surprising that plagues and epidemic diseases were such regular and deadly visitors during the Christian ages of European history. And when disease came the Church found in its presence, not proof of the need for sanitation and greater cleanliness, but evidence of the anger of God upon an impious people.

* * *

God or Man?

The alliance between religion and dirt is not, therefore, a revelation to anyone who bears in mind the nature of the Christian record. It has been frequently manifested, and was a consequence of the ascetic preaching of Christianity combined with opposition to sanitary and medical science. The Christian Church inoculated mankind with a mental disease of unexampled virulence; and at the same time it robbed nations of their greatest protection against physical disease. Even the methods of protection adopted by the Church only served to intensify the evil. The massing of people in religious pilgrimages, with days of prayer for protection against an epidemic, served but to make contagion more certain. The medicine-chest of the Church held but one ingredient—faith; and that was powerless against disease. The true remedy came when man paid less attention to religious exhortations and more to the conditions that govern the causes and the cure of disease. For Nature yields nothing to prayer, and everything to knowledge. Man on his knees is symbolical of ignorance and helplessness. But man erect and open-eyed is typical of the spirit that writes "finis" to the reign of the gods, and ushers in the era of a liberated humanity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

NATURAL SOCIETY.

Man in general has always been what he is now. This does not mean that he has always had fine cities, cannon with twenty-four pound balls, comic operas, and nunneries. But he has always had the same instinct of self-love in himself, in the companion of his pleasure, in his children, in his grandchildren, in the work of his hands. That is what never changes from one end of the world to the other. The foundation of society always existing, there has always been some form of society. For we were not made to live like bears.—*Voltaire*, "*Essai sur les Mœurs.*"

"The Popes and Their Church."

A VOLUME of upwards of six hundred closely printed pages lies before us, bearing the alluring title of *Christianity in History: A Study of Religious Development.* It has two authors, J. Vernon Bartlet, M.A., D.D., and A. J. Carlyle, M.A., D.Litt., and is published by Macmillan & Co., at the price of 12s. 6d. The task attempted is a vast one, which is to supply a compendium of the history of the Church and of the development of doctrine. In the words of the authors, it is "an attempt to set forth the genesis and growth of certain of the more typical forms and phases which Christianity—whether as conduct, piety, thought, or organized Church life—has assumed under the conditioning influences first of the Roman Empire and then of the Western civilization that was its successor and heir." Naturally, the work is divided into five parts, entitled "The Beginnings," "Ancient Christianity," "The Middle Ages," "The Great Transition," and "The Modern Period." The impression which a careful perusal of it leaves upon the mind is twofold; first, that Christianity, though in its essence a Divinely revealed religion, "appears in history as the child of Judaism, claiming to be the perfected religion of Israel," and, second, that, starting as a child, its history has been one of growth and development. Besides, though "the essence of Christianity is Christ, and its method the influence of personality upon personality," yet it won its supremacy in the West through long-continued and more or less brutal conflict with three great rivals, all the most characteristic elements in which it unblushingly appropriated and assimilated to itself. This is candidly admitted by the authors, who treat it throughout as if it were merely a human system strenuously and not over-scrupulously struggling for sole dominion over the minds and consciences of men. In many respects, *Christianity in History* is a work which Freethinkers will appreciate and enjoy, because, while reverent, careful, and scholarly, it is also pre-eminently rationalistic. Indeed, it could not be more rationalistic without being positively sceptical, and even hostile to the Christian Faith.

Our object in calling attention to *Christianity in History* is to point out that, although presenting a generally accurate and rationalistic portrayal of the Christian religion's growth and development in the different periods of its history, it yet wholly misleads the reader as to its influence upon individual and social life. For example, the Christian Church is spoken of as zealously promoting the intellectual education of the Western world. We are assured that "Christian ecclesiastics and monks never wholly lost the tradition of the education of the ancient world"; and we would naturally infer that, on the whole, the Church was a centre in which righteousness and truth, purity and love, shone most brilliantly, irradiating the outside world with their healing and warmth-giving beams. But every honest student of ecclesiastical history is fully aware how absolutely false such an inference would be. We are, therefore, delighted to be able to refer our readers to another book recently published by Messrs. Watts & Co., namely, *The Popes and their Church*, by Mr. Joseph McCabe. This is, perhaps, the most effective work Mr. McCabe has yet given us. His knowledge of Roman history in general, and of the Catholic Church in particular, is of the most intimate character. Of the latter he writes from actual experience, as well as with accurate knowledge, and of necessity his testimony deserves the most serious consideration. Now, nothing can be more certain than the fact that the Church has always been the sworn enemy of education, in the ordinary sense of the word. Next

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to Leo I., the greatest of the ancient Popes was Gregory the Great, who occupied St. Peter's Chair from A.D. 590-604. Of him Mr. McCabe says :—

> His ignorance and credulity were unlimited. His largest works, *The Magna Moralia* and *The Dialogues*, are incredible hotch-potches of stories about devils and miracles. He sternly rebuked bishops who tried to educate their people; and he did not perceive that the appalling vices and crimes which he deplores almost in every letter—the general drunkenness and simony and immorality of the priests, and the horrible prevalence of violence—were mainly due to ignorance. He was one of the Makers of the Middle Ages (*The Popes and their Church*, pp. 27, 28).

Gregory hated culture with his whole heart, and in his zeal against it is reported to have destroyed libraries and monuments not a few. The authors of *Christianity in History* curiously admit that "an immense amount of the ancient learning and the ancient intellectual discipline was lost," and that "the intellectual methods and conceptions which the Christian Church handed on to the mediæval world, were in many important respects, far below the level of the higher intellectual civilization of the ancient world"; but, whilst making that damaging admission, they glory in the alleged fact that the Church "became the guide and educator of the civilization of the Western world." On their own showing, however, the guidance and education which she provided were of a woefully imperfect and lowering type.

Mr. McCabe traces the history of the Roman Church from the fourth century down to the present day, and the perusal of the horrible record brings the blush of shame and contempt to the reader's cheek. That there were a few comparatively good Popes is unquestionable; but, taking them all in all, the claim that they were the vicars of the loving Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost is too ludicrous for words. We are told in *Christianity in History* (p. 351) that "the Christian Church was born into a world which was very highly civilized—a world whose civilization is, indeed, comparable only with that of quite modern times," and that she handed that civilization down to the Middle Ages; but the truth is that she despised Pagan civilization and practically destroyed it; or, as Mr. McCabe puts it, that in proportion as the Popes thrived Europe decayed. What even the best Popes aimed at was the triumph of the Papacy, not the reformation of the world. Take Pope John XII. who ascended the Papal throne in 955, of whom Mr. McCabe says :—

> There was not a crime in the penitentials that John XII. did not introduce into the "sacred palace." The palace of Caligula or of Nero in ancient Rome had not witnessed more wanton scenes than the Lateran Palace now exhibited. Liutprand tells us (*De Rebus Gestis Othonis*, IV.) how John, pressed by a rival, appealed to the Emperor Otto, and when Otto came to Rome the Romans brought up against their spiritual father a list of crimes which would, they said, "make a comedian blush for shame"; and a comedian was the lowest thing they knew. The Romans were lenient, but they could not tolerate a Pope who committed murder, perjury, adultery, incest (with his two sisters), and sacrilege. Before the Synod convoked by Otto it was proved that John had "turned the Lateran Palace into a brothel," cut out the eyes of or castrated those who criticized him, raped girls and women who came to pray in St. Peter's, gambled, cursed, drunk to the Devil.....There was, in brief, nothing that he had not done (pp. 45, 46).

Unfortunately that is by no means the worst Papal record, that concerning Alexander VI. at the close of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth being odious beyond compare, of whom we read that one evening he and his daughter, Lucrezia, dined with Cardinal Cesare "and fifty prostitutes in Cesare's rooms in the Vatican," and that after the banquet "the women danced unclothed." Alexander was also guilty of duplicity in war and diplomacy, and, according to some, of a murder for £150,000. Even prior to the thirteenth century, "the Holy See had rarely had an illustrious man in it during eleven centuries. It was stained black with blood, and vice, and corruption. Europe, at the mercy of the Popes, was sordid, filthy, fearfully cruel and violent, crassly ignorant, utterly primitive in the administration of justice, indescribably lax in sex matters."

Mr. McCabe's book is accurately described as "one of the most deadly indictments yet written of the Church of Rome"; and no reader of *Christianity in History* can over-estimate the need of such a merciless exposure. We can heartily recommend it to all who are eager to obtain facts wherewith to disprove the silly dogma of the divinity and infallibility of the Christian Church.

J. T. LLOYD.

Henry Stephens Salt.

> When the sword glitters o'er the judge's head,
> And fear has coward churchmen silenced,
> This is the poet's time; 'tis then he draws,
> And single fights forsaken virtue's cause.
> —*Andrew Marvell.*

A STORY is told of a modest Frenchman, that when the great Napoleon took him familiarly by the ear, and said, "I intend giving you the Legion of Honour, the man answered: "Thank you, sire, but could not your Majesty give it to my father?" In some such spirit we may picture Mr. H. S. Salt's acceptance of praise. His striking talents and his widespread philanthropy have always been united with a modesty which is, in these days of self-advertising, extremely rare.

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Born in India in 1851, the life of this great social reformer has its touch of romance. He was educated at Eton College—he became one of the house-masters—and also at Cambridge University, although he could never have completely acquiesced in the old order of things, such as was dominant at these seats of learning. For the young master was soon reading Shelley's lyrics of liberty, and was absorbing the intellectual audacities of Henry Thoreau and Walt Whitman. In such company young Mr. Salt was bound to look beyond Eton and her old-fashioned ideals, and to scan far horizons and the unalterable stars.

Such a fine spirit as that of Mr. H. S. Salt's was bound, sooner or later, to rebel at being "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd" within the narrow limits of the educational system of Eton, that "nursery of Toryism," as he himself wittily described it. There was no bitterness, however, in his criticism. Though he ploughed a lonely furrow, he has never been morbid. Taking all things at their true worth, he has never been surprised by views he could not accept. He has merely acknowledged urbanely that they were so different from his own.

So acute a critic as G. W. Foote has said that Mr. Salt is "without the least fanaticism." This is the more remarkable as he challenges contemporary convention at so many points. He conceives human society as a

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great brotherhood; but the underlying unity is not merely economic, not merely the apotheosis of an enlightened selfishness, but an ethical fraternity, where love and mutual service are to be confidently expected :—

> Till each man find his own in all men's good,
> And all men work in noble brotherhood.

This optimistic faith is not to be limited to one race or species, but extended to the whole world of innocent beings. And herein lies the genesis of the Humanitarian League, with which Mr. Salt's name is inseparably associated. In a letter written in 1910 by G. W. Foote, on the occasion of the Society's twentieth anniversary, the great Freethought leader wrote :—

> I believe the Humanitarian League has been, is, and I trust will continue to be, one of the noblest and most useful organizations in England. No friend of humanity need despair if he will only look at what the League has done for the real higher life of England in the face of tremendous odds and with ridiculously small material resources. Yours is veritably the triumph of a great idea.

The scope of the League's activities may be estimated by recalling that it has dealt with such measures as Criminal Law and Prison Reform, Cruel Sports, Humane Diet and Dress, Education of Children, Flogging in the Services, the Humanizing of the Poor Law, and many other needful reforms. In brief, the distinctive purpose of the League is to consolidate the principle of humaneness, which it considers should be an essential part of any intelligible system of society.

Through all the vicissitudes of life Mr. Salt preserves a serene mind, an unconquerable optimism, and an inexhaustible interest in all things human. A great reformer, his life has been devoted to a ceaseless whirl of activities. Under less strenuous conditions he might have made a great name for himself in literature. His sympathetic studies of Shelley, Richard Jefferies, De Quincey, Thoreau, and James Thomson, prove his devotion to letters. His quiet humour is displayed in his delightful volume of verse, *Consolations of a Faddist;* whilst his scholarship is apparent in his spirited rendering of *The Treasures of Lucretius*. In another vein he has emulated George Borrow, and his *On Cambrian and Cumbrian Hills* is not without a touch of genius.

Meanwhile, society is not yet a brotherhood. It is divided into mutually antagonistic classes. Tyranny, crime, and war prevail, and how to remove them is the question of questions. Not by bloody revolution, thinks Mr. Salt, but rather by peaceful evolution. While it is true that there is no set programme warranted to cure all social ills, there are principles to be followed. Love is the principle that, by its superior, attractive power, will draw to itself the virtue and strength which selfishness has before absorbed. In this way, the greed which produces crime and misery and so many forms of social unrest, will be banished through the power of a new, stronger, and nobler spirit.

The phase of Mr. Salt's activities which will appeal most widely is his dauntless championship of the Humanitarian movement and of the rights of animals. He will always be remembered as the chivalrous knight-errant ever seeking out forlorn, oppressed, or distressed causes and objects, in whose behalf to break a lance, on whom to lavish his passion of pity, aad satisfy his yearning for service. Mr. Salt's career is a discourse on the indispensability of reformers, who, more even than the poets, are "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind."

MIMNERMUS.

Thought fights with thought: out springs a spark of truth From the collision of the sword and shield.—*Landor.*

A Search for the Soul.

III.

(*Continued from p. 341.*)

ONE of the few British scientists of the present day who are believers in the immortality of the soul is the great physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge. In his book, entitled *Man and the Universe*, that eminent member of the scientific profession tells us many things which are in complete harmony with science; but he also tells us things that are not admitted as facts by the great majority of scientists, as may be perceived by the following extracts :—

> What is it that combines and arranges the particles of matter so that if absorbed by root or leaves they correspond to and form the tissue of an oak, if picked by talons they help to feed the muscles of an eagle, if cooked for dinner, they enter into the nerves and brain of a man? What is the controlling entity in each case, which causes each to have its own form and not another, and preserves the form constant amid the wildest diversity of particles? We call it life, we call it soul, we call it by various names.....The soul is that controlling and guiding principle which is responsible for our personal expression and for the construction of the body, under the restrictions of physical condition and ancestry. In its higher development it includes also feeling and intelligence and will, and is the storehouse of mental experience.....Life is not matter, nor is it energy, it is a guiding and directing principle; and when considered as incorporated in a certain organism, it, and all that appertains to it, may well be called the soul or constructive and controlling element in that organism (pp. 78, 79).

Looking at the foregoing statements, we see that "soul" includes the "life" of the human organism, as well as "feeling and intelligence and will" and other mental attributes. And, what is even more surprising, all human beings, animals, and plants are each possessed of a soul, whose office it is to guide and control the formation of the body, to regulate its growth, and cause it to assume the height, girth, and form of its ancestral type.

But what is this "life" or "soul," which is said to guide and control the formation, growth, and development of the human organism? Sir Oliver says: "We *call* it life, we *call* it soul, we *call* it by various names." But the only thing which performs all he has described he never once names. This is "heredity." Yet it is the mysterious action and influence of this form of matter, protoplasm, that Sir Oliver calls "life" or "soul," and this "principle," he tells us, when united to the mental faculties, will survive the death of the body and live for ever.

Now, since it appears to be the action connected with heredity, which Sir Oliver Lodge calls the soul, we will look at the matter in the concrete. Commencing, then, by fecundation, in which the sexual cells of both parents meet and coalesce, we find in this union the formation of a new cell, the impregnated egg-cell or "stem-cell," from which each individal life begins. This stem-cell soon afterwards divides into two, and when each half-cell has developed, each of these again divides into two. By continuing this process the cells increase by geometrical progression into four—eight—sixteen—thirty-two—sixty-four, etc., and soon evolve into millions. When a sufficient number of these protoplasmic cells are formed, then the real work begins. The cells have to arrange themselves into the human form, not only as to the body, limbs, and external organs, but also into all the internal organs possessed by the parents. Such a task seems impossible; but it is performed unerringly

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by these cells of living protoplasm. Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that they are guided and directed in this work by an immaterial "principle" which he calls "life" or "soul." As a matter of fact, the stem-cell, and all the other cells produced by segmentation, are minute particles of *matter* derived from the parents. No real life is originated until the parent cells unite: neither the spermatozoon (male) nor the ovum (female) possesses sufficient vitality in itself to reproduce the species.

If we follow the cells of protoplasm through the period of gestation, we find that they travel over a very old and beaten path, which leads in a roundabout way through all the past ages before arriving at the human stage. The following short paragraph from *The World's Advanced Thought*, published many years ago, states the case in a few words:—

> The development of the embryo is a condensed and abbreviated repetition of the evolution of mankind. In the gestative period previous to birth the inchoate human being runs swiftly through the whole gamut of change that his ancestors slowly experienced in their movement of ages up the zoological ladder. He passes through the several stages of cell, leaf, egg, worm, reptile, serpent, fish (including gills), quadruped (including tail), till he reaches the human stage.

The foregoing statement is true only as regards the human race as a whole. In the majority of individual cases there are breaks in the chain; but notwithstanding some missing links, the long, devious path of evolution in the past can be clearly perceived. This aggregate of cells, then, which forms itself into a human body, would seem instinctively to know how organized bodies were formed in the past; hence, it travels, blindfold as it were, through the earlier stages of evolution, then through the later ones, until it ultimately reaches its goal. "There is a time," says Professor Huxley, "when the embryos of neither dog, nor horse, nor porpoise, nor ape, nor man, can be distinguished by any essential feature one from the other; there is a time when each and all of them resemble that of the dog. But as the development advances, all the parts acquire their speciality, till at length the embryo is converted into the form of the parent from which it started."

Now, assuming for a moment the existence of an immaterial director that guided the protoplasmic cells in their formation of the body, Why, it may be asked, did this director allow the cells to form themselves into the parts of an organism belonging to an early stage, then reform themselves and take the form of an organism belonging to a later stage; in one stage providing their body with gills, then reforming it and giving it a tail, and so going from one stage to another until they ultimately reached that of man? Why did not this controller show the cells a short and direct way of reaching the human stage without all this forming and reforming? Is it not clear that the cells have *no* immaterial director to guide them, but, in their own way, by some kind of instinct, they follow the path which protoplasmic cells had always taken in the past. Setting aside, then, this immaterial director *that does not direct*, is it not far more probable that the hereditary influence which resides in the cells—and is a property of living matter—is the agent that directs all the formative processes?

Sir Oliver Lodge appears to speak of "life" in an abstract sense, as he might of "goodness" or "wickedness." But such qualities are not entities which survive the death of the individuals in whom they are found; there is no "goodness" or "wickedness" apart from people who are classed as "good" or "wicked." The same is the case with the abstraction called "life." We know that one of the attributes common to members of the animal and vegetable kingdoms is vitality. This fact the mind takes cognizance of, and, dissociating it from the organism, calls the abstraction "life." But life in the concrete refers, not to an abstraction, but to the state or condition of the entire living body when all its internal organs are exercising their respective functions. There is no such thing as "life" apart from bodies or things which are living, and though all the organs and tissues of the body contain life, this so-called "vital principle" cannot be separated from them. The word "life," as employed by Sir Oliver Lodge, is thus merely a *name* used to distinguish animated from inanimate forms of existence. Hence, to imagine "life" in the abstract to be an entity which will survive the body after death is to throw reason and common sense to the winds.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

A Bill is at present before Parliament that is of some interest to Freethinkers. In our fervour for liberty and democratic government, we have got rid of so many safeguards of freedom that losing one more or less makes little difference. The new proposal is that trial by jury shall be abolished for the duration of the War and for a certain time after, except in cases where personal character is involved. This means that in the event of a prosecution for blasphemy—for we hardly expect that would be considered a charge involving personal character—the defendant will be left without the protection of a jury. And before a judge of pronounced religious convictions, we can guess the result. We can see no reason for this Bill save as a preparation for other things. We daresay the Bill will pass. The present House of Parliament will pass anything. Charles the First would have considered it a dispensation of Providence had he had such a House.

In "dedicating" two ambulances at Trafalgar Square on Saturday, the Bishop of London said: "The difference between conveying wounded in ambulances like this and in a motor lorry is all the difference between heaven and hell." No doubt his lordship is an authority upon the conditions of these places, but we mustn't forget that his God made both.

After four years of war, Christians are beginning to have doubts as to the entire German nation being "atheistic," and they are actually saying things which would have been well-nigh impossible before the world-conflict. The *Evening Standard* (London) goes so far as to say that "the religious-minded German is on the whole a much worse man than the German Atheist."

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge has published a pamphlet, entitled *The Problem of Man's Ancestry*, by Professor F. Wood Jones. The most striking thing about the booklet is that the Biblical account of man's origin is completely ignored, and the writer admits the truth of evolution. Orthodoxy must be in a bad way when it has to borrow its arguments from Freethinkers.

The Vicar of Waltham Abbey invited all Nonconformist bodies in the town to join the Church in services of intercession. Providence was as deaf as usual.

The fawning newspapers editors have made much of the King's visit to a factory, when he helped to cut soldiers' shirts. There was nothing in the incident to waste good printer's ink on a lengthy report. If the Bible be true, God himself on one occasion turned tailor and made "coats of skin" and clothed Adam and Eve.

The Committee on Munition Workers' Health report that Sunday work does not pay. Yet the dear clergy have always found Sunday work pay very handsomely.

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Although parsons run Gospel-shops, they are not usually popular with other tradesmen. A notable exception was the late Rev. Henry Long, of Higham Ferrers. At his funeral all the public-houses in the neighbourhood were closed. Perhaps the deceased gentleman purchased his "communion-port" from local dealers.

Clergymen as a rule are adepts at begging, and in securing the assistance of Mr. Lloyd George to take up the collection at the Welsh Service at Westminster Abbey they recognized that his abilities in this direction outdid their masterly efforts. Trust a parson for knowing the best way to collect the "dibs."

The Health Committee of the Carlisle Town Council granted permission for a concert in the Park on behalf of a Prisoners of War Fund. On this coming before the Council the Mayor said "there was something repugnant and distasteful in doing anything which in any might encourage the secularization of the Sabbath," and moved that the matter be referred back for consideration. We are glad to see that the Mayor failed to find a seconder, and that the concert was held. It is a curious thing that these Sabbatarians can see no wrong in War work being done on Sunday, but complain of harmless and healthy amusement. The Mayor is taken very sharply to task in the local paper, which reminds him that his argument no longer appeals to public sympathy—or, we hope, to public intelligence.

A London paper describes Mr. William Hughes, the Australian politician, as an "Imperial Christian." We have heard of "Chinese Presbyterians," but this union of "Punch and Pray" startles us.

Truth is stranger than fiction. At the Southwark Coroner's Court two boys told that official they had never heard of the Bible. The two boys were not related to one another, and attended different schools.

"It is no wonder that thousands are turning from the Churches in disgust." This is not a sentence from a Freethought paper, but is taken from the *Daily News*, and is from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Orchard. It does not augur well for the near future of religion.

One of our readers, acting on the advice we gave in these columns, wrote to the local M.P., Sir Herbert Neild, on the question of Secular Education. In the course of his reply, Sir Herbert says:—

> I am wholly opposed to a purely secular education, which in my judgment would be most disastrous to the country. I have never shrunk from expressing my view and sought to obtain support of advocating measures which are opposed to my strong personal conviction, and on this subject there can be no surrender if the best interests of the youth of the nation are to be safeguarded.

What we should like to know would be the facts upon which an estimate of the consequences of Secular Education, such as is expressed by Sir Herbert Neild, is based. We know of none. Will Sir Herbert say that Secular Education in France has been disastrous to the youth of France? And if not there, why here? Is English human nature so inferior to French that it needs a support which others can do without? We fail to see anything in Sir Herbert's reply save sheer religious prejudice.

It will be noted, too, that Sir Herbert Neild takes no notice whatever of the political aspect of the question. He is quite content that everybody should go on paying for the religion of everybody else, and that others should be forced to maintain a religious teaching to which they have a convinced opposition. This, of course, is because the religion taught is one with which Sir Herbert happens to agree. If he were a citizen of a Mohammedan country he would consider it an injustice to be compelled to maintain the teaching of that religion. It makes a world of difference whether one belongs to the dominant religion or not. And it is almost invariably fatal to one's sense of justice.

The German Kaiser claims that during his thirty years' reign he has been "A Prince of Peace." Like most Christians, he uses the word "Peace" in a Pickwickian sense.

A "Calvary" is to be erected outside a Kilburn church at a cost of £1,200. In these terrible times, it isn't the clergy who are being crucified.

The Duke of Connaught opened a "Y.M.C.A." hut subscribed for by East-End Jews, states an evening contemporary. This is proof positive of the complete secularization of the work at the "Y.M.C.A." huts. None are so devoted to their faith as members of the Jewish community.

Providence, we are told, watches the fall of the sparrows, but there seems some laxity with regard to the "paragon of animals." During last year over five thousand persons were killed and injured on British railways.

The Wirral Board of Guardians have decided to open their meetings with prayer. The only comment came from a Roman Catholic who said he would leave the room while the prayers were in progress, and would offer up prayers by himself. But what will happen if the Roman Catholic prays for something different from the rest of the Board? How will the recording angel be able to tell which is the official prayer? We suggest, as a way out of the trouble, that all the prayers should be signed by the chairman and clerk. That will prevent misunderstandings.

The *Church Times* warns clerical owners of glebe lands against being in a hurry to get rid of it. It is probable that a rise in value is anticipated. Anyway, our contemporary cites approvingly a caution of the Bishop of Winchester to the effect that the land is not his own but is the property of the Church. So far, we are bound to admit, the Bishop is on sound ecclesiastical ground. Students of history will remember that the Mediæval Church forbade the sale of slaves belonging to the Church for the same reason. The slaves were not their property, and no abbot or bishop was to sell the property of the Church—except at par or a little over.

The Australian Premier, Mr. Hughes, is running some risk of being accused of blasphemy. Speaking at the British Empire League on June 19, he said:—

> We should not befool ourselves or think that in some fashion the God of which we have no knowledge—Providence—will again lead us, who have blundered so often, into the promised land. We have to face facts. Nothing but our own valour and inflexible will can get us out of where we are.

That looks like a semi-official repudiation of "Providence." If we are not careful we shall have German writers citing Mr. Hughes as proof that we are a nation of Atheists. English journalists have asserted that of Germany on about as much evidence.

It was one of life's little ironies that in a City bookshop two volumes should be displayed, side by side, bearing the titles, *Savage Survivals* and *The Popes and their Church*.

A new book bears the delicious title, *The Bells of Paradise*. Pious folk are more used to the beautiful hymn, "The bells of Hell go ting-a-ling, aling."

The clergy occasionally do other War-work beside seeing the soldiers off at the railway stations. The Bishop of Llandaff recently consecrated a memorial chapel at Bassaleg.

The Bishop of Woolwich says that boys earn too much money, and one Woolwich lad earns twice as much as a curate. The simple remedy seems to be that the unhappy curates should be paid boys' wages.

If the clergy are unwilling to fight, they do their best to make their sojourn in this vale of tears tolerable. At a cricket-match at Lords, one of the teams was advertised as being composed of clergymen.

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To Correspondents.

A. S. PICKERING.—From what you say, Coventry, evidently, needs attention, and we hope will receive it. Thanks for your inducing your newsagent to display an extra copy of the *Freethinker*. Your are quite safe in distributing our tracts when and where you please.

J. L. CARR.—Pleased to have your name as one of the *Freethinker* League. We are sending papers to all the addresses given.

MRS. K. MAXWELL.—Our Shop Manager is writing you *re* subscription. Pleased the *Freethinker* meets with your warm approval. That the two Presbyterian churches in your village have combined in order to secure a congregation is encouraging.

DECIT (Ayrshire).—The present editor of the *Freethinker* is an Atheist. So was the last editor, G. W. Foote.

H. S. W.—We were waiting only for available space, as you will see from this week's issue.

E. LECHMERE.—The result might have been better, but it is well to put one's point of view before these people. Otherwise they are apt to think their own view is more powerful than it really is.

H. A. HUTTON.—We are quite prepared to meet any god we may ever come across. At present we are left marvelling at the mentality of some of the followers of one god.

GREVZ FYSHER.—Your instructions have received attention.

A. RUSSELL.—Quite a well known work, and in great vogue among Freethinkers a generation or two back. It is still good reading, but not sufficiently up to date to warrant re-publication.

T. D.—You are quite misinformed. The *Freethinker* does not benefit in the slightest degree from the Bowman legacy. Neither does it receive financial aid in any form from either the National Secular Society or the Secular Society, Limited.

G. RILEY.—Hope you will be successful. Thanks for ordering extra copies for display in your newsagent's window.

V. LE ROY.—Next week. Many thanks.

A. WILDMAN.—Good news is always welcome.

T. DENNIS.—Pleased to know you had a good meeting in Sheffield on Sunday last in the open air. You do not give the time of next Sunday's meeting in the Forester's Hall, so have guessed—6.30.

A. B. MOSS.—We are doing as you request. Your suggestion that Freethinkers should carry a copy of this paper about with them for the purpose of introducing special portions to friends is a good one. Pleased you like the idea of a *Freethinker* League. It *is* catching on.

E. ANDERSON AND A CORP.—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.

G. RULE.—We are very appreciative of what the Battersea Branch is doing to encourage the sale of the *Freethinker*. We have no doubt it will be successful.

A. BRAMHILL.—You appear to be jumping at conclusions.

W. BARTON.—Pleased to have your name and help. Literature for distribution is being sent. Kindly send on the paper when the parcel is large enough, safely secured with string and labelled "Waste Paper."

LAWRENCE SMALL.—Compliments received with appreciation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We have already had several responses to what we wrote last week regarding a supply of waste paper in order to guard supplies of printing paper for the future. One London reader writes:—

> You want paper, we want the *Freethinker*. I, perhaps, cannot do much, but I am calling on my friends, making a list of those willing to give their waste paper. I propose collecting those—collecting from them every month, and sending same to you. It may only be a little, but you are perfectly welcome to what I can get.

That is the right kind of spirit. We want all the papers, magazines, old books and ledgers (without covers) we can get. Those who care to give will doubly help. But we will pay the scheduled prices for all paper sent. The paper can be tied in bundles of about 56 lbs. and over, and sent to us. We will remit on receipt.

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, asks the *Manchester Guardian* to receive literature, and subscriptions for the purchase of literature, in order that some "serious" reading-matter may be sent out to the troops. The *Guardian* offers to comply with the request, and adds that large numbers are ready "to ponder and examine the basis and ultimate things of life." We believe this to be the case, but when the *Guardian's* literature gets there it will not have the field to itself. We have taken care of that, and many of our readers would be surprised if they knew how much we have sent out to the troops. And our reward has been scores of letters from men who have confessed that it was in this way they made their first acquaintance with Freethought.

Sir H. H. Johnston's recent Conway Memorial Lecture, "On the Urgent Need for Reform in Our National and Class Education," is now issued by Messrs. Watts & Co., at the price of 9d. net. The lecturer has no trouble in making out a strong case against the present methods of education, and of the complete unsuitability of much that is given. If Sir H. H. Johnston's lecture has the effect of leading some people to recognize the urgent need of reform in education, he will have done good work. But the English people take little interest in education, although one is pleased to record that at present a more hopeful spirit is abroad.

A lively little paper is *Shaw's Journal*, published at Wolverhampton, and devoted to the discussion of social questions. The editor has several competitions running, and we notice that one of them consists of "the best essay on Paine's *Age of Reason*." Decidedly, the world is moving.

The *Humanitarian* continues to make its regular monthly appearance, and its persistent advocacy of a broad humanitarianism is a welcome sign during a period of war. The last issue to hand contains a revew of Lord Morley's *Recollections*, and, among other interesting matter, a protest against the use of the word "meat" for flesh-food exclusively. "Meat," the writer holds, is a generic term, and is properly applicable to all food. But we are afraid that usage in this matter will be all-powerful.

The New York *Truthseeker*, in its issue for May 25, reprints as an article our Pioneer Tract, *What Will You Put in its Place?* We have been waiting for several weeks to retaliate by serving up one or two of the *Truthseeker's* excellent articles. Some of these are much too good to be spent on American readers alone. We are quite sure our readers will appreciate these reprisals.

We are at present sending out a large number of specimen copies of the *Freethinker* for several successive weeks, and as this involves some expense, we should be obliged if those who decide to become regular subscribers would drop us a post-card to that effect. At the same time, we are glad to report an increase in the number of subscribers due to this form of propaganda.

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"Old Hand," writing in the *Accrington Observer*, recalls a lecture given by Charles Bradlaugh in the Accrington Town Hall in 1883. The meeting, says "Old Hand," was presided over by the Rev. J. Harrison, and was the finest political gathering ever held in the town. The meeting was held in connection with the Affirmation question, and, judging from the recollections of "Old Hand," the occasion must have been a memorable one. It is a pleasing reminder of the great days of Freethought.

Mr. James Anderson, of 95 Hanover Street, Edinburgh, will be glad to meet other Freethinkers in that city with a view to forward the interests of the *Freethinker* and organize propaganda work. There should be much greater activity in Edinburgh than there is, and we trust Mr. Anderson's invitation will meet with a prompt response.

The Story of the Tea Plant.

II.

(Continued from p. 345.)

As Colonel Money intimated many years ago in his pioneer treatise, *The Cultivation and Manufacture of Tea*, the selection of site and soil for the plantations is of vital moment to the success of the industry. India bids fair to become the great tea garden of the globe, and in that luxuriant land the ideal conditions for growth are furnished by an alternation of sunshine and shower. In the Tropics evaporation proceeds at a rapid rate, and a copious supply of moisture is essential to the wellbeing of the plant. During a period of protracted rain the plant flourishes for a time, but its growth gradually lessens, and may ultimately cease. In very damp seasons the leaf yields inferior tea, for, as Bald states in his text-book, *Indian Tea*, the sap becomes watery, and "the plant has not been in sufficiently vigorous circulation to elaborate the substances necessary for the production of thick juice."

It has been scientifically demonstrated that all soils are rendered fruitful by the nitrifying activities of bacterial organisms. These micro-organisms form a multitude so immense in all good vegetable soils that the earth may almost be regarded as a living entity. The decomposition undergone by animal and plant substances so commonly attributed to water and air, is really produced by the labours of bacteria. Micro-organisms thus render available to the higher floral structures those nutrient materials so necessary to their life and growth.

Beneath the superficial soils, teeming with bacterial organisms, lies the deeper dead earth. This is seldom exposed to the influences of the atmosphere, and is therefore destitute of oxygen. It was well known in India that when the site of a deserted village was brought under cultivation, its crops, for several seasons, proved themselves miserably poor, no matter how rich it might be in all those constituents which usually promote fertility. Such soil as this has been trodden for generations by countless feet, and thus its population of nitrifying bacteria has been destroyed, and therefore the many attempts to rear the tea plant on it have ended in failure. Dr. Aikman has shown that oxygen is necessary to the life and labours of soil bacteria, and with the cessation of their nitrifying activities the earth becomes barren. When a tea estate is extended so as to embrace the site of an abandoned village, unless special measures are taken to introduce bacteria into the soil, the site will remain as a sterile patch for several years. To avoid this barren blemish in the landscape, the progressive planter provides each tea bush with a generous surrounding of virgin soil from the adjoining jungle. Thus is supplied the nourishment which enables the tea plant to thrive until the beneficent bacteria have restored the soil to a state of fertility.

The tea shrub languishes on water-logged soil. When cultivated on sloping land, drainage may be neglected; but on estates situated on level country, the soil must be drained. When the rain falls, it is most important that the moisture should be afforded the fullest facilities for saturating the ground. If the rain runs over the surface, it not only transports invaluable soil substances to the streams, but the priceless nitrogen and other precious chemicals suspended in it are likewise lost. Rain not merely confers moisture to the thirsty earth. Its chemical constituents form an ideal fertilizer. The better the drainage system, the larger the percentage of nutritious materials added to the soil when the rain water slowly filters through it. Again, even in seasons of abnormal rainfall, well-drained land is much more responsive to the cultivator's art than indifferently drained or water-logged soil.

When totalled, the yearly rainfall is surprisingly heavy even in Europe. We attach small importance to the fact that an inch of rain has fallen during a summer storm. Yet every recorded inch of rain represents a downpour of 101½ tons on every acre of land. Therefore, 100 acres of land receives 10,150 tons for each inch of rain that descends in the course of the year. Hence the great superiority of steady, penetrating rain to the violent downpour which usually accompanies a thunderstorm. In the one case, the fertilizing rain filters through the soil, while in the other an enormous proportion of the rain, with its contained chemicals, is swept along the river valleys towards the sea.

At one time it was usually held that tea would flourish in a poor soil. This erroneous idea arose from the circumstance that when the tea gardens of China were first described it was stated that the shrub was usually grown on inferior soil. But, as Money remarks, the tea plant is, as a rule, cultivated in China on land which is useless for other purposes. "If," says he, "a soil is light and friable enough, it cannot be too rich for tea."

Poor or even moderately good soil is of little worth to the tea planter. Hops require rich land in temperate Europe, and the more opulent the soil the more abundant the picking. This is equally true concerning tea. The planting of tea gardens is a costly undertaking, and the utmost circumspection is needed when selecting sites for new plantations. Unlike cereal crops, which succeed clovers or roots, and may be themselves succeeded in the ensuing season by leguminous plants, the tea plot is continuously cultivated for a century. The richest virgin soil is best suited to a garden which is to be cropped for a hundred years or more. Land liable to river flooding must be shunned, for the overflow of a river will, in a few hours, reduce to a state of ruin the most promising plantation. Early cultivators imagined that the rice fields of India could be utilized as tea farms, but hard experience has proved that clay lands suitable for rice culture are worthless for tea.

It is estimated that the amount of rainfall in existing tea areas is something between seventy and one hundred inches per annum. The finest teas are raised where the rain falls throughout the year, with the most copious downfall at the season of highest temperature. Although the tea shrub is an evergreen, the frost and snow of the Himalaya regions, unless severe, do not appear to seriously injure the plant. This is due to the circumstance that the shrub becomes almost as dormant as our own deciduous trees, such as the oak and elm during the reign of winter. In the sub-tropical uplands of India the colder conditions prove useful to the tea plant, for slight frosts serve to destroy the eggs and grubs of insect enemies. Various observers have noted

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that teas cultivated in the more temperate regions are less liable to the depredations of parasites than those grown elsewhere.

Local conditions, both of climate and soil, conspire to produce the choicest teas. The hot and humid plantations of the low-lying districts of Assam are celebrated for their abundant harvest of leaf, but the fine flavoured teas are rarely gathered in this region. In the less heated country of Upper Assam and the Darjeeling Hills splendidly flavoured teas are produced, but even in these areas the teas vary greatly in quality on different soils.

Before a garden is planted it is essential to ascertain whether an abundant supply of good water is easily available for the consumption of the coolies who work on the estate. Water must also be handy for machinery and factory use, as a constant supply is imperative in times of drought. A water famine has frequently brought a flourishing tea plantation to the brink of ruin in the arid period which precedes the arrival of the monsoon rains. The deepest wells have run dry with the sinister sequel of disease and death decimating the dwellers on the estate.

One signal advantage to those whose gardens occupy a hilly site is usually the proximity of mountain streams which may be utilized to provide water power for factory purposes. This secures a very substantial economy in the annual outlay, while the neighbouring forests furnish fuel for machinery, wood for the tea-chests, and timber for dwellings and factories. It is also important to secure ample facilities for transit by river or road to bring in supplies for the labourers, and to send the tea to market. A fairly open site is requisite to ensure the prosperity of the plantation. Narrow valleys are usually too near the jungle to repay the cost of cultivation, for the perpetual encroachment of the forest vegetation entails much extra labour, while in very narrow valleys the tea shrubs are apt to become half-buried by the earth swept down by water descending from the adjoining slopes.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

Miracles and Omnipotence.

THERE is one phase of the recent reassertion of the miraculous by Catholic apologists that, as it seems to me, has escaped the attention of the militant sceptic, concerned, not so much with the excrescences, but the essentials, of the faith he is attacking. The most important of those essentials is, I need hardly say, first the existence, and then the qualities of God. Obviously, until both of these are made clear, then the sacrifice of Christ, assuming that he ever lived, cannot count for anything. Man cannot be reconciled to a God that is either non-existent or pitiless by any tragedy, however poignant, that may have been enacted; and the prime question that we are, therefore, driven to consider is—to quote the words of John Stuart Mill—how, if God is omnipotent, he can still remain benevolent and allow all the immedicable ills that flesh is heir to still to continue; allow, that is, the wicked still to flourish like a green bay tree, and the innocent, even the helpless and innocent child, to endure cruelties that wring the heart of the most callous of his own creatures. If we examine the answer tendered to us by Catholic and neo-Catholic apologists in the light of their own assertions regarding miracles, we shall realize, I think, more than ever, its complete inadequacy.

We are all familiar with the answer. God is omnipotent, we are told; he is all-powerful, but he has parted with his power; he has given man freewill, that blessed and divine attribute; he cannot, therefore, interfere without despoiling man of his destiny, and must perforce continue to take the rest cure through centuries of sorrow, tragedy, and sin. Omnipotence, in other words, does not mean *all*-powerful, but merely all the power left to God; and just as it is impossible for a man to have his cake and eat it too, so it is out of the question that he can have freewill and the intervention of the Almighty to free him from evils that individually, at all events, he is not responsible for.

I might pause for a moment to point out that, even assuming that this argument is well founded, it is no justification of the inertia, which endureth, like God's mercy, for ever. As between the child, innocent and blameless, born into the horror of a London slum or the miseries of an Indian famine, and God, it is no answer to say that it must starve, or be beaten to death, because its ancestors used their freewill improperly. The child remains an injured, a tragic, victim of "sin" not its own; freewill, or no freewill, it is a victim of injustice. But the point is that there is nothing to show that freewill could not be preserved and the child protected, at one and the same time, provided always that the word "omnipotence" is left with its true meaning; the meaning that there is no limit to the power of its possessor.

Let me take another word applied by Catholic apologists to the Godhead, for it will make my meaning perfectly clear. We are told that God has creative power. What does creative mean? It means the ability to launch, or, if you like, impose a condition of affairs upon man without any cause but the will of God—that and nothing else. If freewill, therefore, now spells non-intervention, God can, if he chooses, impose a condition of affairs reconciling those apparently irreconcilable things. And, in point of fact, if miracles do, as the Catholics assert, continue to happen, that is exactly what he does achieve.

What is a miracle? As described by Catholic writers, I suggest much like this. A child is dying of an incurable and dreadful disease, not amenable to treatment. But, in view, perhaps, of specially strong representations, God concerns himself specially with the case. The attitude of non-intervention is abandoned. Human agencies having failed, God gets to work. The child is cured by his direct action; the law of cause and effect is obviously suspended, at least a human effect is produced through causes other than human; the child is cured, *and does not lose its freewill!*

That, according to Catholic writers, is what takes place, and the question at once arises, why, if it be possible in one case, not in all? Why, if one child can be saved by a miracle, cannot thousands of others? Miracles are easy to God. Without omnipotence in the true sense he could not perform them. With omnipotence, he could save the whole of man by one grand miracle. He could end the injustice of children suffering till the third and fourth generation for faults not their own; could abolish a condition of society whereby the unscrupulous become rich, and the worthy remain poor, and could, *inter alia*, save blameless old ladies from dying of the agonies of cancer, because as we are asked to believe, their grandfathers led wild lives.

Why, if God is benevolent, does he not do so?

I may be told by my fellow sceptics that they do not believe in miracles; that it is preposterous to suppose you can produce a cause without an effect; that the misery of man is so clamant that no being, in the slightest degree worshipful, no being not incredibly base and hideously repellant, would suffer it to continue if he had the power to alter it. I incline to that view also. But what, then, becomes of God's omnipotence?

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John Stuart Mill's question still stands unanswered, and, as I fear, unanswerable, and for Catholics to stress miracles is merely to emphasize their own inability to meet the crucial objection to their faith.

AGNOSTIC.

S. P. C. K.

THE Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has just issued a pamphlet by Frederic Wood-Jones, Professor of Anatomy to the University of London, entitled *The Problem of Man's Ancestry* The chief interest to Freethinkers is that its main object appears to be to belittle the work of Huxley and Haeckel, no doubt because they were violent antagonists of the Christian religion.

There lives in the dense forests of the East Indies an animal rather smaller than our English squirrel, which sleeps during the daytime, but jumps from tree to tree catching insects and lizards during the night. The natives call it the Malmag, but it is known to science as Tarsius Spectrum or the Tarsier. The generic name "Tarsius" is due to the animal possessing an astonishingly long tarsus or ankle, while the specific name "Spectrum" refers to its huge goggle-like eyes, resembling those of a motor-cyclist, which give the animal such a weird-like appearance, that it is held in superstitious awe by the natives. Until quite recently it was placed amongst the lemurs, but lately our greatest authority on the subject, Mr. R. J. Pocock, owing to its organization departing markedly from other lemurs, has put it in a phylum all to itself at the base of the primate stock.

Professor Wood-Jones brings forth several lines of evidence indicating the resemblances between Tarsius and man, and points out also that in these characters both differ from the monkeys and anthropoid apes.

The bones of the nose, the structure of the eye-socket, the form of the cheek-bones, the condition of the roof of the mouth, the teeth, and many other parts of the skeleton are alike in Tarsius and Homo, while differing from those of the monkeys and anthropoid apes.

The muscles also show more affinity between man and Tarsius than between man and apes. For example, the pectoralis minor which passes from the ribs towards the fore-limb, where it is attached to the shoulder-girdle in Tarsius and man, in the monkeys and apes ends on the upper bone of the arm. Primitive characters are shown in the tongue, the vermiform appendix, the kidneys, and other organs in man and Tarsius which differ from those of the monkeys and apes.

Turning to the fossil evidence, he quotes from Professor Boule's *L'Homme fossile de la Chapelle-aux-Saints* as follows: "Man has been derived neither from the Anthropoid stem nor from any other known group, but from a very ancient Primate stock, that separated from the main line even before the giving off of the Lemuroids." The conclusion arrived at is, that man and Tarsius linger to-day as specialized primitive Primates. A fossil form of Tarsius, called Anaptomorphus, dates right back to the base of the Eocene period, and is thus contemporary with the earliest tools of man, the well-known Eoliths.

Although the worthy Professor frequently sneers at Haeckel, nevertheless, he brings in his well-known law, that in the individual development of an animal, it climbs up its ancestral genealogical tree. The skull of man shows no suture between the premaxillar and the maxillary bones, although in apes and monkeys a well-marked gap is distinctly visible. This is a human specific character. If man acquired this character late in his history, we should expect the fusion of the two bones to be very late in its appearance in the human embryo. Professor Wood-Jones says:—

> As a matter of fact, this character is established as soon as ever the future bones of the human face are first represented as cartilaginous nuclei. It has become a character of the human embryo at a stage when development has proceeded so little way, that the future being is no longer than ten times the diameter of an ordinary pin's head. Such a finding, in the development of any animal, forces the conclusion that a distinctive feature, so early acquired in embryology, was early acquired in history, and that the species must be very old indeed.

The Professor concludes by mentioning that Dr. S. A. Smith, of Sydney University, has proved from mineralized fossils found on the Darling Downs at Talgai, in Queensland, that men, women, and dogs broke into the Pleistocene fauna of pouched Marsupials, and became the ancestors of the present aboriginal Australians and their native dogs. Dr. Smith believes they came in a boat, and were as highly civilized then as the Australian savage is to-day.

HENRY SPENCE, B.Sc.

Correspondence.

TURNING TO GOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Some few weeks ago I read in your sensible paper of a clergyman who had lost a son in this horrible War. This clergyman was reported to have said, had he been an Atheist before this happened, it would certainly have converted him. I take it that he would have turned to God, as the saying goes. I would just like to put my case, and see how they look side by side. I had two sons fighting for a very long time. For about six weeks we received no letters from one son; then came the official news that he was missing. We then received a postcard from the boy himself, stating that he had been wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans, and would send us all the news when he got settled in hospital, as he had been sent to England as an exchange prisoner of war. The following day we received a letter from him, which ran like this:—

> Dear Mother and Dad,—I promised to let you know all the news. On March 22 I was wounded. The Germans came up so rapidly that they passed on, with the result that I lay out until the 26th before I was actually in the Germans' hands, having the days and nights out in the open. I know how sorry you will be when I tell you I was so seriously wounded that it was found necessary to amputate both legs.

Now, Sir, I could not read any more of that letter for some time, as you will well understand. What I want to say is this: Can any of your readers see anything in my case that I or anyone else should turn to God? I am glad to say that his mother and myself have been down to King George's Hospital, London, to see him, and he is in good health and cheerful. He says himself, had the doctors and nurses been as helpless as his so-called Heavenly Father seems to be, it would have been all up with him, but the doctors say he will be able to walk again with artificial legs. Note the good work of the doctors and nurses; then note the work of God. I am told I should thank God my son is alive. Others must thank God because theirs are dead. What a game! Will we ever get out of this horrible nightmare, and allow sense and reason to take their proper place, and get rid of this blind faith and superstition for ever?

THOS. O'NEILL.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

SIR,—after reading Mr. Comley's letter to-night on "Religion in the Army," I feel induced to send you my experience of both Services. I knew a good deal of the Army before the War—did the first two years of the War in the Army, and have now been nearly two years in the "Senior Service." My experience (and I am a pretty close observer) is

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exactly the opposite of Mr. Comley's. The overwhelming majority of N.C.O.'s and men regard Church Parade as a nuisance, and openly cuss it. Were it voluntary (and *really* voluntary), as it should be, the attendance would be very small.

I do not say the majority are Freethinkers on a basis of intellectual conviction (though a steadily growing number are), but the prevalent spirit is one of utter indifference, tinctured with doubt, suspicion, and a considerable amount of increasing hostility. The conversation proves it. My *Freethinker* was (and is) always eagerly read by many in the Army in France and in the Navy. And the "Man in the Street" (now the man in the Army) has a far more "open mind" than ever before of the great case against religion.

In all my experience I have only seen one man—he was a young man in barracks—saying his prayers before turning in. I might, if you can find space, relate this amusing (and true) story as to the effect of war experiences on some religious folk. In my boat we had a "sailor" who knew nothing of the sea before the War. He was, to use the common phrase, "a bit religious," and never used "strong" language. The class of boats we were in roll, and pitch, and jump about in anything of a sea to a very great degree. Our "religious" friend was a terrible victim to *mal-de-mer*, and five days at sea meant to him five days of practical starvation, and return to port in a very weak condition. One day, while making another offering to Father Neptune, he was covered in a sea and thrown up against a deck house. He struggled and staggered into the foc's'le and there fell under a table, which collapsed on top of him. He managed to rise and make his way out again, where, dropping into an arm chair in the little sick-bay, he said: "I don't believe there *is* a bloody God!" Though not arrived at in quite so strenuous a manner, that is the conclusion that enormous numbers have been forced to come to by the War.

The opinion held by the great bulk of the men (and expressed among themselves) about the chaplains is a very poor one indeed. Where they are thought well of, it is because of their qualities as *men*, not as parsons.

You, Sir, referred some time ago to the hymns sung by men in the Services. The greatest favourite I have come across is to the tune (I think) of the hymn "When we gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful the ri-eh-ver," and it runs thus:—

> Thank Christ we haven't joined for ever
> For ever, and for ever, and for eh-e ver:
> Thank Christ we haven't joined for ever,
> We'd all go bally batchy if we had.

So I must agree with the note you append to Mr. Comley's letter.

A. Z.

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SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "The New Prospects for Socialism."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. Geo. Rule, "The God Idea."

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.30, Miss K. B. Kough, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

SHEFFIELD (Foresters' Hall): 6.30, Important Meeting.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): 11, Important Business. Members are asked to attend this important meeting.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and Medicine.—The Editor	*361*
Christianity and Natural Law.—J. T. Lloyd	*362*
"England's Soldier-Saint."—Mimnermus	*363*
His Real Followers.—Arthur B. Moss	*364*
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	*368*
The Story of the Tea Plant.—T. F. Palmer	*369*

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Medicine.

Amid the uncertain gains and assured losses of the War, the triumphs of sanitary and medical science stand unquestioned and unquestionable. The War has been fought under conditions which are so fatal to health that, left alone, disease would have long ago brought the War to an end by a wholesale slaughter of the participants. For the health of the Army we have to thank, not the much-advertised "Padre," but the unboomed doctor. The miracles of this War are those of healing, and of the means by which the health of the Armies have been maintained. The prayer of faith has *not* saved the sick, new limbs have *not* been made to grow on shattered stumps. What has been done in this direction has been done by Atheistic science. And yet we do not pay the head of the medical profession £15,000 a year; neither do we give him an army of well-paid assistants. We do not give mining Royalties of nearly £300,000 annually to the doctors as we do to the parsons; we have never voted them subsidies in Parliament, and we have never placed a tax upon every ton of coal entering London to build doctor's houses as we have done to build parson's churches. If our soldiers had trusted to God, it would, indeed, have been a case of "God help them!"

* * *

Faith and Physics.

Last week we were dealing with the close and historic connection between Christianity and dirt. And it is pertinent to now consider the influence of Christianity on medical science. That influence can be stated in a sentence—it was wholly and irredeemably bad. The medical science of antiquity was ignored and finally suppressed. The primitive belief that all disease was due to the action of evil spirits was revived and enforced. Right through the Old and New Testaments disease is treated as something that is supernaturally induced and must be supernaturally cured. In all essentials the Christian theory is that which flourishes among savages to-day. The boils of Job, the leprosy of Uzziah, the plagues of Egypt, are all due to God. Leprosy is to be cured by the High Priest taking a little blood and oil and placing it "upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot." If the efficacy of the method only equalled its simplicity, it is a pity it was ever allowed to fall into disuse. Jesus healed the sick by a touch, cured blindness by spitting on the ground, and annointing the blind man's eyes with the spittle (John ix. 6). Peter's mother was cured by a touch. When a man's ear was cut off, Peter picked up the ear and stuck it on again. Paul cured fever by prayer, and restored Eutychus to life after his preaching had caused him to drop down dead. The New Testament is quite explicit on the point. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." In the Christian pharmacopœia there is but one ingredient—faith. In a *Christian* hospital a dispensary would be useless, and chemists downright blasphemy. The patients would supply their own physic, and the parsons collect subscriptions for having introduced the remedy.

* * *

Medicine and the Church.

The Christian Church had its own theory of disease, and its own remedies, and it dealt in its own way with all opposition. The great Origen was convinced that: "It is demons which produce famine, unfruitfulness, corruption of the air, pestilences." St. Augustine said that "All diseases of Christians are to be ascribed to these demons; chiefly do they torment freshly baptised Christians." Tertullian was convinced that an evil angel attended every person and caused disease. Other Saints and Fathers were of the same opinion. And the Church of England Prayer Book still has: "Whatsoever your sickness is know you certainly that it is God's visitation." What, then, was the use of doctors or of surgical science to Christians? None at all. So we find St. Ambrose declaring that the "precepts of medicine are contrary to celestial science," St. Augustine denouncing anatomists "who inhumanly pry into the secrets of the human body," and Tertullian denouncing the surgeon Herophilus for the blasphemy of dissection. The barbarians, in their repeated invasions of the Empire, had left intact the pagan medical schools at Treves, Arles, Bordeaux, Athens, and Alexandria. It was left for the Church to close them or sterilize their usefulness. A Church Council of 1248 and that of Rheims (1119) interdicted the study of medicine, while giving monks the control of the treatment of disease. The Council of Beziers (1246) prohibited Christians applying to Jewish doctors for treatment, and this at a time when the practice of scientific medicine was in their hands. The Dominicans, in 1243, prohibited all books on medicine from their monasteries. Pope Innocent III. forbade physicians practising save under the supervision of an ecclesiastic. Honorious (1222) forbade priests studying medicine, and, at the end of the century, Boniface XIII. interdicted surgery as being Atheistical.

* * *

A Christian Pharmacopœia.

The Christian world had its own pharmacopœia, which both piety and profit impelled them to preserve. In the matter of specialization, the religious theory of diseases lacked little. It was, indeed, a monument of ill-spent

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ingenuity. The human body was mapped out, and each part placed under a special director, beginning with God the Father and ending with now unknown saints. Diseases were shared out in a similar manner. St. Gall cured tumours, St. Valentine epilepsy, St. Polonia diseases of the teeth, St. Roque the plague, St. Hubert the bite of a mad dog, St. Clara sore eyes, St. Gervaise rheumatism, and so on through every complaint the flesh is heir to. In the case of any disease the plan was simple. One merely hunted up the celestial directory, and having paid the necessary fee—a by no means unimportant part of the procedure—one's concern was at an end. In addition there were innumerable relics which played an equally important part in the Christian science of medicine. The saliva of saints, along with water in which their hair had been dipped, were esteemed of great curative value. Parings of saintly nails, remnants of saintly clothing, and even saintly ordure, were all esteemed as remedies. At Cologne Cathedral was preserved—and is still, for aught we know to the contrary—the skulls of the Wise Men of the East. The relics of St. Rosalia at Palermo had thousands of cures attributed to their efficacy; and even after Professor Buckland discovered they were the bones of a goat, the cures went on just the same. Nor did the trifling fact of their belonging to men prevent the bones of St. Ursala and some of her eleven thousand virgins demonstrating their efficacy. Sacred pools, streams, and fountains abounded, each with its list of cures. The touch of an anointed person was also of great value, a superstition that lingered on into the eighteenth century, and was exemplified in the cures narrated of Queen Anne. Charles II. is said to have touched and cured over 100,000 people. William the Third's remark to one whom he "touched" for scrofula, "May it bring you better health and more sense," showed more intelligence than piety.

* * *

Divine Insanity.

Among savages there is but one cause of insanity. It is caused by an evil spirit taking possession of a person. This was precisely the theory taught by the Jesus of the New Testament, and exemplified by him in practice. In this matter, at least, he would have felt perfectly at one with an African witch-doctor exorcising evil spirits. And the teaching was fully endorsed and carried out by the Church for centuries. Officially, it is so still, for the 72nd Canon of the Church of England reserves the power of casting out devils to licensed persons, while the Catholic Church still teaches it. There was no power on which the early Christians prided themselves more than this of casting out devils. And with the organization of the Church came the organization of the power to cast out demons—to doubt which was Atheism. The power became so developed that in the fifteenth century a Bishop of Beauvais not only caused five devils to leave one sufferer, but actually compelled them to sign a document promising not to molest this person again—a method which reminds one of the bargain of Jesus with the devils who were allowed by him to enter a drove of swine. But all other exploits were eclipsed by the Jesuit Fathers of Vienna, who, in 1583, produced a record of 12,652 devils that had been cast out by them. The exactitude of the figures disarms all criticism and silences all doubt.

* * *

A Ghastly Chapter.

Dr. Henry Maudesly may well ask, "What place could a rational theory of insanity have in such an atmosphere of thought and feeling?" Insanity being, on the authority of Jesus, produced by devils, the rational cure was to get the devils out again. All over Europe people were whipped and chained and ill-treated, in the hope of making the dwelling-places of the devils so uncomfortable that they would come out. Lecky has collected a number of cases of people who were even burned for fancying themselves angels, Antichrist, or similar fabulous characters. Thousands of insane people—mostly women, for it was said the devils had more power with women than men—were burned for witchcraft. The state of public asylums even a hundred years ago were a disgrace to civilization. In Greece and Alexandria, centuries before, lunacy had been treated as a disease of the brain. It was left for Christianity to forsake this useful lead, and return to the practice of savages. Not till the scientific labours of men like Pinel in France, and Tuke in England, beat back religious ignorance, did the Church surrender its theories and put a close to one of the most discreditable chapters in the history of civilization.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christianity and Natural Law.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Galatians vi. 7).

THAT verse is one of the many golden statements contained in the Bible. Dr. Jowett, of Westminster Chapel, London, finds in it what he properly calls "The Law of Harvest." In a characteristic article in the *Christian World* for June 20, this popular divine says that we are "surely justified in gazing upon the sunny aspect of the great truth," which is, according to him, that "if we want a fine harvest we can have one." We readily admit that a preacher may legitimately draw such an inference from the apostle's words; but we are deeply convinced, nevertheless, that the author of the Galatian Epistle intended them to serve as a warning more than as an inspiration. He evidently had in his mind people who secretly doubted and openly denied their truth. The very form of the exhortation—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked"—implies that some there were who unblushingly taught that there was no inexorable law of sowing and reaping; or, in other words, that it made very little, if any, practical difference how a man lived under the Christian dispensation. Both the doubt and the denial were by no means unreasonable deductions from the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Dr. Jowett ignores this dark aspect of his text altogether, basing his discourse, not on the verse he quotes, but on another, namely, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." And yet the reverend gentleman, referring to his own youthful experience, makes the following significant admission:—

> My own early associations with the words are mostly connected with tragedy and disaster. They are usually quoted to emphasize the dire consequences of ill-living in early days. We think of the sowing of wild oats and the inevitable sequence which is found in moral ruin. And so the word has come to be a threat rather than an inspiration; it is more a warning than a promise. It is a trespass-board, and rarely a heartening counsel of friendly and comforting direction.

There is a broad hint, in that extract, that the natural treatment of the text is not good exegesis, as if the apostle had not meant it to be so taken; but we venture to dissent most emphatically from such a view. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that the apostle is here giving expression to a solemn warning, or setting up "a trespass-board" rather than "a heartening counsel of friendly and comforting direction." His central doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he had so zealously proclaimed during his visit to them, had led the Galatians to the natural inference that believers in Christ were freed from the natural law of cause and

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effect; and as a result some of them, no doubt, had gone morally astray, and were the cause of the moral downfall of others.

Now, Paul's contention is that they had made a false and disastrous inference from his teaching. As a religious teacher he was, in his own opinion, infallible. What he declared to his hearers and readers was the sure "word of the Lord." If his converts misconstrued his message, no blame attached to him; it was purely the outcome of their own blindness and stupidity. He assured the Thessalonians, "by the word of the Lord," that Christ's second coming would occur in their own lifetime. Pinning their faith in that ocular declaration, the poor people abandoned their daily avocations, and spent their whole time waiting and watching for that most happy event. The second coming was postponed year after year, and the apostle wrote to them again, not to confess that his doctrine was at fault, but to accuse them of having misunderstood and misapplied it. As a matter of fact, the mistake was entirely his own, though to his dying day he never owned up to it. The Lord's second coming is still an unverified dream, one of many falsified prophesies. Equally false is the doctrine of justification by faith, which for Protestants has been the "article of a standing or falling Church." It is but fair to state that the Council of Trent (1545-63) was unanimous in rejecting that dogma—that is, in anathematizing the view that "justifying faith is nothing but confiding trust in the Divine Mercy as remitting sins for Christ's sake, or that this trust alone is that whereby we are justified." And yet there is no doubt whatever but that Luther was perfectly right in his interpretation of the Pauline doctrine. In Paul's Epistles it is repeatedly asserted, with the utmost confidence, that justification is by faith alone.

> What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.....Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans iv. 3-6; iii. 28).

Such is the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith alone, and it is being preached to-day from all orthodox pulpits. In hymn books, still used in Nonconformist chapels, we find such nauseating doggerels as the following:—

> Nothing either great or small—
> Nothing, sinner, no:
> Jesus did it, did it all
> Long, long ago.
>
> Cast thy deadly doing down,
> Down at Jesus' feet,
> Stand in him—in him alone,
> Gloriously complete.
>
> Free from the law; oh happy condition!
> Jesus hath bled, and there is remission!
> Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,
> Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Protestant divines are in the habit of saying that it took the Church fifteen hundred years to discover this great truth so clearly taught in the Word of God. That is so; but once discovered, its value to the Reformed Communions proved incalculable, and with them to this day it is the "article of a standing or falling Church." That is true, and its truth is the supreme witness against the Christian religion. One Sunday, John Ruskin attended the Rev. Mr. Tipple's Church and heard a sermon in which it was proudly affirmed that faith in Christ in a moment converted the blackest sinner into a saint as bright and pure as any angel before the throne. To the brilliant author such a doctrine was the most pernicious and damnable conceivable, and he could find no terms sufficiently scathing in which to denounce it. Mr. Tipple positively declared that he never preached it, nor even believed it; but Ruskin heard it in Mr. Tipple's Church, whether by him or another, not only timidly hinted at, but unequivocally proclaimed as an incontestable Gospel truth. Ruskin's unmitigated condemnation of it showed how clearly he perceived the absolute inviolability of the law of causation. The astonishing fact is that Paul, too, discerned how utterly impossible it is to set aside the law of harvest, though he preached a Gospel which exulted over the possibility of totally severing the natural connection between sowing and reaping, or between past and present in a man's life. It never once occurred to him that he was guilty of giving his assent to two fundamentally and wholly irreconcilable doctrines, only one of which he knew both by experience and observation to be eternally true. He was fully aware that a man's past cannot be blotted out, that of necessity we reap what we have sown; but he did not, or would not, see that the Gospel he preached could not be true because it flatly contradicted that inflexible law. At last, however, it is being slowly brought home to the human mind that justification by faith is absolutely impossible, and would be essentially immoral if it were possible. To secure a fine harvest we must sow fine seed, to be happy to-morrow we must pursue truth and virtue to-day. If we cannot save ourselves we are lost indeed. We are Nature's children, and it is at once our duty and privilege to understand, obey, and make profitable use of our mother's laws. In any case, these cannot be broken; but if we disregard them they both can and will break us, no matter what Gospel may be preached to us.

J. T. LLOYD.

"England's Soldier-Saint."

[A REJOINDER.]

> "Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"
> "No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you sir; but I bite my thumb, sir." —*Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet."*
>
> John P. Robinson, he
> Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee.
> —*Lowell.*

EDWARD GIBBON, the greatest of our historians, is dethroned and done for. Sentence has been passed upon him by the Honorary Secretary of the Society of Saint George. All that remains between now and the morning of execution is mere detail. In pursuit of his mission as a Christian and a patriot, the Honorary Secretary has addressed a long letter to the Editor of this paper, and pointing out that Gibbon has unaccountably confused "Saint George" with another gentleman of the same name in a similar line of business. Those who have adopted the "careless and sneering assertions of Gibbon" have been misled grossly. This is partly owing to the fact that their own churlish desire to belittle the saint coincided with the opinions expressed by the wicked Gibbon, who deserves all the plagues of Egypt for upsetting the faith of simple folk.

It is all very sad, but "Saint George" himself is the trouble. Whether we identify the "saint" with the scoundrelly army contractor of Alexandria, or the other man with the same name, he is equally unsatisfactory. The chief exploit of the "other fellow" is the slaying of the dragon. Sane people regard this as a mere fabulous invention, such as the stories of Perseus and the sea-monster, Apollo and the python, Bellerophon and the chimera, and many another legend. This dissolves the saint as a solar myth. It also disposes of him

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as the Christian crusader, champion of chivalry, and "patron saint of England."

The other stories told of this "Saint George" serve to show to what depths human credulity can sink. This "saint" was, we are told, killed no less than three times, pleasantly reviving on two occasions. Among the trifling things that happened to him were that he was roasted, beaten with rods, crushed with rocks, beheaded, and thrown to wild animals. Coming to life again, he was sawn into pieces. These fragments were thrown into boiling pitch, but he again came to life, being finally and mercifully despatched by being broken to pieces on a wheel. What has all this beautiful nonsense to do with England, or even with common sense? Only in one fable is he described as having even visited this country. If the members of the Royal Society of St. George really believe that the decrees of Omnipotence are affected by saintly intervention, of what use is this particular "Saint George"? Is he not one of the patron saints of Germany and Austria as well as England?

Gibbon, be it remembered, identified "Saint George" with George, of Cappadocia. As he was writing history, and not collecting fairy tales, he was justified. And, if the "saint" moulted many a feather in the process, he emerges from the ordeal as a man and not as a monstrosity. Here is an account of the human "saint" as penned by Ralph Waldo Emerson, who should be beyond the reach of the shafts of the Royal Society of Saint George:—

> George, of Cappadocia, born at Epephania, in Cilicia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. A rogue and informer, he got rich, and was forced to run from justice. He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria. 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. 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.

There is no getting out of it! "Saint George," in either version, is one of the most complete shams from which ever soft-hearted and soft-headed folk sought to extract religious sentiment. His story may appear as true as the Gospels to the unlettered and unsoaped members of the Greek Church in the East of Europe, but what concern have decent folk in England with the infamous bacon-curer of Alexandria, or with the central figure in a solar myth? Every schoolboy should know that "St. George's" vogue came to England with the Crusades, though the legend was known long before. As a Protestant country, we do not need a patron-saint at all, and Catholic ecclesiastics must rub their hands with glee when they recall that a "saint" still figures on our gold coinage and banknotes.

Custom makes cowards of most folk, but it is no use pretending that the bulk of people in a civilized country can be made to care for a meaningless blend of classic myth and deceased Cappadocian. Why not throw over the whole farce? So far from recommending any citizen to wear an artificial rose in honour of a still more artificial saint, we suggest that it would be a kindness to strew the poppy of oblivion over the grave of the army-contractor of Alexandria. A cynic might liken the history of "England's soldier-saint" to a purple passage from the earlier books of the Bible, or a succulent page from the Newgate Calendar. The patron-saint of England, like so many Biblical heroes, is a sham, and there is an end of it.

MIMNERMUS.

His Real Followers.

ONE Sunday morning in June, I met Uncle Joe returning from church. He had been to a special service, to which he had been invited by the vicar, and at which the Mayor of the Borough, and the Aldermen (in their robes), and Councillors, and many of the Borough officials had promised to attend; and a further attraction was promised in the announcement that various Volunteer corps, and Boy Scouts with their bugle bands, would accompany the representatives of the municipal authorities. In the circumstances, I was not surprised to learn from Uncle Joe that a large congregation, composed largely of ladies and other sightseers, were present. I did not attend myself, as I found the attraction of a good band on Peckham Rye more to my taste.

"Well," I said to Uncle Joe, when we had exchanged the usual courtesies, "what sort of sermon did you have from the vicar?"

"Oh, very good," he replied; "commendably brief, but right to the point. The vicar said that this War in which we are now engaged must be a war to the finish. It will never do to let the enemy come up again and renew this terrible conflict. So, therefore, we must crush the enemy now, once and for ever."

"Yes," I responded, "I agree with that sentiment; but I do not quite understand how a reverend gentleman, a follower of 'the meek and lowly Jesus,' could talk in that way."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not consider the sentiments at all Christian-like; it does not seem to me to express the ideas embodied in the teachings of the 'meek and lowly Jesus.'"

"As I have told you before, that is where you are wrong," said Uncle Joe, with an air of authority. "You seem to think that Christianity consists in nothing more than the teachings of Jesus; but Christianity is a great deal more than that. We believe in the Old Testament as well as the New, and we go to war to-day in much the same spirit as the Children of Israel did thousands of years ago."

"Oh, but I thought that Jesus had come to alter that state of things—that he had come to bring a new dispensation—to establish a better and nobler kingdom on earth?"

"That is true," said Uncle Joe; "but you cannot establish such a kingdom on earth until the people are prepared for it."

"Quite so; and it seems to me that it will be a precious long time before this 'glorious kingdom' can be established, while human nature remains what it is."

"What do you mean?"

"Just this. Jesus, if he taught anything at all—that is, if the Jesus of the Gospels ever existed, which I very much doubt—his main teaching in regard to human conduct is what is called the doctrine of non-resistance. For example: 'If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn unto him the other and let him smite that also; if a man takes your coat, give him your cloak,' and so on; and I mean to say that the only Christians who act up to that teaching are the despised and persecuted Conscientious Objectors, who not only refuse to fight for their country, but refuse to do any kind of labour that may be said to contribute towards the successful pursuit of the War."

"Ah, but I think that the Conscientious Objectors are wrong," exclaimed Uncle Joe, with some warmth, "and if all Christians acted up to that doctrine, the enemy would soon take possession of our land, and every one of us would speedily go under the iron heel of the

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worst tyranny that has afflicted human civilization for ages."

"Exactly. And so it comes to this: that the majority of Christians are courageously fighting against tyranny and oppression, not in obedience to the teachings of Jesus, but in direct opposition to them."

"No, not exactly that," said Uncle Joe. "As I told you before, Christianity is not such a narrow creed as you imagine. It takes the whole of the Bible as 'containing the word of God'; and if it finds anything in the Old Testament that favours warfare, and strenuous warfare at that, the Christian is as much at liberty to follow that teaching as he is any of the particular passages that you may find in any one of the Four Gospels."

"But is there not a passage in Luke that says: 'But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me'?" (Luke xix. 27).

"Yes. I think, however, if you will look closely into that passage, you will probably find that it is an interpolation. It is opposed to the whole tenor of the teachings of Jesus?"

"I suppose you admit that some of the passages in the New Testament are interpolations?"

"Oh, yes; I cheerfully admit that," said Uncle Joe. "Many of our most eminent scholars admit it also."

"Very well; what I maintain is that the main teaching of Jesus was that of 'turning the other cheek to the smiter.' But where is the Christian who does it? As I have said, only the poor 'conscientious objector,' who is often sent to goal by the Christian in authority for having the audacity to obey the behests of his master."

"And what of the passage: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword'?"

"Yes; but finish the passage, please, and you will find that it had a purely domestic application. For the passage goes on: 'For I 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' (Matthew x. 34-36). In this case, I think, the sword was purely metaphorical."

"But you cannot deny," said Uncle Joe, "that the Christian soldier who fights not only for his own freedom but for that of small and oppressed nationalities is doing a noble work?"

"Oh, certainly; but he is fighting not as a Christian, and not in obedience to the teachings of Jesus, but as a human being who believes in liberty for his fellow-man and is prepared to sacrifice his life to attain it."

"Oh, I am glad you acknowledge that Christians do good sometimes."

"Neither I, nor any other Freethinker, would be stupid enough to deny that. But what I ask you is, What Christian, who is in the fighting line, acts up to the teaching of 'Resist not evil,' 'Love your enemies,' 'Bless them that curse you,' or 'Pray for them that despitefully use you?' I say, not one."

"But, my dear boy," said Uncle Joe, quite affectionately, "we cannot act up to all the teachings of Christianity at once. One at a time, I say, is enough for me, and the whole history of this country, and other Christian countries, is enough to show that Christians have never been deficient in fighting spirit, and have taken a leading part in some of the greatest wars in the history of the world."

"Which leads me to repeat that Christians have done so in direct opposition to the teachings of their Lord and Master. I am glad, however, they have done so, otherwise we, as a people, would have been wiped off the face of the earth. For the doctrine of non-resistance, carried to its logical conclusion, would mean not only the abolition of our Army and Navy, of our law courts, and police courts, our judges, and magistrates, but our police constables also, and this would inevitably lead to the villain riding rough shod over the virtuous, and to the masses being left a prey to revolution and anarchy."

By this time we had reached the door of Uncle Joe's house, and he had scarcely put the key into the keyhole, when Aunt Jane came forward to greet us.

"Good morning," she said to me; "hope you have had a good time?"

"Splendid," I replied. "The band was excellent—the harmony delightful."

"And the sermon—how was that?"

"Oh, quite to my taste," said Uncle Joe, cheerfully. "But it was open to criticism; and we have been discussing it all the way home."

"Come to any settled conclusion about it?"

"No," I replied. "We agree to differ—as usual."

"Oh, then, dinner is quite ready," said Aunt Jane.

"And, at all events, we shall have a better prospect of agreeing on the qualities of that," I said, "than on any sermon that was ever preached."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Acid Drops.

Earl Curzon's speech in the House of Lords the other day may be said to have advanced us a step nearer Thomas Paine's ideal of a League of Nations, although his lordship was not very enthusiastic about it. There are many difficulties in the way, but none that are insurmountable if only the nations concerned are in earnest, and mean to act honestly. But Freethinkers will not fail to note that the only thing for which Christian nations are able to effectively league together is war. When it comes to forming a League to prevent or abolish war that is a different thing. Was it Swift or Sydney Smith who said that most Christians had enough Christianity to enable them to hate each other heartily.

Another check has been given to Sabbatarian bigots. Some shopkeepers having been summoned for Sunday trading, Mr. Clem Edwards, M.P., made an application for a summons against James Bloer for aiding the printing of Sunday papers by purchasing on Monday a copy of *South Wales Daily News*, against Police Superintendent Williams for the same offence, and against the Chairman of the Bench for having milk delivered at his house during prohibited hours. The Magistrate said he had never known such an application in his experience, and adjourned it for consideration by a fuller bench. Nothing like giving these people a dose of their own medicine, besides making these Sunday laws stand out as the ridiculous things they are.

Every issue of the *Dublin Gazette* (bi-weekly, we think) contains at least three notices of charitable bequests, the major portion being for the purpose of bailing souls out of the purgatorial swamp. A late issue contains the following:—

> £1,000 to the R.C. Bishop of the diocese of Dromore, to apply the income for the support and maintenance of a resident Curate or Priest, with the obligation of having fifty masses said in Cabra Chapel each year for ten years after his decease, and twenty-five masses for each of the ten succeeding years for the intentions above mentioned.....Two fifth shares of his estate to the said Bishop, to be applied in having masses said at the above honorarium for the suffering souls in Purgatory.

Though this poor soul is being dragged with only 750 masses, it must be remembered that the cost to his relatives is £1 6s. 8d. per offering. Now, a somewhat similar article may be purchased at 2s. 6d.; so that, in the case in point, the chance of resuscitation may be magnified ten times. These bequests are common in Ireland; they excite no comment. When their absurdity is pointed out, a flush of rage suffuses the face; the features betray no gleam of wit.

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The late Parish Priest of Ringsend, a very poor district outside Dublin, left about £22,000. He bequeathed it—no, no; not to his starving parishioners—to Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. This seminary is one of the largest of its kind in existence, having at the present time about 750 crows. It is an exceedingly rich establishment, and, though it has a big Government grant, its regal splendour is firmly established in, and well maintained by, the piteous poverty of this poor little nation. It is the forge of the heaviest shackle in the world—the Roman dominion. Each stone in its walls, each acre within those walls, each fire in its grates, and each youth in its precincts, are shelter, land, warmth, and offspring grabbed from the growing structure of the nation, and set, a very mine, at its foundations. You people in England, do not sneer at your more unfortunate brethren in the sister isle; only remember. Remember! Remember that this little land is studded with spires, convents, monasteries, all in their thousands; with priests, nuns, brothers, monks, parsons, altar-boys, and the Devil knows what besides, in their tens and tens of thousands. *Just remember—and consider.*

Mr. Edward Clodd keeps a keen eye on the press nowadays, and frequently the columns of the daily papers are enlivened by bright letters from his pen. In a pointed attack on Spiritualism, he describes it as a "delusion" which is "as old as the hills." He adds: "Belief in the soul as a sort of etherealised matter, and in communion between the dead and the living, is wholly primitive, and what is pretentiously called 'new' is but the old animism 'writ large.'" Young Freethinkers might well emulate the example of this "unsubduable old Roman." Well-written letters to the press do much to dispel the darkness of superstition.

"The attitude of the Church has been the same in all wars," says Dr. Orchard. In other words, the Government religion has always dutifully echoed the views of the Government. And this is true whether the Church be Roman Catholic, Greek, Protestant, Lutheran, or any other of the many brands of Christianity.

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge is raising a fund for sending Prayer Books to soldiers. The prayers for fine weather might prove useful.

The indifference of Providence to sacred things is enough to make a saint swear. A churchyard in Aukendale, Upper Swaldale, has been washed away by the flooding of the river. And churchyards are "consecrated" ground.

Canon Lyttleton, preaching at St. Martin's Church, London, said he knew no one who believed in miracles who did not do so on the very soundest reason. On the Continent the clergy consider the gate-money a very sound reason.

Even theologians are moving, most of them in a circle, it is true, but one here and there dares to step out of the circle and go forward, bravely breaking lose from and leaving behind both Church and Bible. And yet, alas, that statement is only partially true, for no divine *can* advance entirely unencumbered, or wholly freed from the meshes of superstition. In reality, so-called progressive theology is the most irrational thing under the sun. The New Theologians proudly claim to follow the dictates of Reason; but at best they only form a limited liability company of Rationalists, while modern Rationalism knows them not.

The Rev. Arthur Pringle may be taken as a fair specimen of the members of that limited liability company. In an interesting article in the *Christian World* for June 27, he prides himself upon having outgrown and become independent of the letter of Scripture. He very truly points out "how constantly the tyranny of the text has degraded Scriptural exposition to verbal jugglery and special pleading." Then he quotes Newman's famous admission: "Every creed has texts in its favour, and again texts that run counter to it." Unfortunately for himself, Mr. Pringle ignores the fact that renouncing the letter of the Bible is to all intents and purposes tantamount to giving up the Bible itself, *because when the letter has gone there is nothing left.* But the most amusing and amazing thing of all is, that the reverend gentleman regards this deliverance from bondage to the Biblical letter as due to "the War and all that it has brought with it." Thus the War is at once of the Devil and God, the worst of curses and the greatest of blessings, the direst calamity and a transient boon!

What becomes of the Bible, then, when its letter has ceased to exercise its ancient dominion? At this point Mr. Pringle lets the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. On his own showing, the Bible is now just exactly what any man may choose to make of it—what in truth it has always been. The following is the way it is put by the writer of the article: "So passes the text—not from its stimulating and legitimate use by the wise preacher."

We are pleased to see that Coventry Freethinkers have been getting busy, and the Rev. J. R. Armitage, a "munitions area chaplain," has undertaken to set them right. His correction assumes the form of the reminder that everything that was "best in Europe and the world" had been "implanted or stimulated by Christianity." It taught the powerful to care for the oppressed; it gave woman her true place as the equal of man; it abolished slavery, and cared for the child and the prisoner, etc. We note that Mr. Armitage does not claim that Christianity invented the law of gravitation and created the solar system. From which we infer that Mr. Armitage is really a modest man.

The only drawback to the credibility of Mr. Armitage's statements are that the poor and the weak are still oppressed, and that this oppression is greater in Christian countries than elsewhere. Children are as badly treated in Christian countries as elsewhere, while Christian England only a century ago instituted the slaughter of little children in factories for pure gain; slavery was backed up by all the Churches just so long as it was possible for them to do; the position of woman was worse under Christian than under Pagan-Roman rule, and it was Freethinking men and women who led the way in the movement for the legal equality of the sexes. Finally, the movement for reform in the treatment of criminals was initiated by Beccava, an Atheist, and for years remained in the hands of Freethinkers. These are drawbacks to Mr. Armitage's assertions being accepted without examination, but we do not expect they will disturb his opinions.

There is a Pagan quality about a new book by Mr. A. Safroni-Middleton, entiled *Wine-Dark Seas and Tropic Skies.* Says the author: "I cannot help thinking that the world's religion should be inspired by the soul of laughter." This is a very far cry from the figure of the Man of Sorrows, surrounded by the horrors of calvary, and with the fires of hell in the background.

There is a "meenister" at Dumbarton who holds a medical degree, and who is away with the Army. Whether he is drawing pay as a doctor or as a chaplain we do not know; but, in either case, it is above starvation point. The Presbytery has now asked this gentleman to allow £200 per annum—presumably from his Church allowance—for payment of a "supply" at his church. The minister, Rev. Cameron Campbell, has declined, and the Presbytery now intends placing the facts of the case before the Procurator for guidance.

The Glasgow Presbytery is also in trouble. It seems that four ministers only had volunteered for service in the Army—we assume it means since their exemption under the new Act. One volunteered as Chaplain, and three for Y.M.C.A., on hut work. At Dumbarton there are eight ministers of military age, and all these have taken full advantage of their exemption. We do not see they are to blame. The Government decided the matter for them.

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To Correspondents.

H. MAY.—A tax, ranging from one to three shillings per ton, was placed by Parliament upon all coal entering London for a period of forty-six years, to defray the cost of building St. Paul's and other City Churches. The present Bishop of London was made a Canon of St. Paul's in 1697 at a salary of £1,000 per year. The office was a sinecure. In the same year he became Suffragan Bishop of Stepney, and received another £1,000 per year. Soon after he referred to himself as "We working parsons."

T. S. (Salisbury).—You are *not* troubling us in sending the names of likely subscribers to this paper. On the contrary, you are doing us a favour. It is only by the co-operation of our readers that we are pulling through one of the worst periods in the history of the printing and newspaper world.

J. W. WHITE.—We have lively recollections of the old days at West Stanley, and if a hall can be secured shall be pleased to pay the district a visit during the autumn. There ought to be a strong Branch of the N.S.S. there. We may adopt your suggestion on the other matter later.

LIBRA (Glasgow).—Pleased to learn that your newsagent has increased the number of copies he takes—with your assistance. Mr. Walsh is right in saying the power to end war rests with mankind alone, only that leaves one wondering what use God is in the situation? Apparently God doesn't matter, which is exactly what we say.

H. J. (Manchester).—Sorry, want of space prevents the publication of your letter. We quite agree that Patho-psychical conditions underlies a great deal of religious phenomena, and have tried to prove that by a book now in the press.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Glad to hear you are still well. Isn't your leave nearly due?

A. HODGSON.—*The Popes and their Church* is issued by Messrs. Watts & Co., price 6s.

J. BURRELL.—Mr. Runciman is quite right in replying that an amendment dealing with religious education will not be moved during the passage of the Bill now before Parliament. The danger lies in a separate Bill that may be introduced when the present one is out of the way.

W. CUMMING (Glasgow).—Thanks for cuttings. Readers help us considerably in keeping us posted concerning local events. We are glad to have the appreciation of a fifteen years' reader of the *Freethinker*, and hope to meet you when we next visit Glasgow.

A. J. (Gateshead-on-Tyne).—We have no present intention of reprinting last week's "Views and Opinions" as a leaflet. But we intend adding to the "Pioneer Leaflets," which you say you have found "very effective" at an early date.

A. G. ROYSTON.—Pleased to hear you have induced the newsagent to display this paper at both Holyhead and Carnarvon. The result shows what determination will accomplish. We are obliged also for the pamphlet you enclose. It seems additional proof of chaos of uncertainty in which Christianity is at present.

E. COLLETT.—Please let us know so soon as anything definite is possible.

JACK BARTON.—Papers sent as requested. We are in hopes that the struggle will be less severe one day, meanwhile, we just "carry on." We note your suggestion of raising the price of the paper, but we are hoping to avoid that. After getting so far, it seems a pity not to go the whole distance.

J. HUDSON.—The opinion of a fellow-craftsman that our last issue was "a rattling good number" is welcome. Those behind the scenes can best appreciate all that is involved in producing a weekly paper single-handed.

T. DENNIS.—You are quite right in what you are doing. If anything is said by anyone who matters, let us know.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Save Your Papers.

WE hope our readers are bearing in mind the need we have for all their old papers, books, and magazines. We want as much as we can get, and as soon as we can get it. Send all you have in parcels of from fourteen pounds to one hundredweight to the Pioneer Press, 61, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. If the bundles are just tied round strongly with string it will be enough. They should be labelled "Scrap Paper," and can be sent carriage forward. We will send labels on request, or, if possible, sacks when they are preferred. But we must have all your old papers as soon as possible. If old ledgers—without covers, please—and other business documents are sent, we will see that they are properly destroyed. Remember that no parcel is too small to send. Full schedule prices will be paid.

Sugar Plums.

We publish this week a pamphlet, by Mr. H. G. Farmer, that will be of interest to most people, and will prove useful in controversy. The subject of *Heresy in Art*—the pamphlet in question—is the religious opinions of famous painters and musicians. Those who are familiar with Mr. Farmer's writings in these columns, will readily concede his right to speak on such a subject, and there are few who will fail to find *Heresy in Art* of interest. Of its use in controversy there can be no two opinions. The pamphlet is published at 3d., postage ½d. We venture to bespeak the widest circulation for a useful pamphlet.

Permission was given to form new Branches of the National Secular Society at Coventry and Maesteg at the Executive meeting on Thursday last, and forty-nine new members were admitted. More Branches are coming along, and we are expecting important developments in South Wales.

The Executive also settled the constitution of the Committee that is to consider the question of the Society's re-organization, and the Committee hopes to soon be at work. Meanwhile, individual members or Branches that have any suggestions to offer should forward them without delay to the General Secretary. These should be sent in not later than July 20.

We have in the press, and hope to publish shortly, a booklet by Mr. Cohen on *Christianity and the Slave Trade*. We think we can safely say this is the most thorough examination of the question that has yet been issued, and it contains a lengthy chapter on the relation of Christianity to labour in general. There will also be plates illustrating the famous old Liverpool slave-ship *Brookes*. The work will contain full references, and so will be useful for all purposes. We have other things in the press, which will be announced in due course.

One of the most outspoken of Freethinking poets during the latter part of the nineteenth century was Robert Buchanan. Many of our readers will remember the scathing indictment of Christianity contained in his two lengthy works—*The Wandering Jew* and *The Devil's Case*. The Pioneer Press has just secured a number of copies of *Robert Buchanan, the Poet of Modern Revolt*, by Mr. A. Stodart-Walker. The work does justice to Buchanan's heretical views, and is a handsome well-printed volume of over 300 pages. It was published at 6s. net, and is being offered at 2s. 6d., postage 6d. Those who wish to secure a copy should write at once.

From "Somewhere in France":—

> What do you say to a full discussion on "Ought We to Believe in Christianity?" within sound of the German guns? It all arose out of the parcels of pamphlets you have been sending out. The things were well distributed, and well read.

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Many discussions followed, and at last a regular debate, arranged on the above-named subject. I took the negative, and I believe the majority agreed with me; I am sure a good number did. Don't forget it; Tommy is getting his eyes opened to more things than one in this War.....I am writing this because I think you will be pleased to know how much good your stuff is doing at the Front. Keep it up.

We mean to.

Here is a piece of advice, offered by the *Church Times*, which we heartily endorse:—

Do we not keep our opinions too much to ourselves? We need not preach, we need not drag them in, but ought we not to be much more ready to state our convictions clearly and on well-reasoned grounds, not aggressively, but without compromise? The need of clear thought is as great in England to-day as it was forty years ago when John Morley lamented our "inveterate national characteristic—a profound distrust, namely, of all general principles; a profound dislike both of much reference to them and of any disposition to invest them with practical authority; and a silent but most pertinacious measurement of all philosophic truth by political tests."

Every word here applies quite well to people of all shades of opinion. If we have an opinion, we should let the world know it—not offensively, or even aggressively, but let it be known. Opinions are robbed of their force by not finding expression. It is like keeping seeds in a cardboard box.

From France, Corporal Gatenhill writes:—

Many thanks for parcel of literature duly received. I am now assured of an amount of intellectual pleasure—so are my friends. The demand for literature of this description exceeds the supply out here. More men are interested in "the best of causes" than ever before.

Mr. R. Jenkins, newsagent, Nolton Street, Bridgend, Glam., will be pleased to attend to the literary wants of Freethinkers in his district.

A Search for the Soul.

IV.

(Continued from p. 353).

ONE of the results which Sir Oliver Lodge's *Man and the Universe* appears to have upon the mind is a feeling akin to mystification, more especially with regard to the life, mind, and soul of man. Thus, Sir Oliver says:—

Life is not energy, but it is the director of energy and matter.....Mind determines. Life directs.....Mind and life dominate and transcend matter and energy (p. 60).

What about life? Can that be a nonentity which has built up particles of carbon and hydrogen and oxygen into the form of an oak, or an eagle, or a man? Is it something which is really nothing? Not so; nor is it so with intellect and consciousness and will, nor with memory and love and adoration, nor all the manifold activities which at present strangely interact with matter, and appeal to our bodily senses and terrestrial knowledge; they are not nothing, nor shall they ever vanish into nothingness or cease to be. They did not arise with us: they never did spring into being; they are as eternal as the Godhead itself, and in the eternal Being they shall endure for ever (p. 84).

In making the foregoing extracts I wished to see more clearly what Sir Oliver Lodge means by the "soul." On p. 73 that scientist says: "Life thus defined is a portion or partial aspect of what is often spoken of as *soul*." On p. 78, speaking of heredity, he says: "We call it *life*, we call it *soul*." On the same page he states that "the *soul* includes also feeling and intelligence and will, and is the storehouse of mental experience." According to these statements Life and Mind are immaterial entities, the two constituting the Soul, which lives and moves and has its being after the death of the body. Mind determines what shall be done; Life directs and sees it done. All this is pure mystification.

Let us now see whether these theories appear to be in harmony with facts. Life, as we know it in the human organism, is maintained chiefly by the activities of the organs connected with alimentation, the circulation of the blood, and respiration. The vitality manifested by the functioning of these organs is called "life." The continued existence of this vitality is dependent upon the organs exercising their respective functions effectively: we have no difficulty in thinking of it as something which animates the whole body; but the mental abstraction "life" is a mere name. Vitality can only be found in the concrete where it appears to be a property of living matter—of the cells of protoplasm.

When a child comes into the world it is born possessed of life, and this life is maintained up to an advanced age solely by means of food. After mastication and insalivation the food enters the stomach, where it is acted upon by the gastric juice; then it enters the small intestine where it comes under the action of the bile from the liver, the pancreatic juice from the pancreas, and the juice of the intestine itself, after which the nutritive part of the food is found to be a milk-like fluid called chyle, which, owing to the chemical action of the juices mentioned, can now be perceived by the microscope to contain the elements of blood. The chyle next enters the thoracic duct, where it mixes with a similar fluid called lymph, then it passes into the subclavian vein where it mingles with the blood. It is this blood circulating through every part of the body that forms the common source from which every organ or structure derives the new materials necessary for its growth, as well as for the repair of its waste products. We can thus understand how wounded men who had lost a large quantity of that vital fluid died simply from "loss of blood." We can also perceive the truth of the statement in Deuteronomy xii. 23—"For the blood is the life."

But where is the immaterial controller which guides and directs the formation and development of the body? No such controller appears to be in existence; the hereditary influence in the cells of the organs are able, apparently, to perform their respective functions unaided. The mind—which Sir Oliver says is a portion of the soul, and determines what is to be done—does not even know that there are such organs in the body, except through books on physiology. Prior to the year 1628, not a single mind or soul upon earth, including those of the medical profession, knew that the function of the heart was to propel the blood through the arteries and capillaries to every part of the body, whence it returned through capillaries and veins again to the heart, and so continued to circulate during the whole term of life. This fact—discovered by investigation and experiment—effected a complete revolution in medical science. The Mind or Soul has no innate knowledge of what takes place within the body; it has to ascertain from books what has been discovered in the past, and from this starting-point to work on towards fresh discoveries.

Again, we heard last summer that a whole family was taken ill through eating rhubarb leaves, and that the father, a clergyman, died. What was this man's soul doing that it allowed his body to be poisoned? The answer is that neither the Mind, which Sir Oliver says "determines," nor the Life, which he says "directs," nor the two combined—that is to say, the Soul—knows anything whatever about the kind of food best suited to the body. This knowledge had to be learnt by experience, and could only have been known, in the first instance, by tasting everything that appeared suitable and rejecting all that was found to be injurious. In the course of time the information thus gained became the common property of the race, and food-bearing plants were brought under cultivation, to which was added the flesh of domestic animals already known.

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A London newspaper of August 16, 1917, quoted the *Cologne Gazette* as saying that one morning, a few days before, the portals of every restaurant in that city were found adorned with posters bearing the following culinary recipe:—

INSTRUCTIONS TO PUZZLED COOKS.

Take the butter card, stew it down with the meat card, and add the egg card. In a separate saucepan cook the potato and vegetable cards together, and, when done, add these to the stew. For desert, warm up the potato card, add the milk card, sweeten with the sugar card, and bake with it the bread and biscuit cards. Then wash your hands with the soap card, and wipe them dry with the table-linen voucher.

This paragraph, which I cut out as a sample of German humour, is a remarkable illustration of the way in which Sir Oliver speaks of certain abstractions of the mind as "entities" that will survive the body.

Next, Sir Oliver asks whether the abstraction which he calls "life" is "something which is really nothing." Yes, this is so. Apart from the ideas associated with it, Life, in the sense in which he employs it, is "really nothing." This he emphatically denies, and further declares that intellect, consciousness, will, memory, love, adoration, and other mental attributes "are not nothing, nor shall they ever vanish into nothingness or cease to be." And what is his reason for thinking that these manifestations of the activity of the brain will continue to exist after that organ has perished? The reason is that those activities "did not arise with us," but are "as eternal as the Godhead itself, and in the eternal Being they shall endure for ever."

A worse reason for believing in a manifest absurdity could scarcely be given. There was a long period in the history of this planet before animal life appeared, and another long period before the evolution of man was completed. We have not a scrap of evidence that would lead us to suppose that there are other beings in the universe possessed of similar mental faculties, or that, even if there were, such faculties could survive the destruction of the organism that produced them. Furthermore, the statement that these mental attributes are "as eternal as the Godhead itself" is pure nonsense. Sir Oliver surely ought to know that man created his gods in his own image, and, in doing so, ascribed to these deities all the qualities which he himself possessed, together with many more which his superstitious nature imagined. Among the latter are omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and other powers, which, from past ages down to the present day, have been attributed to a purely imaginary being, whose existence has never been proved nor even shown to be probable. Needless to say, this deity is unknown to science.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

The Story of the Tea Plant.

III.

(Continued from p. 357.)

WHEN the Indian tea industry was in its infancy the official experts regarded the indigenous species of Assam as an inferior tea-producing plant. As a sequel, the Indian authorities imported tea-seed in enormous quantities from China, and distributed it throughout the Peninsula for the benefit of the planters. The Government proceeded on the erroneous assumption that the native Assam species was materially inferior to the Chinese varieties, with the result that the tea-gardens of India were planted with seed which yielded very poor quality tea. There seems to have been small excuse for this official misconception. It is now universally acknowledged that the Assam plant produces the finest flavoured teas, while Colonel Money, who enjoyed long experience as a planter, declares that even in the early days of Indian tea culture, many of the growers, brokers, and others were fully aware that the Assam species was the premier tea plant.

Save in very favoured sites, the Assam species does not flourish, as it is constitutionally a delicate plant. Hybrid bushes thrive best in hilly, or comparatively dry areas, owing to their greater hardiness. It is also true that many of the finest teas of the Indian hills have been grown from coarse China tea-seed. But in fairly favourable conditions of climate and soil, even in upland places, a good hybrid is to be preferred, as it produces generous flushings of high-grade tea.

The tea shrub is propagated from seed. This process necessitates a longer period of growth, but all attempts to plant gardens with cuttings have ended in dismal failure. This is chiefly attributable to the fact that the tea seed sends a long tap root into the soil to a considerable depth so as to supply the future plant with sufficient moisture in days of drought. The scientific selection of seed, generation after generation, from the most robust and blight-resisting bushes, has materially improved the plants. The tea blossom may be seen from July to October, and when the flower petals fall, and the seed is set, over a year elapses before the seed is ripe. The seed is enclosed in a thick capsule which may contain one seed only, or even three or four.

The young plants are reared in nurseries, and when ready for transplanting they are dug out, each seedling being removed with a ball of earth in which it was rooted in the nursery still clinging to it. It is essential to success that, when taken from the nursery to the garden, the seedling should be placed at the same depth in the earth which it occupied in the nursery soil. The tap root should run straight down into the ground, while the lateral roots should be spread out to secure free access to the soil. A fair percentage perish, but if, after a month or so, the shrub still betrays signs of life, it will probably recover. Even when the young plant sheds all its leaves and appears to be dead it is still alive. The plant is really preserving its existence by casting away its foliage. During this critical stage the plant discards its breathing organs—the leaves—while the whole of its energies are concentrated in developing its roots which penetrate the surrounding soil in every direction. This task done, tiny leaf buds appear and replace the fallen foliage. As Bald writes:—

> This is one of the remarkable illustrations of plant life, and of plant *instinct* for self-preservation. It is the more remarkable, because the tea plant is an evergreen, and this probably the only occasion in its life when it sheds its leaves all at once.

Seeds are very successfully grown in "pots" composed of clay, cow dung, and straw. When the seedlings are large enough for the garden, the "pot," with its contained plant, is buried on the spot where the new shrub is to grow. The "pot" is broken before it is placed in the earth where the rain soon destroys it. The seedling then continues its development without that delay of a month or more which invariably occurs when the plant is transplanted in the manner described in the preceding paragraph. Another advantage is that nearly all the seedlings develop into healthy shrubs.

In company with the fruit grower, the tea planter must patiently await the maturity of his garden before he gathers his harvest. Even in estates situated in the plains and in a climate conducive to speedy growth, the shrubs do not yield a full return until the sixth year. In the third year a half crop is harvested, and the yield increases annually until the maximum is reached. In upland regions the rate of growth is much slower, and

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planters may wait ten or twelve seasons before their bushes attain full yielding powers.

We can form no conception from farming experiences in Europe of the difficulties encountered in the Tropics in securing supplies of animal manure. Small quantities are usually available, but for the fertilization of a large tea estate these are hopelessly inadequate, while in most plantations even the refuse of the coolies' temporary abodes is rarely utilized, although it forms an excellent fertilizer. Where the temperature is high and the rainfall copious, the flora grows luxuriantly, and green plants are advantageously utilized as manure.

All plants of the leguminous order—those that bear their seeds in pods, such as our beans and peas—possess the property of promoting on their roots the growth of nitrogen-storing bacteria. The warts or nodules found on the living roots of leguminous plants are really colonies of bacteria which are ceaselessly engaged in extracting nitrogen from the air, which they transform into a substance essential to vegetable growth. In the course of a season these nodules decompose and give up their nitrates to the soil, from which it is eagerly absorbed by the neighbouring plants. Fresh nodules form on the young rootlets each year, but the older roots fail to produce them.

On progressive plantations leguminous trees are grown as fertilizers. One of these, the Siris tree, has proved itself the best fertilizer; and according to Bald and other authorities, the results obtained from the cultivation of this tree in a few years are positively astounding. When the Siris (Albizzia stipulata) grows near a tea estate, a large number of self-sown seedlings spring up in the gardens. The seed-pods of the Siris are wonderfully light, and strong winds will carry them for miles over the environing country before they fall to the earth. When the pods alight on moist soil they appear in profusion, but seldom seed themselves on stiff or arid earth. In these latter conditions, however, they may be cultivated, and the nitrogen with which their roots enrich the soil well rewards the planter for his trouble in planting the trees. This is certainly a most satisfactory method for maintaining the fertility of an estate, for its productive powers are secured at very small expense.

It has been urged that the Siris trees cast too much shade over the garden. But this is easily overcome by cutting away all branches that obstruct the light. These, again, when dug into the earth, or even if allowed to perish on the surface, will provide excellent manure.

The Siris is unnecessary on highly superior and well-watered soils, but on lands less opulent or liable to prolonged periods of drought the tree's importance as a fertilizer is immense. There are several other varieties of Siris available to the tea planter. Some serve to shield the gardens from gales. The dense evergreen leaves of the Dalbergia protect the tea bushes from furious hailstorms. A shrub which produces a profusion of flowers in the autumn—the magnificent Boga Medeloa—is another leguminous growth which thrives on inferior soil where the Siris languishes. The Medeloa grows rapidly, and the nodules formed on its roots furnish an early and sumptuous supply of nutriment to the tea plants. Annual crops are also extensively cultivated as green fertilizers. After a given period of growth, these green crops are dug into the soil, with signal success. Indeed, Dr. Mann estimates that in Assam, in normal seasons and with an average growth, that the digging in of green crops will produce an increase of three-quarters of a maund, about sixty pounds of high quality tea, per acre. The benefits thus obtained last through a couple of seasons, and then it becomes necessary to repeat the process.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Comley, is, I am afraid, a bit astray in his remarks regarding religion in the Army. I am stationed in a camp where there is every facility for the religiously inclined, and all I can say is that the great majority of the soldiers don't care two straws about religion. On all sides there is grumbling and resentment when Church Parade comes, and I reckon that if the Parade were voluntary, ten out of every hundred would only attend. If there be a concert, or any other form of amusement, every available man is there. Religious services have to be bolstered up with advertisements that such and such a chaplain from Egypt or Palestine is coming, who will have magic-lantern slides to show; and all this is done to try and persuade Tommy to come to hear the "Word of God." Tommy's no fool; all he does is to smile, and very often remarks, "they won't catch me." I am trying to find religion exemplified in the Army in some tangible shape, but its like sugar—very scarce. When I say religion, I mean the religion of Christians. There are numbers of Freethinkers; in my hut I have the company of two who are of the militant stamp, who read the *Freethinker*, the works of Ingersoll, Paine, Bradlaugh, and other champions of the great cause of Freethought. The religion of the open mind is being felt in the Army as elsewhere, and the "Grand Old Book" is having a peaceful slumber in realms of dust and neglect. Certainly the Lord is not looking very much after his own; if he did, one wouldn't meet so many "infidels" who are turning his elect from the worship of his crucified Son. However, the fact is, Christianity has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; and as Tommy is not entirely a fool, he treats it as an exploded fable that has lived too long and cannot die too soon.

A CORP.

SIR,—I cannot let pass the observations of "F. Comley" on the above subject (in your issue of June 23) without mentioning my own experience in this direction during an equal period of service. I have found that the majority of the men are indifferent. This mental attitude towards Christianity and supernatural religion in general appears to have its origin in the fact that they have a vague feeling there is a fundamental fallacy underlying these beliefs, which has been instilled into them from childhood; while, on the other hand, they have never been brought into intimate contact with Rationalistic views. So far as they have any opinions regarding the latter, they are under the impression that the Rationalists' teachings are merely destructive, and have nothing to offer in return as a basis of life but loose living and a contempt for all the higher ethical principles. During the latter half of 1916 and the following year, I was in British and German East Africa (whence I was invalided with malaria), and, as compulsory Church Parades were very rare, one had a better opportunity for seeing what hold religion had among men amid strange surroundings which offered little in the way of entertainment to divert men in their leisure moments.

At a service I attended in Nairobi, in June last year, at a temporary church which stood only fifty yards from a large general hospital, whose patients consisted largely of convalescent malaria and dysentery cases, and at an equal distance from a repair depot where a large staff was employed, the total congregation in the evening numbered twenty-eight—considerably less than one per cent. of men physically able to attend, and who were within a minute's walk of the place. At Mombasa, which at that time was the coastal base, I visited the cathedral one Sunday evening a few months previously, and found, interspersed with a sprinkling of white residents and natives, less than a score of men in khaki. I might multiply instances of this kind with reference to such places as Dar-es-Salaam and Kilwa, and later on Cape Town, and also depots in England, but I think I have written sufficient to show that we who differ from Mr. Comley often *do* know of what we are speaking in this respect.

R. P.

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GHOSTS' CLOTHES.

SIR,—"Abracadabra" "leaves the question for Spiritists to answer." I am a Spiritist, though not a Spiritualist, so I answer.

Where did the ghost get his clothes? Forty years ago my father used to ask that same question as a poser for ghost-believers; but even as a boy of ten I wondered where the difficulty was. If the ghost can once cross the barrier between what does not reflect light and what does, surely one impression on the retina is as easy as another—a waistcoat as easy as a face. Materialists mostly believe in æther; I do not know how they can, for none of the five senses can reach it; but still they do believe in it. How, then, do they see anything absurd in the hypothesis that both the ghost or spook, and his clothes, are of æther made visible by an act of will much as a muscle is contracted?

"Abracadabra" says æther is "many million times thinner than air." So far as I have studied the mathematical theorems, which form our only track to any mental picture of the æther, it is not comparable with air or any other gas, but is a very abnormal kind of liquid or solid, probably more solid than solids, because not atomic in structure. Prof. Larmer's article in the *Encyc. Brit.* is accessible and fairly intelligible.

C. HARPUR.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 27.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Braddock, Davidson, Eager, Gorniot, Heaford, Leat, Neate, Nearey, Palmer, Roger, Spence, Thurlow, Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Miss Pitcher, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read.

The following officials 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.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Battersea, Bethnal Green, Coventry, Goldthorpe, Maesteg, Manchester, Newcastle, Portsmouth, Sheffield, South London, Southampton, Swansea, West Ham, and the Parent Society—forty-nine in all.

Applications were received and granted for the re-formation of Branches at Coventry and Maesteg.

The resolution passed at the Conference concerning Mr. Cohen's Scheme for Reorganization, which was to the effect that a Committee should be formed consisting of members elected by the three oldest London and four oldest Provincial Branches, each of these Branches to nominate one member, who must have had at least three years' membership of the Society; the place of meeting to be subsequently decided upon; the results of the labours of this Committee to be printed and circulated; and a special Conference of all Branches to be convened in a central position to fully discuss and finally endorse or reject the scheme of reorganization recommended, was considered; and it having been decided that the oldest continuous London Branches were Bethnal Green, North London, and South London (formerly Camberwell), and in the provinces Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and South Shields, it was resolved to invite these Branches to elect their representatives to attend a meeting to be held in London on suggested dates.

It was further agreed that in order to facilitate the business of this Special Committee, a Sub-Committee be appointed to arrange all resolutions and suggestions sent in for its consideration.

Other matters remitted from the Conference were adjourned till the next meeting. All members of the Society are invited to send in such suggestions as they may consider helpful towards the scheme for reorganization. These will have the careful consideration of the Committee, and should reach me not later than July 20.

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.

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

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. Kirkham, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. James Marshall, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. E. C. Saphin, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, Mr. Bob Norman, "Keepin' it 'Oly" (A Revue); 7, Mr. H. B. Doughty, "Are Secularists Sincere."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, J. B. Johnson, A Lecture; 6.30, J. B. Johnson, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, Members' Meeting. Members and Friends are requested to attend. Business important.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Ramble postponed. Important Special Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Poole Square): 7, T. Dennis, A Lecture.

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

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
A Great Anniversary.—The Editor	373
Side-Lights.—J. T. Lloyd	374
Shelley's Masterpiece.—Mimnermus	375
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	376
The Story of the Tea Plant.—T. F. Palmer	380
The War and God.—Athos Zeno	381

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

A Great Anniversary.

This week's issue of the *Freethinker* bears a date that is among the most important—if not *the* most important in history of modern Europe. It is the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, a building which stood in Paris—but to the whole of France was a symbol of privilege, extortion, and wrong. The taking of the Bastille was not a great event in itself. It was defended by only a handful of old soldiers with but little in the shape of armament. But the dramatic sense of the French people saw it for what it was—the symbol of the death of autocracy in France, the birth of the people as a recognizable and recognized force in social and political life, and has ever since celebrated it as the National Fete Day of France. Other Governments dreaded its influence, as well they might. British Conservatism and British religion for long loved to depict the revolution as an orgy of bloodshed and a carnival of obscenity. Such it still remains to those who draw their philosophy from Christian tracts and their history from *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. To saner people the revolution of 1789 stands out as one of the most magnificent expressions of the human spirit in all history.

* * *

Pre-Revolutionary France.

What was France before the Revolution? It was a nation of serfs, of a people without power, governed by a class that ruled in the name of privilege. All political power was centralized in the King's Council at Versailles. The nobles were a distinct class in the State, and all born noble remained noble, each administering justice on his own estate. The nobles and bishops—for the bishops ranked as nobles—possessed the exclusive rights of fishing and hunting. They could order marriage between the children of their serfs, and they possessed the infamous right to demand the wife of the peasant for the first twenty-four hours after marriage. For ordinary criminal offences there was torture before trial, and mutilation afterwards, without the protection of any public statement of offences committed. For religious offences there was loss of eyes, tongue, or limbs, breaking on the wheel, or burning alive. *Lettres de Cachet*—a simple order signed by the king authorizing imprisonment—were numerous. They were frequently issued with the signature, and all else blank. In forty years 45,000 of these warrants were issued. Just before the Revolution the taxation of the country stood at sixty millions, not more than half of which was spent on the public service. And nearly all the taxes were paid by the non-privileged classes. The theory was that the nobles defended the State with their swords, the priests by their prayers. Therefore, they paid a "non-collectible" tax—in other words—what they pleased. The Church possessed a revenue of £8,750,000, which supported about 130,000 priests and their establishments. The Archbishop of Cambria was the lord of 75,000 people. The Archbishop of Toulouse, beside his ministerial salary, received £54,000, of Rouen £20,000. The Bishop of Troyes received penitents in confessionals lined with white satin. The Church owned nearly a fourth of the land. No wonder the Churches and the aristocracies of other countries were afraid of the influence of the Revolution! Revolutions are apt to become epidemic.

* * *

A People's Wrongs.

The people sweated, the Church *preyed*, the nobles pillaged. The tax-gatherer was everywhere. There were taxes on bridges, paths, fairs, markets, foods, clothing. After the King came the Lords, after the Lords the Church. Even Alison points out that if the produce of an acre of land equalled £3 2s. 7d., the King took £1 18s. 4d., the lord, or bishop, 18s., the peasant received 5s. And here are a few reports from various sources that will give some idea of the state of the people. In 1662, 300,000 people were reported starving in the Champagne; 1675, Colbert, the Minister of Finance, reports that in one province the people had been living on roots and grasses; 1694, "Your subjects, sire, are dying of hunger"; 1707, "Two millions of the people are starving." In two months, in 1753, 800 people died of want in Paris. Nothing can exceed the horror of the picture drawn by Arthur Young in his travels through France. "It reminds me," he said, "of the misery of Ireland." And this with a king drawing eight millions annually, a nobility thirty millions, and the Church another eight millions. If ever revolution was justified anywhere it was in France in 1789. And if ever the influence of a revolution brought benefit elsewhere it was that one. During this past four years thousands of Englishmen have learned to appreciate France, who never appreciated it before. It would be well if these would trace out the fructifying influences of the Revolution on the rest of Europe.

* * *

The Power of Ideas.

For that Revolution did really stand for an idea. The want and misery of the people only gave the idea visible form. Church and Government saw this well enough, and for nearly a hundred years before the Revolution actually broke out were engaged in trying to suppress the growth of ideas they saw were fatal to their rule. Men wrote, and the Government suppressed. Thus, several of Diderot's works were suppressed, and the author imprisoned. Voltaire suffered the same fate for writing history. Helvetius wrote on the mind; the book

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was burned. De Lolme wrote on the British Constitution; book burned. Buffon wrote on geology; his book was burned as heretical, and the author forced to recant. In 1775 the Government, by a sort of a Defence of the Realm Act, decreed that "All who wrote books that would disturb the peace of the realm would be punished with death." And only nine years before the Revolution broke out, the Government proposed abolishing all private presses and setting up a Government press, under the control of the magistrates. But ideas are not killed in this way. There is only one sure way of killing an idea, and that is to disprove it, and so provide room for a better one to develop. It was long the habit of English Christians to hold up the French Revolution as a bugbear to frighten people away from Freethought. It is one of the glories of Freethought that it was chiefly instrumental in lifting the French people out of the bog of misery in which they were plunged.

* * *

The Birth of a New Order.

Many eminent men—Kant in Germany, Wordsworth in England, and Paine—recognized at once in the Revolution more than the outbreak of a hungry and ill-used people. They saw it was the close of an old era, and the opening of a new one pregnant with great possibilities. Excesses there were—but these came later, and were as nothing compared to the centuries of wrong that had preceded them. The Revolution was more than French; it was European. Fight as some might against it, the ideas and principles of the Revolution gained ground everywhere. It entirely swept away the notion that government existed in virtue of privilege or by divine command, and made common the idea that government existed only by the will of the people and for the benefit of the people. It cleared France of its feudal land laws, and left the cultivator really master of his own land and of the products of his labour. It gave France a code of laws which, in spite of faults, remains the best model for a code in Europe. It taught that popular and complete education, the upkeep of hospitals, art galleries, asylums, museums, were all belonging to the essential duties of an enlightened Government. It preached Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and it believed in them. Even to-day there is a greater moral equality in France than in any other country in Europe. And wherever the French Armies went, they carried these ideas among the nations. It is not, then, for nothing that France holds July 14, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, as its national day. When that fell, the old order fell in France, and its fall reverberated throughout the world. And if to-day privilege is less blatant in its claims, vested interests less arrogant in their pretensions, and the will of the people more potent in its expressions, we have largely to thank the men and women who gave to the world the soul-stirring Revolution of 1789.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Side-Lights.

THERE are many extremely familiar facts in human life which, for various reasons, are practically ignored, and whose real significance is, on that account, scarcely ever discerned. Their constant recurrence throughout the ages has blinded the mind to their momentous importance. This is specially true of a number of religious facts with which we come into well-nigh daily contact. It may not be that in this connection familiarity breeds contempt, but it is undoubtedly responsible for considerable neglect of much highly valuable evidence as to the nature and utility of religion. For example, nothing is more common, in Christian circles, than the insistence upon the need of systematic instruction in religious matters. In the *Church Times* for June 28 a paragraph in the Summary is devoted to this subject. It says:—

> About a year ago an experiment was tried in Southwark diocese with the object of instructing people in the faith. For this purpose a diocesan committee opened two Church Tutorial Classes, and the results of their first year's work are said to be most encouraging. So good a plan as this ought not to be confined to one diocese: it is worthy of adoption generally. We are glad to call attention to the representative meeting which was held last week at King's College, London, with the Bishop of Oxford in the chair, to discuss the question of establishing Church Tutorial Classes throughout the other dioceses.....His lordship advocated the method of the Workers' Educational Association, which brings people together to listen and discuss, with a view to studying the intellectual grounds of social organization. The same thing, he remarked, could be done in regard to the intellectual grounds of religion. In view of the pathetic ignorance of the ordinary layman and laywoman, coupled sometimes with a sincere desire to learn if only a teacher could be found, something ought to be done at once, and the proposed Tutorial Classes would seem to offer the very opportunity for instruction that is so desired.

Nothing could be more profoundly symptomatic than the curious information suggestively brought to our notice in that extract. The underlying fact is that Christianity has been in the world for nineteen centuries. Then comes a second fact, that the Church is in its very nature a teaching institution. The purpose of all its ministrations is to instruct its members in the doctrines of religion. Fact number three is that the Church, so soon as it came to power, abolished Secular Education. All schools became its handmaids, and all education was saturated with religion. All religious sects are agreed, at the present time, that religion must be taught in all day-schools, because otherwise it would certainly come to naught. We are now face to face with a fourth fact, which is that for nearly a hundred and fifty years there has been in existence an institution whose sole object is to impart religious instruction. It is eminently noteworthy that multitudes of parents who never darken church or chapel doors regularly send their children to Sunday-school. Thus in one way or another, directly or indirectly, Christianity makes its appeal to all alike within the bounds of Christendom, and so the facts just mentioned are of prime importance. And yet the Bishop of Oxford speaks of "the pathetic ignorance of the ordinary layman and laywoman." Of course, his lordship means ignorance of even the very rudiments of the Christian creed.

Dr. Gore is, theoretically, to the very core of his being a Supernaturalist. He has full confidence in the omnipotent and omnipresent love of God, in the all-conquering, sin-annihilating grace of Christ, and in the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. In his sermons he often dwells with moving, melting eloquence upon the transforming efficacy of the Gospel, as well as on the infinite nearness of the Divine Being to every human soul. Beautiful beyond compare is that theory, and the only fault one can find with it is that it completely breaks down in practice. Here, as in many other connections, theory and practice are not on speaking terms with each other. Practically, his lordship publicly pins his faith in machinery. He has no patience whatever with the policy of Secular Education, but advocates, in season and out of season, the preservation of all Government schools as mills to grind Christian doctrines for consumption by youthful minds. To his machinery there is no end. Of course, behind, in, and through all the machinery works God—Father, Son, and Spirit; but apart from the

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machinery, even the Holy Trinity can apparently do nothing. The deplorable inefficiency of the machinery hitherto is abundantly attested by "the pathetic ignorance of the ordinary layman and laywoman" in this nineteen hundred and eighteenth year of our Lord. Deeply sensible of this lamentable fact, his lordship of Oxford is all eagerness to set another machine in operation in all British dioceses. We can confidently assure him beforehand that Church Tutorial Classes will ere long be as conspicuous failures as all other ecclesiastical machines have been.

As the sweet hymnologist, Isaac Watts, puts it:—

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

That is to say, God has tied himself down absolutely to natural law on the one hand, and to the Church on the other. He cannot even interfere with the weather, except through Nature, nor save a soul, except through the Church. He is so limited as to the extent and degree of his action that there is not a single shred of evidence that he acts at all. Neither the physicist nor the biologist can hit the trail of his activity at any point; and psychology also is now developing fast into an exact science. The tendency of every science is to eliminate Divine agency from the conduct of the Universe, and of every theology to limit it in the sphere of the Church. In theory, God may have direct dealings with every human being, but in practice he works exclusively through the Church, which is a purely human machine. When asked why God does not exert himself more effectually to secure the welfare of the world, the answer the divines generally give is that he cannot transcend the capacities of his instrument, which is only a polite way of bowing him out of the very organization which is theoretically of his own founding.

Christianity has always been hopelessly handicapped ever since it entered upon the stage of human history, by the irrational claims made on its behalf on the one side, and by the nature of its achievements on the other. It has not done what it originally promised to do, and it has actually accomplished what its early founders would have looked upon with heart-breaking disappointment and burning shame. In the twentieth century Christianity is the worst of all anachronisms; and God is dishonoured most by those whose profession it is to defend him. During the last four years, in particular, the divines have made him look so ridiculous that thoughtful people can do no other than give formal expression to their long-cherished unbelief both in him and his Church. As a matter of fact, the War has so completely puzzled the theologians that in the attempt to explain it in the light of God, or God in its light, most of them have entirely lost their heads, and, as a consequence, the Church is visibly languishing.

J. T. Lloyd.

A Fragment.

I think I saw you at St. Paul's last night:
The Bishop really was *quite* at his best.
There is no doubt that what he says is right,
He puts his congregation to the test.
And *didn't* you enjoy the Anthem, dear?
Those Choir boys' voices *always* sound so clear.....
The War drags on—and Peace seems far away.
I had a Post Card last week from my son.
And Freddie went to Aldershot to-day,
To see if something really can't be done
To get commissioned in the R.F.A.
It's *better* food, you know, and *higher* pay.

Arthur F. Thorn.

Shelley's Masterpiece.

Sun-treader, life and light be thine for ever!
—*Robert Browning.*

O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty makes clear and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea. —*Swinburne.*

It is related of Robert Browning that, as a young man, he one day passed a bookstall, and saw a volume advertised as "Mr. Shelley's Atheistical Poems, scarce." Badly printed, shamefully mutilated, these discarded blossoms touched young Browning to new emotions. This contact with the dead singer was the dawn of a new life to the clever lad. From that time Browning's poetic production began. This result was not surprising. Shelley is one of our greatest poets. To him song was natural speech. With a great outlay of labour, special education, and careful selection of circumstances, many have purchased their poetic rights as the chief captain bought the name of Roman, but Shelley was poet born. Many of his contemporaries who overshadowed him whilst he was living have almost faded into mere names, but Shelley has a message for generations unborn.

Shelley sang of a golden age. Long will it be ere the time when men "shall not learn war any more," or "live and move harmonious as the sacred stars above"; long ere the human countenance so radiates with intelligence and love that the air around it shall be "bright as the air around a star." Society was perfectly agreed that such ideas were but a mad illusion. And society denounced him accordingly, and fined and imprisoned the men and women who sold the poet's *Queen Mab*. Florence to the living Dante was not more cruelly unjust than England to the living Shelley. Not until thirty years after the English poet's death was his poetic glory widely acknowledged, and even at the Centenary Celebration at Horsham most of the speakers referred discreetly to Shelley's Freethought and Democratic opinions, and emphasized his claims on the Sussex county families.

Shelley's subjects were not *Hours of Idleness* nor the amours of *Don Juan*, but the perfectability of human nature. It is the alpha and omega of his poetry. In the splendid rhetoric of *Queen Mab*, in the nobler music of the *Revolt of Islam*, in his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*, its expression glows with the solemn and majestic inspiration of prophecy. And Shelley meant every word that he wrote. Shortly before his own untimely end, he said to his friend Trelawny, "I am ninety," meaning 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 lived like a Spartan. A hunk of bread and a little fruit served him for a meal. "Mary, have I dined?" he once asked his wife. His income was spent on the poor, on struggling men of genius, and on necessitous friends. 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 he 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.

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Because of Shelley's Atheism society gave the poet a bad name, and would gladly have imprisoned him, as it actually imprisoned the men and women who sold his *Queen Mab*, which was not the juvenile work that orthodox critics pretend. During the last years of his life, when his intellect was mature, Shelley told Trelawny that the matter of that poem was good; it was only the treatment that was immature. Shelley's masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*, written in the meridian of his splendid genius, deals with emancipate Humanity no less than the earlier work. The glorious speech which ends the third act describes "thrones, altars, judgment seats, and prisons," as parts of one gigantic system of misrule, and pictures man "sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed," and only hampered by "chance, and death, and mutability" from oversoaring.

> The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
> Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

The poet springs from the earth like his own skylark. And the same magnificent idea finds expression at the close of the fifth act:—

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
> This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
> This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

This is the keynote of this masterpiece. "*Prometheus*," said Shelley himself, "is my favourite poem. It is, in my judgment, of a higher character than anything I have yet attempted. It is original, and cost me severe mental labor." He was right. His picture of emancipated humanity is noble and inspiring in its scope and significance, and grandly conceived. It is thronged with shapes of the utmost majesty and loveliness, and is full of swift and thrilling melody. It is the finest triumph of Shelley's lyrical genius, and one of the glories of a thousand years of English literature.

What Shelley might have been we cannot conceive. At the age of thirty he was drowned in the sea he so loved. His ashes rest beneath the walls of Rome, and "*Cor Cordium*" ("Heart of Hearts") chiselled on his tomb well says what all who love Liberty feel when they think of this Atheist-poet who gave his life to Humanity, and whose splendid genius was as free as an eagle above the clouds with outstretched wings.

MIMNERMUS.

Writers and Readers.

LIKE poverty, war makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows. Or, to vary the metaphor, it is a fire over which is brought to boiling point the mixture of virtue and vice, passion and prejudice, that makes up our average human nature, the impurities coming to the top in an unsightly and malodorous scum. It has forced up the execrable food-fakers and the shamelessly cynical unconscientious objectors. It has given us the water-cranks who shout "Traitor!" and "Pro-German!" at us because we refuse to clog our systems with cocoa, as if anything but dulness could be the result of such a muddy beverage. It has sanctified that erstwhile candid Pagan, Mr. Bottomley, who has now forsaken Newmarket for the New Jerusalem, and put most of his money on the Lamb of God. It has given us women-novelists in the last stages of erotomania, who debauch the young mind with fiction compared to which Balzac's *Droll Stories* are innocence itself. It has also given us prurient old maids and parsons, nosing about among the garbage of sexual diseases, and a stupid dramatic censor who removes the ban from Ibsen's *Ghosts*, and thoughtfully permits the adult-in-the-street to see *Damaged Goods*, a pamphlet in the Shaw manner, as dull as it is inconclusive. But, unfortunately, these are not the worst elements of civilization brought to the surface by the present War: the amazing Billing case has made it clear not only that one of the chosen representatives of the people may be a fool, but also that thousands of men in other respects intelligent enough are thrown off their balance by hysterical claptrap. What a spectacle of British ignorance and hypocrisy, naked and unashamed, to put before the unprejudiced and intelligent neutral!

. . . . .

I understand that Mr. Chesterton, from whom some of us expected better things, is vastly delighted with the amazing verdict, not because he thinks it the right one, but partly because it went against Mr. Grein, who had the bad taste to be born of Hebrew parents, and partly because it was a slap in the face for our naughty artistic aristocrats. It was the voice of that virtuous person, the average sensual man, reproving blackguardism in high places; in fine, the verdict was democratic. Certainly it was democratic; but in the worst sense of the word. The uneducated mob, in the person of twelve honest and patriotic burgesses, decide that the cultured aristocrats must be moral perverts, since they prefer Wilde to Sir Henry Arthur Jones; the wicked artist to the virtuous literary bagman. But what in the name of common sense and common honesty have Wilde's nasty propensities to do with his art? If I were setting up for a moral censor—a part I have always disliked because it implies a priggish superiority—I should not be slow to blame him for his evil deeds, and I should try to strike a balance between what I found good and bad in him. But for the life of me I cannot see how I am to set his shortcomings as a man—as a social unit—over against his virtues as an artist. Surely there is no common measure. I challenge anyone to point out the faintest trace of moral depravity in the radiantly witty farce, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in the sane paradoxes of *Intentions*, or in the finest of modern ballads, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Blinded with reactionary prejudice, you may have made up your mind to loathe Wilde and all the things he stood for. That is your loss; you wilfully deprive yourself of an exquisite æsthetic pleasure because you are so foolish as to confuse two things which have nothing in common. You depreciate an artist's work because you know him to have been a bad citizen, an unkind husband, or a neglectful parent. But are you justified? Do you really find less magic in the verse of Coleridge, or a poorer quality in the rhetoric of De Quincey, when you know that they were but poor creatures from a moral standpoint? If we reverse the proposition, we see the absurdity of moral criterion of art. The ethically estimable Southey was a greater poet than Byron, and his prose finer than Lamb's, who wanted the virtues of the orthodox Tory Christian. But what place has Southey now in English letters? None at all. His works died with him, or perhaps before him. It is the characteristic of great creative art that is immortal; it is what is good in man bursting into flower—the flower of the mind. Art is its own justification; it is beyond good and evil.

. . . . .

In the belief that we are thereby helping to crush Prussian militarism we have, without undue grumbling, done many things which, at other times, we should have thought foolish and servile. The assumption seems to be that we are not likely to resent any form of interference which is supposed to be good for us. And, now, at the bidding of Messrs. Billing & Bottomley, it would appear that the placemen who run the country will try to force us for the good of our moral health to buy nothing more dangerous than the fiction of Miss Corelli and the poetry of Sir Henry Newbolt. Very soon no patriotic and self-respecting bookseller will stock the works of Mr. Hardy, Mr. George Moore, Mr. Bennett, and the soul-corrupting Wilde. They have really been at a discount with freedom of thought and expression since the memorable summer of 1914. An instructive thing happened to a friend of mine a day or two ago. He happened to visit the Leicester Lounge when the "loungers" were discussing the Billing verdict, and was foolish enough to defend *Salome*. Thereupon an excited gentleman made an obscure reference to those who give their nights and days to wallowing in Kraft-Ebbing, and suggested that my friend's name would be found

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among the notorious 47,000. Another good citizen thought that my friend's defence of Wilde was a public insult to a young lady known as *Dora*, who, by the way, seems a very touchy flapper. However, the lesson is not lost on my friend. He now takes care to hide his admiration of a poet's work when the characters portrayed are not *nice*, for fear of upsetting the delicate moral balance of people who take their ethical principles from Mr. Bottomley and Lord Alfred Douglas.

. . . . .

Let us look for a moment at *Salome*. It was written at Torquay in the winter of 1891-2. It was composed in French prose, and was not intended for the stage. It was not written for Sarah Bernhardt. It was suggested, we are told, by a series of pictures by Gustave Moreau illustrating the subject. Wilde owed little or nothing to Flaubert's short story *Herodias*, although he got some of his material from that writer's *Temptation of Saint Anthony*. His debt, however, is greater to Holy Writ, which is common property; and, in spite of Mr. Justice Darling, Wilde is not a more bare-faced plagiarist than Shakespeare, who boldly transferred to his own account other people's ideas and phrases. The simple syntax of *Salome* is, of course, that of Maeterlinck, and the form of the dialogue is borrowed from a writer of European reputation—the great Ollendorf—to whom the Belgian dramatist is equally indebted. It is curious that the finest image in the play comes from a speech by John Bright.

Salome was shown to Madame Bernhardt in 1892 when she was running a London season at the Palace Theatre. Preparations were made to produce the play; it was even rehearsed; but the Censor refused a licence, not because it was immoral, but because it brought Scriptural characters on the stage. It was produced privately for subscribers, but with no great success. The critics fell foul of it, one of them describing it as "the debased language of decadence," a passage literally transferred from Holy Writ. The English version, published in 1894, was illustrated by Beardsley in a set of drawings that was a satirical comment on the play and the writer. They are frankly pornographic, and are sufficient to account for the perverse immorality generally, if stupidly, associated with the play. In 1901, *Salome* was played for the first time in Berlin, and ran for two hundred nights. It became a part of the repertory of the German stage. Strauss' operatic setting was produced at Dresden in 1905, and some German critics were no more intelligent than Mr. Billing. They openly insulted both the composer and the singer in the best Clement Scott manner. This should commend them to Mr. Bottomley, who seems to think that there are no German Philistines. I am told that, exclusive of the French texts, there are *forty* different translations and versions. These include German (ten), Czech, Dutch, Greek, Italian, Magyar, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Yiddish versions, in all of which languages it is performed.

Surely the wiser course for Mr. Billing and his friends to have taken would have been to laugh at the delicious absurdity of taking coals to Newcastle, of introducing English drama to neutrals by means of a play which they better than we know *Charley's Aunt* or *The Private Secretary*. *Salome* is not a great play; it is rather a frigid and brilliant *tour de force*—an effort of the literary imagination with little emotion and no atmosphere. But to say that it is corrupt, and to argue those who admire it are corrupt, is to write yourself down an ass. I could say more, but I leave it at that.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

THE MASTER SPIRIT.

Give me a spirit that on life's rough sea
Loves to have his sails fill'd with a lusty wind,
E'en till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his rapt ship run on her side so low,
That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air.
There is no danger to a man that knows
What life and death is: there's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law:
He goes before them, and commands them all
That to himself is a law rational.

—*George Chapman, "Byron's Conspiracy."*

Acid Drops.

The King has been pleased to order August 4, the anniversary of the outbreak of War, as a day of intercession and prayer. We have had quite a number of these days of intercession without anything happening. One would have thought the times serious enough to have done with this pious tomfoolery.

We hear much of this War being a war of ideas, and so it is, for the reason that all human conflicts are conflicts of ideas. But it may be questioned whether our Government has any real appreciation of the value of ideas in human affairs. It has, for instance, always been a reproach to the country that important works are published at a price that place them beyond the reach of men and women of modest incomes. We speak feelingly on this point, as we have been a constant sufferer. But now we see the Luxury Tax Committee intends placing a tax on books. They are to be treated as a luxury. Cheap novels will escape, but serious works on literature, science, and philosophy will have to suffer. Hall Caine and Marie Corelli and Charles Garvice will be left untouched. Those who do not cater for the crowd, and deal with life from the standpoint of science and philosophy, will suffer.

If that were the way to beat Germany, no one would complain. But is it? Every sensible person, we should imagine, knows that merely winning the War will not defeat Germany. If we wish to establish British supremacy, and maintain it, it can only be done by keeping the British public at a better educated and higher level than Germany. We have suffered in the past because we failed in this respect, and all the talk of German misuse of education is beside the point. It is in the world of ideas and of intellectual achievement that we must establish our superiority, if it is to be done at all. And to commence with a tax on books as a luxury is suicidal. Whatever else a good book may be, it is not a luxury. It is a necessity to every thoughtful man and woman, and it should be a necessity in every home. If the Government is really anxious to do the country a service, it might devise some plan by which *good* books could be placed within reach of young men and women. Most people will read good works if they commence at the right age. It is because rubbish is so cheap and so easily obtained, and good literature so dear and so apparently inaccessible, that the taste for it is never acquired.

John Frederick Hill was sentenced to twenty months' imprisonment for converting to his own use £50. He had collected the money for a naval officer's orphaned children. Hill was wearing an emblem of a Christian guild, and had said it was his duty as a Christian to help others. So it was, but a safer plan is to start a mission and put yourself down liberally as expenses. Hill will, doubtless, know better next time. We all have to pay for experience.

In order to cheer us all up in these dismal times, a kindly Providence has given us an epidemic of influenza which is very infectious.

The possession of a conscience in a Christian country is fraught with real danger. Mr. G. A. Sutherland, a former master at Harrow, who has already served three sentences of hard labour as a Conscientious Objector, has been sentenced to a further two years' hard labour.

How terribly handicapped the Almighty has been throughout the ages! However eager he may have been to come to men and do wonders in answer to their prayers, he could not have done so for lack of highways along which to travel. After a crowded intercessory service held at Queen's Hall, London, a week ago, however, he will have no excuse for his ominious inactivity. "We are here," said Dr. Jowett, who acted as chairman; "we are here to cut highways for the Lord; we are here to cut prayer tracks along which the forces of the Almighty may flow." What a miraculous meeting it must have been!

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We are informed by the *British Weekly* that "Dr. Jowett's address from the chair inspired a marvellous confidence in the power of prayer." This is not at all surprising, for Dr. Jowett was there for that very purpose; but it would startle the world if "something tremendous" were to happen because of that intercession. It is so easy to say that "when we offer prayer we are handling forces that can change the face of the world"; but the fact that stares us in the face is that the world has never been transformed in answer to prayer. No one knows this better than Dr. Jowett himself.

It is simply astonishing how mawkishly sentimental the greatest of preachers may become at a crowded prayer-meeting in a time of national panic. On the occasion described in another paragraph, Dr. Jowett excitedly asked, "What would you like my Saviour to do through you for Ireland?" Is he not aware that there are two sets of Christians who would like their Saviour to do two entirely opposite things for Ireland, and that there is no likelihood of such a Saviour doing anything at all for that sadly troubled land?

We are informed by the *Daily News* that the Presbyterians are filling a large place in the direction of the War. "Sir Douglas Haig is a Presbyterian, of course, and Marshall Joffre is a member of the Reformed Church of France, which is nearest to the Presbyterian Church. General Pershing and his Chief of Staff, General Peyton C. Marsh, are Presbyterians, while both President Wilson and Mr. Lansing, the Secretary of State, are Presbyterian elders." Thus do they conscientiously justify the teachings of the Prince of Peace, which they profess to follow.

The Bishop of Sheffield complains that he has only 196 clergymen left for 171 parishes. He will, therefore, only recommend that eight of these be advised to go into the Army. But quite a number of businesses, on which the future of families depend, are being closed. Why not close a few of the churches? If God is on our side, he will not mind.

Darwen (Lancs) is holding a series of open-air prayer meetings to help win the War. At one of these gatherings the Rev. J. Hodges said that, on reflection, he was convinced that God had not yet forsaken us. What *we* are waiting for is some indication that God is going to help us. The Rev. J. Blackburn Brown, on the other hand, said he "was absolutely certain that God has kept the control of the War in his own hands." The "control of the War." Now we know who to blame for everything that has occurred.

A sage old proverb bids a cobbler to stick to his last. Its application is lost upon Mr. Harry Lauder, who is passing popular as a comedian on the music-hall stage. Speaking of the Pacifists, Mr. Lauder said: "these people ought to be run into the Thames. To cut their throats would be too quick for them." Surely, Mr. Lauder is straining his fine wit too far. Most people prefer him when he is funny without being vulgar.

While people are mourning over the comparatively early death of Lord Rhondda, who was a man of exceptionally brilliant gifts, and whose signal success as Food Controller everybody admires, it is an eminently noteworthy fact, though ignored by the press at large, that his lordship was a thorough-going Secularist. So far as we know, the *Monmouthshire Evening Post* is the only newspaper that has recorded this interesting information. In a lengthy obituary, which appeared in its issue for July 3, our contemporary says:—

> He summed up his philosophy in a speech at Cardiff some eighteen months ago: "I may tell you my religious principles in a nutshell. It is a good old world, and I shall be very sorry to go out of it, because I don't know what it is going to be in the next. Anyway, I believe in getting as much pleasure and happiness as possible out of this world while you are in it, so long as you do not interfere with the happiness and pleasure of other people. And as a corollary to that I believe in giving as much pleasure as possible to other people as long as it does not interfere too much with your own enjoyment." A writer in a fairly prominent review based a very critical article on this, denouncing the cynicism of it all. Well, the last sentence is cynicism naked and unashamed, but its very frankness was disarming, and taking the world as it is and men as they are, there are far worse philosophies of life. We believe it correctly summed up the man.

The Secularist philosophy, however mildly held, is fundamentally irreconcilable with belief in any fairly orthodox version of the Christian religion.

A fine example of the "Irish bull" is presented in the *Freeman's Journal*. Following Lord Curzon's statement that the Catholic clergy of Ireland had advised their flocks, under the penalty of damnation, to resist conscription, his lordship sends an explanatory letter containing quotations from sermons delivered in Ireland. One priest is reported as having said, "God would cry to Heaven for vengeance." This gem would be hard to beat.

In the fourth year of the War, the National Free Church Council is discussing the question of part-time War-work for the clergy. These gentry will be almost ready to start when the War is quite over.

Scotch folk shed their prejudices very slowly. Glasgow Corporation, after a lively debate, sanctioned a Sunday performance in Kelvingrove Park by the band of the Scots Guards. At this rapid rate of progress it should take Glasgow several centuries to reach Continental ideas of Sunday relaxation.

A correspondent of the *British Weekly* writes, that in view of the shortage of teachers, why could not ministers of religion be utilized in the schools? We have no doubt many of them would do this, but it would be a bad day for English education if this plan were adopted. We suggest sending parsons into the Army, and relieve the teachers this way. We are glad to see that the *Schoolmaster*, in noting the suggestion, reprints our remarks—from a recent issue—with acknowledgment of origin—by way of comment: "22,000 out of 42,000 elementary schoolmasters have joined the Army, and 5,000 more have been called up. What a contrast to that of the clerical profession, which has so far been exempted from military service."

Since his conversion to Spiritualism, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has begun to use the old, old vocabulary so long used by the orthodox. For instance, he refers to the "cheerless beliefs" of materialists. It must, of course, lighten the burden of life to realize that spirits smoke cigars in another world.

The newspapers made a lot of fuss because a service at Westminster Abbey was held in the Welsh language. The dear editors have never noticed that Gibberish has been spoken there for many years.

Spiritual unrest has spread to the workhouses. The Brentford Board of Guardians has instructed the chaplains to give notice of any changes in religion on the part of the inmates. What a flutter would be caused by a widespread religious revival among the guests of the ratepayers.

"He doeth all things well" is a sentiment treasured by the pious, although facts are against the idea. Out of 228,000 children medically examined at the London County Council Schools, 89,000 required treatment. More than 10,000 little ones attended consumption dispensaries.

The clergy are almost as acute as pill advertisers in seeking public favour, and they have not hesitated to exploit the War. An advertisement in a provincial paper, issued on behalf of a church, contains the following: "Have you suffered bereavement by the war?" "Your loved ones are still living."

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To Correspondents.

Will J. O. Connor please send the Editor his address. He wishes to write him on the subject of his enclosure of July 5.

H. Poole.—We have returned the print, which is curious, but we do not think it has any special meaning. It looks to us like a frontispiece to some old volume of astronomical divinity, somewhere about a century old, and its special meaning would depend upon the book itself.

A. H. Palmer (Madeira).—We will look out the missing numbers for you. Your newsagent was in error in reporting them all out of print. We will consider your suggestion of "linking up *Freethinker* readers."

E. Gascoyne (Chesterfield).—Canon Shaw is true to the traditions of his order. When public opinion changes you may rely upon his "Message" changing too.

H. Scudder (Alnwick).—We saw the reprint. We are glad to say it is becoming increasingly common for reprints from this paper to appear in newspapers, and—better still—usually with due acknowledgments.

Sergt. R. Lewis.—*A Short History of Ancient Peoples* is published by Hodder & Stoughton. We think the published price was 10s. 6d. It is probably more now, as most publishers have taken advantage of the War to do *their* bit, and have raised the price of all their old stock.

Pte. T. Bate.—We are sending free copies of paper to address given.

C. E. Johnson.—Mr. R. Chapman, 6 Wenlock St., Simonside, South Shields, will be pleased to give you all the information you require. Pamphlets have been sent. You are right in thinking our great need is more capital, but that will come one day, perhaps, and then we shall see things.

W. Smallridge.—The literature and circulars served out by missionary societies are so many insults to anyone outside an asylum—or a Church. They are indications of the mental level of the people who *honestly* support them. Pleased to hear that your son finds the *Freethinker* eagerly read among his fellow-soldiers.

A. J. Willetts.—Thanks. Shall appear. Thanks for what you are doing on behalf of paper.

A. Atherton.—Mr. Cohen has written you.

Pte. J. Morgan writes from Ireland quite endorsing the letters published in reply to Mr. Comley on "Religion in the Army." We have had many other letters of a similar kind for which we deeply regret our inability to find space. But we are pleased to find agreement that the circulation of our literature is doing great good to the cause.

J. Burrell.—We are greatly obliged for all you have done in the past, and feel certain that we can depend upon you for the future. New opportunities will present themselves to one who is so alert as yourself.

G. Grove.—Thanks, papers are being sent.

R. H. Nisbet.—Crowded out at present, will try and find room later.

H. C. Hebbes.—Sorry we have no space for your letter. We agree that the medical profession has been, and is, for that matter, "guilty of astounding blunders," and we are with you in opposing blind support of authority of any kind.

Pte. D. T. Evans.—Received, and will be acknowledged later.

Z.—MSS. received. Will publish as early as possible, but we are much in arrears with accepted articles just now.

R. Parker.—We are very pleased to have the Foulis Catalogue. They were great printers, and a credit to eighteenth century Glasgow.

H J. Carthy.—Our experience of doctors does not agree with yours. We should say the profession contains a large number of Freethinkers, and there is an old maxim: "Out of three doctors two Atheists."

W. J.—We have no objection, as you rightly assume. But you must first catch your capable Christian who is agreeable to a set discussion with a leading Freethinker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We publish elsewhere in this issue a letter from the Rev. Dr. Lyttleton, late Headmaster of Eton, suggesting the discussion of various points that are at issue between Freethinkers and Christians. We cheerfully fall in with this suggestion; and we feel assured that such a discussion can produce nothing but good. Presumably Dr. Lyttleton himself will lead off in this general discussion, and we await his first communication with some interest.

South Wales Freethinkers are in earnest about "the Cause," and are setting to work in the right spirit. A Conference of Freethinkers is being called at the Wyndham Hotel, Bridgend, Glam, on Saturday, July 20, at 5 o'clock, to discuss the prospect of organization. This is an entirely independent effort on the part of our South Wales friends, but Mr. Cohen has been asked if he will be present and address the meeting. He has agreed to do so, and it is probable that he will also lecture on the Sunday at Maesteg. We shall be able to give more definite particulars next week.

We are receiving many promises of supplies of waste paper from readers in both London and the provinces. We are pleased to record this, as we need all the paper we can get. The paper supply gets shorter, and the price gets higher, and one is compelled to look some distance ahead. We are also glad to say that the *Freethinker* League is getting many new adherents. The practice of getting newsagents to display an extra copy of the paper, with a promise on the part of the member of the League to purchase it if unsold, is working well, and finding many new readers. We are fortunate in our friends, and we owe them much for their help during a trying time.

We are asked to announce that Mr. Bowman, newsagent, of 38 Leicester Road, Higher Broughton, Salford, Lancs, supplies all our publications, and has undertaken to exhibit the *Freethinker* for sale. Local residents will please note.

We were pleased to see a smartly written letter in the *Chiswick Times* by "E. L." on Secular Education. We hope our friends all over the country will keep the agitation going.

On Friday, July 19, our contributor, Mr. T. F. Palmer, opens a discussion at the offices of the Christian Evidence Society, 34 Craven Street, Strand, on the subject of "Does Scientific Materialism Best Account for the Universe?" The meeting is open to all, and the speaking commences at 8 o'clock. We daresay that many of our readers will make a point of being present. The discussion is certain to be interesting. Mr. Palmer is also opening a discussion on July 16, at 8 p.m., on "The Birth and Death of Worlds." Admission is free.

A correspondent writes:—

> In the course of my own work I came upon the following, which may be of use to the sane and admirable *Freethinker*: "he [Abelard] had dared to bring all things in heaven and earth to the test of Reason." "For his conservative opponents that was heresy" (I think the word is that, but I can't always read my own writing) "enough"; "to accept the doctrines of the Church because they were rational was hardly less offensive than to reject them as irrational."—(Dean) H. Rashall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. i., p. 55.

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The Story of the Tea Plant.

IV.

(*Continued from p. 370.*)

THAT pitiless struggle for existence everywhere manifested in the organic realm is strongly in evidence in the case of the tea plant. In company with all the nobler forms of floral life this shrub is extensively devastated by parasitic organisms. In Assam, a root fungus which flourishes on the decaying stumps of trees extends its attacks to the young tea plant with fatal consequences. The damage caused by this fungus is, fortunately, restricted to the area occupied by the rotting roots, but a space of some score feet in diameter is rendered desolate, and barren patches may disfigure the plantations throughout their extent.

Only too true are the poet's words :—

> Nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;
> The mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
> And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

In their standard work, *The Pests and Blights of the Tea Plant*, Sir George Watt and Dr. Mann instance and describe a mighty host of insect and other enemies of the tea bush.

The injurious activities of vegetable pests are apt to be intensified when plants are placed under cultivation. In a state of Nature the indigenous tea plant is scattered here and there in the virgin forest, but, when grown in gardens, enormous numbers of bushes are planted together, and when predaceous organisms meet with a permanent supply of the nutriment to which they are best adapted they multiply at a prodigious rate. Unlike an annual plant, the tea shrub remains evergreen all the year round, and as the months roll by its assailants are afforded full facilities for depositing their eggs or spores on or near their victim. They thus ensure a constantly increasing multitude of descendants to renew their baneful activities in the coming season at the expense of the unfortunate tea plant.

Although this shrub has suffered less severely than many other cultivated crops, the perils to which it is exposed have necessitated the scientific study of tea pests so as to protect the planter from their ravages. One authority asserts that: "Were it not for the natural checks to which most blights are subject, the tea plant would soon be devoured off the face of the earth." In some seasons various most important plants are seriously damaged by blights, caterpillars, and other foes, while, in others, the weather conditions prove very unfavourable to some at least of these pests. Adverse seasons are reinforced through the presence of numerous carnivorous and parasitic enemies of floral pests, and their activities are such that in normal years they more or less succeed in keeping tea blights and other destructive organisms under control.

Red spider is a perpetual enemy of the tea bush. All sorts of desperate attempts have been made to overcome this pestilent insect, but hitherto with small success. In the spring the eggs are hatched out in countless numbers within the leaves, and so soon as they emerge, the tiny spiders everywhere infest the foliage. This parasite exhausts the sap of the leaves, causing them to shrivel and fall. Even heavy rainstorms render little help, for the minute spiders seek safety on the underside of the leaves ready to reappear when the weather improves. So serious are the ravages of red spider that the invaded shrubs steadily weaken with each attack, and subsequently become an easy prey to morbid fungoid growths.

Red spider is usually most baleful on China bushes, while the pink mite, another parasite, ravages the choicer tea shrubs, notably, the celebrated Assam species. It was formerly supposed that the superior varieties were deciduous, for, occasionally, large groups of plants appear almost destitute of leaves. It is now known, however, that this results from the activities of the pink mite which sucks all the juices from the leaves, which thus cease to function, and then wither and fall. Much to the planter's annoyance and loss, the foliage thus discarded forms the newly ripened leaves of the early flush which would have produced the finest tea. Bushes growing in shady situations seem less liable to attack than those planted on more open ground. As a remedial measure flower of sulphur is employed, and this is said to expel the parasite for the whole of the ensuing season.

The mosquito is another formidable foe which, at one period, menaced the Indian tea industry with ruin. Its depredations in the late 'eighties in the Darjeeling district were responsible for the bankruptcy of several fine estates. The life cycle of this exasperating insect is now nearly known, and its doom is merely a matter of time. The tender tea leaves are destroyed by the mosquito in July in some regions, at the very period when the plant should appear at its best. Usually, however, the most serious blight occurs in September and early October until the close of the season.

Although a noxious creature, the presence of the green fly promotes the production of choice flavoured teas. Fortunately for manufacturing purposes, this fly does not injure the foliage unless its visitations prove abnormally severe. Then its sinister activities retard all growth, with calamitous consequences to the cultivator. An expert informs us that :—

> The green fly feeds upon the watery fluid of the young leaves, and extracts it in such a way as not to injure in any degree the tissue itself, or the actual juice or sap of the plant; thus the juice, by losing nearly all its water, becomes greatly concentrated, and the whole leaf is proportionately contracted in size. Planters all know the peculiar stunted appearance of green-fly leaf, and if the bushes are of the small China variety, the leaves in these circumstances are so small as to be very expensive and difficult to gather; they have also the light yellowish colour indicative of fine quality, and the sap is thick and sticky, being really a concentrated essence of tea.

Many other insect enemies infest the tea plant. Then there are many parasitic plants that entwine themselves around the bark, branches, and leaves of the bush, thus excluding light and air, while depriving their host of access to soil and moisture. In these several ways climbing plants arrest the growth of, and sometimes even strangle, the tea shrub to which they have attached themselves. Moreover, numerous fungoid diseases afflict the plant. Sickly shrubs are subject to the growth of lichen, while healthy bushes, when invaded by this parasite, soon lose their vigour. Not only does this growth sadly handicap the tea shrub with its unwelcome embrace, but its scaly surface provides a habitat for several species of insects detrimental to the plant's prosperity.

So far, no satisfactory machine has been devised which plucks the leaves from the bush. Where coarse tea is produced, and the leaves are gathered at random, a plucking machine serves very well. But the desideratum is a contrivance that will select the leaves essential for the preparation of high grade teas, while leaving on the bushes the foliage not desired.

When the leaf-buds peer forth in spring, the tea plant is said to flush. It is stated that from ten to fifteen flushes during the season form a fair average from strong and healthy shrubs, although the pickings number as

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many as thirty, or even thirty-five. The separate shoots are in different stages of development at each gathering, and in successful tea-plucking each leaf must be encouraged to grow until it is at its prime, and then promptly picked. Hand picking is therefore necessary, and cheap and abundant labour is indispensable to the planter. On a thriving estate of 1,100 acres the various requirements involved compel the services of a staff of "at least 2,000 people of all grades, who must have the necessary fuel to cook their food and for domestic purposes generally."

Experimental tea-growing in America has been in operation for many years, but, except in South Carolina, with small success. Insufficient rainfall and the high cost of labour combine to prevent the warmer regions of the United States from entering into serious competition with India and Ceylon.

When the leaves have been gathered, the first stage of manufacture begins. This is the withering process, which precedes the rolling of the leaf. It is considered that, were rolling to take place prior to withering, the precious leaves would be torn to tatters, and the greater part of their juice lost. About seventy-five per cent. of the green leaf consists of water, even in dry weather, and nearly half of this moisture must be evaporated if the leaf is to be rolled without fracture. Also, during the withering stage a striking chemical change occurs. The natural enzyme or fermenting principle of the foliage is augmented, and this increases both the flavour and strength of the manufactured commodity.

(To be concluded.) T. F. PALMER.

The War and God.

A CONFESSION OF FAITH FROM THE NORTH SEA.

HUNTING about the North Sea in all weathers, and under present War conditions, in one of the Ocean Dragoons—a big T.B.D.—does not give much opportunity for the exercise of that weapon which is (sometimes) "mightier than the sword." But, even in that life, with little sleep, less comfort, and no warmth, there are some moments of leisure. Then one naturally reverts to the more peaceful past times—so far as these can be indulged in. Thus it was that this was originally written to an intimate, but still orthodox, friend. I have been induced to send this copy to the old *Freethinker*, thinking it might be of interest, and of some little value, to a wider circle than the individual friend to whom it was at first addressed.

In passing, I may say (as one who has been "serving" since almost the very outset of the War) that my *Freethinker* is much in demand among many shipmasters—as it was with many comrades on land. Not only that; it is read by "the man in the street" (now the man in the Service) with an interest greater than "before the War"—and with a "more open mind."

A word of explanation, before proceeding with the transcript of the letter, may help to a clearer understanding by the reader—be he "saint" or otherwise. I sent a card of greeting (and of mourning for a very bitter loss) to this friend, last Christmas. He twitted me, in a letter, with conforming to orthodox Christmas observances; and (with underlying seriousness) insinuated that I—even after my more than twenty-six years of philosophic Atheism—had been compelled by the War to reconsider my philosophic values!

That could not be allowed to go unchallenged. So I wrote again, pointing out that "Christmas" was a Pagan festival, pinched by the Christians, and was a widespread public festival to-day (though with but little chance of "festivities" for many of us). I referred to a few of the facts from comparative mythology; and I mentioned that these facts were admitted, even by many Christian scholars.

Following upon that, I received the letter to which this (exact) transcript is my reply. My friend's arguments may be enumerated thusly:—(1) He liked to hear from me, but preferred "ordinary" letters; (2) What I had said was "pure piffle"; (3) I shouldn't try to ridicule a religion which had "stood the test of centuries," in spite of all the many attacks upon it; (4) Abundant proof had been published that the War was bringing people back to religion, and compelling them to believe in God; (5) I had had more and better chances in life than he (referring to education, etc.), but I had done much "worse" in life (presumably owing to my Atheism); and (6) There was little prospect of happiness for me so long as I remained an Atheist.

Not a very formidable attack from a rationally argumentative point of view. But very typical of the usual Christian criticism.

What follows here is a literal copy of my reply. All quotations and references are from memory, as the only book I have with me is a well-conned copy of the *Rubaiyat* (apart from fiction and magazines).

. . . . .

DEAR FRIEND,.....

I cannot finish this letter without some reference to the more "serious" subject touched upon in some of your more recent letters. The "last word" is not only the woman's prerogative, but also the right of him who "replies" in a discussion. *You* opened it. So, 'tis only fair that *I* should close it. It is, of course, a matter of taste; but I feel a greater pleasure in writing about such "serious" subjects, than in merely chronicling the small beer (which we never see!) of our daily round. Still, after this, I shan't pursue the subject (or any other "serious" one)—if *you* don't start it!

You rightly say you were brought up a Christian. So was I. But I studied Christianism (and other religions) pretty thoroughly, and with great earnestness. You did not. Had you and I been born and brought us as Mussulmans, you'd probably be still a Mussulman, and probably I should not.

I never tried to ridicule your religious beliefs; though ridicule (within reasonable limits) is a perfectly justifiable weapon, and one which the professional "witch-doctors" use, or try to use, *ad lib.* I merely pointed out some incontrovertible facts about the Pagan origins of Christianism—many of which are admitted by Christian scholars.

The Christian religion (or religions) has, most emphatically, *not* "stood the test of centuries." In my own lifetime I have seen it (or them) *forced* to abandon doctrine after doctrine—position after position. It stands (*if* it stands) to-day vastly different to what it was thirty or more years ago—when I started to study it. These changes constitute in themselves a measure of the efficacy of the Freethought attack. (And proud am I of having done my little bit in compelling those stragetic movements to the rear on the part of Christianism.) I can remember when "Plenary Inspiration" was almost generally believed in. To-day it is not—not even in Scotland! I don't suppose even the "Wee Free" diviner believes the commas are verbally inspired—especially as there was no punctuation at all in the Hebrew!

I am old enough to remember Robertson Smith being excommunicated (by the Free Kirk, wasn't it?) for saying that "Isaiah" was not all written by one and the same said prophet. But I have lived to see scientific criticism (merely the development of the great Thomas Paine's

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Age of Reason) do the same deadly work on the "New" Testament that it had already done on the "Old." And much of that *inside* the Churches! The late Rev. Dr. Bruce practically abandoned the "Divinity" of Christ and was *not* excommunicated. Hensley Henson does not believe in the physical resurrection of Christ, etc.—and has just been made a Bishop. That's not standing the test of thirty years—let alone centuries. A few years ago, the Rev. Dr. Anderson, of Dundee, said "we" (Christians) had to abandon the "Historical Christ"; and we had to create an ideal ("Christ") out of the good, the true, and the beautiful. And he (Dr. Anderson) still draws his screw as a parson. That is "standing the test of" years in a kind of "Kamerad! Hands up here!" spirit indeed.

I can remember the stir caused by Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, and others; and read all through the controversies in the *Nineteenth Century* and elsewhere. And I remember poor old W. E. G.'s frantic efforts to save his creed and his Gods. To-day, evolution is almost universally accepted (even by Christians), and the "impregnable rock" has gone the way of all sandstone under continued water-action. Nay, admission after admission has been made by representatives of all denominations (especially in recent years) that Christianism has *not* been holding its own. "Standing the test" in *that* way is a German victory indeed!

ATHOS ZENO.

(*To be continued.*)

Correspondence.

A PROPOSAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have a proposal to make to you in consequence of a request made by one of your readers, whose name, age, and sex are unknown to me. This gentleman or lady—to be referred to for the purposes of this letter as the former—kindly sent me the same numbers of your journal, with sundry passages marked in ink. On the margin he had written a strongly worded suggestion that I should take note of these passages. So much for the external advice received.

On looking at the passages marked, I at once resolved to act on this friendly but anonymous hint, so far, anyhow, as to feel your editorial pulse on the question of starting a discussion by correspondence in your columns. My reasons for mooting this project are as follows:—

(1) It is refreshing always to come into contact with a mental atmosphere very different from the one a clergyman ordinarily breathes.

(2) Especially when it means reading disquisitions on matters of vital importance written with conspicuous sincerity, clearness of thought, and desire to arrive at truth.

(3) I have formed a hope that if certain conditions are observed the result of such a discussion, as I anticipate, would be something like a cordial *rapprochement* between myself and sundry of my fellow-Britons from whom, largely through my own fault, I have become estranged.

Other reasons might be added; but I must pass on to speak of necessary conditions, and of what I am prepared to offer if those conditions be observed.

All I ask is that, if any of your readers honour my letters with their notice, they would join me in an honest and persevering effort to be perfectly courteous and perfectly candid. Nobody, of course, is *perfectly* either the one or the other; but that is no reason why we should not try.

I shall therefore begin to keep up my end, as we used to say in our cricket matches, by avoiding so far as I can every phrase which would be likely to give offence, and every form of words which would obscure my meaning or my genuine opinion. Courtesy, frankness, honesty; these ought to be within the reach of us all; and so far as a rapid glance at your columns allows me to judge, you are showing how they are, even in a "religious" discussion, to be maintained.

If, on the other hand, by blundering or bigotry, or any other tomfoolery, to which we parsons are occasionally prone, I gall any of your readers to exasperation and heat of language, I shall do all I can to make amends; but, thenceforward, shall leave unnoticed whatever the particular disputant may say. I have reached an age when personal abuse has not only lost its power to excite, but even to stir the faintest flicker of emotion. It strikes me as unutterably dull.

If, therefore, you give me the opportunity I will send you some observations on what you have written with the object of pointing out grounds of agreement between two points of view apparently irreconcilable.

E. LYTTELTON.

(Doctor of Divinity and late Headmaster of Eton).

THE SOUL.

SIR,—I always find "Abracadabra's" articles interesting and instructive, but his treatment of the expressions "soul" and "spirit" are not entirely satisfying to me. For many years I have been mentally teased by the use of these terms by Christians, as though they were synonymous, and this week "Abracadabra" writes: "these are merely *names* of two imaginary entities (or two aspects of the same entity)."

I suggest that at some early age there existed a cult of the threefold, but I have had no time nor opportunity of verifying the idea. But I think that, in a superficial view of Nature, it would be noticed that three is repeatedly exhibited. We have:—

Sun, moon, and stars;
Earth, air, and water;
Animal, bird, and fish;
Man, woman, and child, etc.

So in after-life belief there would arise:—

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;
Heaven, hell, and purgatory;
Body, soul, and spirit, etc.

The last two appear to me to represent two distinct entities in the mind of early man; Soul (Sol—the sun) being the body-heat; and Spirit (Spiro—I breathe) the breath. If we could refer back far enough, perhaps we should find that originally there were reasons for these separate terms, which were sufficient for the people who held them. Can "Abracadabra" clear up my indecision?

E. ANDERSON.

CLEANLINESS AND GODLINESS.

SIR,—*Apropos* the reference in "Views and Opinions" of June 23 issue to Thomas Becket's hoary clothing, recalls the influence of the Church at that time, and the simplicity of kings. Becket, as keeper of Henry's privy seal, rose high in the King's favour, and is described as being a tall and handsome man; eloquent and witty, fond of all games of skill and sport. In short, his real "sportive" instinct appeared endearing to all the young nobility who "gathered round" his table. But so soon as the Church and the sanctity of office adorned his person, his palace was no longer the abode of the happy and the gay. Becket became a changed man. He was stern and quarrelsome, relentlessly haughty, and put forth his claims with such boldness of spirit as to leave most of his quarrels unsettled. Despite this fact, his journey to Canterbury appears to have been one triumphal procession. People shouted "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" All this after six years of exile, coupled with the excommunication against the Bishops of York, London, and Salisbury because they had dared crown Prince Henry at the King's request during his exile, goaded the King into having Becket removed.

Certain laws in favour of the King and opposed to the Church, in that the Church tribunals dealt too lightly with the very serious crimes of the clergy, led Becket to agree, under threat of violence from some of the barons, but to eventually flee to France. The Pope released him of his promise, and refused to recognize the Constitution himself. However, Becket was soon to pay the penalty, and the poor King did penance on his tomb for the crime.

D. O.

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SUNDAY BANDS IN GLASGOW.

SIR,—It may interest your readers to learn that a military band performance was given on Sunday, June 30, in Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow. This is stated to have been the first band performance to take place on Sunday in a public park of Glasgow. The event drew a huge crowd to the park, and is worth putting on record as showing that even in Scotland we are gradually humanizing the Sunday.

GEORGE SCOTT.

GHOSTS' CLOTHES.

SIR,—In my paper of June 23 I left two questions for Spiritists to answer—first, where did the imaginary "spirit," which they say leaves the body at death, get its membrane or outer covering? and second, where did it get the "spirit-clothes," which their clairvoyants profess to see? Mr. Harper, in his reply, has answered neither.

To illustrate the first of these questions I may point to a balloon sailing through the air. Take away the outer covering which holds the large quantity of gas together, and every particle of the latter will be immediately dispersed. While the gas was confined within its envelope, it might be said to represent a personality; without its covering, it is at once scattered to the four winds, its particles never to be gathered together again. So must it be with a "disembodied spirit," assuming such an impossibility to exist. Mr. Harper has not mentally visualized this question.

Again, Mr. Harper quotes me as saying that "æther is many million times thinner than air." What I said was that "ether is *supposed to be* many million times thinner," etc. I used the words here italicized for the simple reason that, in my opinion, what certain scientists say about ether is pure theory; also, my reference was not to the ether obtained from alcohol and sulphuric acid, but to the extremely attenuated gaseous substance which is *supposed* to fill all space, as mentioned by Sir Oliver Lodge.

ABRACADABRA.

Society News.

A meeting of the South Shields Branch, N.S.S., to consider various urgent business matters took the place of a country ramble at short notice. A vote of condolence with the relatives of our oldest member, Mr. J. T. Horsman, was passed, and it was decided to start a Freethinker Fund to develop and maintain local sales, and, from a suggestion of the deceased member, to institute a waste paper department and a collector was duly appointed. One new member was made. Branches will do well to follow the example of our South Shields friends.—E. M. VANCE, *Gen. Sec.*

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind,
That never passion discomposed the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life. —*Pope.*

Obituary.

Mr. John Thomas Horsman, the oldest member of the Branch, and once a familiar figure at the Annual Conferences, died suddenly, aged fifty-seven, on July 5, and was buried at Harton Cemetery on Monday last, Mr. J. Fothergill giving an impressive reading of the Secular Burial Service. Deceased followed his usual employment as a locomotive engine driver for the N.E.R. Co. on the day prior to his death. His conversion to Secularism was due solely to Bible reading, and during his long connection with the South Shields Branch he was a regular and persistent worker in a quiet way. Conferences, from Glasgow to London, and even to Brussels, were an annual pilgrimage for Mr. Horsman until recent years; until he died he was always highly respected by his colleagues, his fellow-workmen, and the railway officials.—R. C. (South Shields).

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 ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Laurence Housman, "Crime and Punishment."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Miss Kough, A Lecture; 6.30, Miss Kough, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

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

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Christianity and Morals.—The Editor	385
Anglo-Catholicism.—J. T. Lloyd	386
Under the Red Flag.—Mimnermus	387
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	388
The War and God.—Athos Zeno	392
Playing at Sunday-School.—Joseph Bryce	393
Thoughts Awheel.—Andrew Millar	394

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Christianity and Morals.

A Christian reader of this paper—there are quite a number of them—writes that, however much we may dissent from Christian doctrines, we cannot deny that Christianity brought a new moral force into the world, and that this showed itself clearly in the lives of its followers. Well, but this is what we do deny, and we believe we can make our denial good by an appeal to facts. We know that the opinion voiced by our correspondent is one that is fairly common, and exists with many who do not call themselves Christians. But this we regard as either pure cant or the hypnosis produced by mere assertion. And it will be noted that the claim is not made on behalf of contemporary Christianity. It never is. When Douglas Jerrold was told that the weather at Christmas was not what it used to be, he replied, "It never was." Christian writers always find the wonderful moral regeneration effected by Christianity in some period preceding their own. Or else it will produce a moral re-birth in some time that is yet to come. The dream of the visionary or the unverifiable guess of the prophet.

* * *

A Vain Search.

Now, religions never get truer to themselves as they grow older. They are at their truest when they are youngest, at their falsest in their old age. This is because as religions grow older, they become more subject to the play of *social* forces, which leads to a dropping of many things that are morally objectionable or useless. And the emphasis laid now upon morality by teachers of Christianity is no proof that it was their chief concern in the early centuries. Moral teaching is, in brief, the camouflage adopted by religions that have reached senility, in order to disguise their real nature from contemporary eyes. And there is really no proof that primitive Christianity aimed at the moral improvement of people in any other sense than that in which systems are compelled to inculcate certain moral duties. Salvation by belief, not regeneration through moral conduct, was the aim of Christianity. Pagan contemporary moralists and writers are never struck by the morality of Christians; what impresses them is their narrowness, their fanaticism, and their intense superstition. Against the assertions of Christians there is the broad fact that conduct did *not* improve with the growth of Christianity. On the contrary, it deteriorated. Charges of the most serious character were brought by Christians against Christians; not merely charges of doctrinal laxity, but also of moral turpitude. Even Dean Milman was forced to admit, on a survey of the facts, that Christianity gave to non-Christians no more than its own superstition and hatred of heretics and unbelievers. And Professor Dill, writing of the fifth century, says: "The picture which St. Jerome draws of female society is so repulsive that we would gladly believe it to be exaggerated. But if the priesthood, with its enormous influence, was so corrupt, it is only too probable that it debased the sex which is always most under clerical influence." And one may here recall the speech made by Cardinal Hugo on the departure of Pope Innocent IV., in 1251, from the city of Lyons: "Friends, since our arrival here, we have done much for your city. When we came, we found here three or four brothels. We leave behind us but one. We must own, however, that it extends without interruption from the eastern to the western gate."

* * *

An Orthodox Witness.

But instead of multiplying these testimonials, let us take the evidence of one witness. And let that be not a Freethinker, but a Christian—no less a person than the reverend and learned Dr. Mosheim. In his *Ecclesiastical History* he deals with Christian history century by century, and his summaries on the moral regeneration effected are instructive. Thus:—

> *Second Century.*—After pointing out that many "learned men" consider the Christian writers as "the very worst of moral instructors," he adds: "the cause of morality.....suffered deeply by a capital error (ascetic doctrines) which was revived in this century.
>
> *Third Century.*—Church rule "was soon followed by a train of vices which dishonoured the character and authority of those to whom the administration of the Church was committed."
>
> *Fourth Century.*—"When we cast an eye towards the lives and morals of Christians at this time, we find a mixture of good and evil, some eminent for their piety, others infamous for their crimes. The number, however, of immoral and unworthy Christians began so to increase that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare."
>
> *Fifth Century.*—"The vices of the clergy were now carried to the most enormous lengths, and all the writers of the century, whose probity and virtue render them worthy of credit, are unanimous in their accounts of the luxury, avarice, arrogance, and voluptuousness of the sacerdotal orders."
>
> *Sixth Century.*—"The various orders of the clergy were infected with these vices that are too often the consequences of an affluent prosperity. This appears with the utmost evidence from the imperial edicts and the decrees of councils."
>
> *Seventh Century.*—"The progress of vice among the subordinate rulers and ministers of the Church was at this time truly deplorable."

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Eighth Century.—"In the Western world, Christianity was disgraced by the lives and actions of those who pretended to be the luminaries of the Church. The clergy.....were distinguished by their luxury, their gluttony, and their lust."

Ninth Century.—"The licentiousness of the clergy arose, at this time, to an enormous height."

Tenth Century.—"Both in the eastern and western provinces, the clergy were, for the most part, composed of the most worthless set of men, shamefully illiterate and stupid.....equally enslaved to sensuality and superstition, and capable of the most abominable and flagitious deeds."

Eleventh Century.—"All the records of this century loudly complain of the vices that reigned among the rulers of the Church.....The inferior clergy were also licentious in their way; few among them possessed any remains of piety and virtue, we might add of decency and discretion."

Twelfth Century.—"Wherever we turn our eyes among the various ranks and orders of the clergy, we perceive the most flagrant marks of licentiousness and fraud, ignorance and luxury, and other vices, whose pernicious effects were felt both in Church and State."

Thirteenth Century.—"Both the Greek and Latin writers, provoked beyond measure by the flagitious lives of their spiritual pastors and instructors, complain loudly of their licentious manners; nor will their complaints appear excessive to such as are acquainted with the history of this corrupt and superstitious age."

We do not think it is necessary to continue the record up to date. It could be done, but we hope we have given enough evidence to justify our denial that Christianity ever brought moral regeneration to the world. That belief is sheer superstition. It rests on no better evidence than the word of Christian writers, and modern ones at that. It was not, indeed, within the power of Christianity to do anything of the kind. A religion which involved a reversion to the beliefs of savages could not make for moral progress. It could only make for degeneration. And the history of that degradation is there for anyone who runs and reads. Fortunate it is for the Church that the majority neither run nor read. Still less do they *think*. If they did the reign of Christianity would be short indeed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Anglo-Catholicism.

THE religious press abounds with all sorts of illusions concerning the present conditions and prospects of the Christian religion. Prominent clergymen confidently affirm that, in its effect upon religion, the War has already proved the greatest possible blessing in disguise. It has deepened and intensified the spiritual life of the Churches, and enabled them to perceive, with greater clearness than ever before, the nature and scope of their mission in the world. Everywhere we discern unmistakable signs that the people generally are recovering their sense of dependence upon and responsibility to God, and showing an increased interest in and eagerness to hear and heed the Gospel message. Both in the Army and the Navy men are turning to God in ever-growing numbers, realizing that in him alone can they find the succour and inspiration of which they stand in such dire need in these distressing times. On the other hand, we are informed by the same press that churches and chapels are empty, that a lamentable religious indifference prevails, and that the Gospel of Christ no longer attracts the masses. The optimists are evidently buoyed up by illusions, by hopes kindled by beliefs which scorn facts, while the pessimists judge by what they see and know to be true. The optimists seem to be governed by the principle, avowed and gloried in by Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, "that he would relate all that was to the credit, and pass lightly over all which was to the dishonour, of the Faith," forgetting that such a principle in action can only result in grevious injury to the cause it seeks to serve. Commenting on Eusebius and other primitive Christian writers, Dean Milman says:—

> Strict impartiality could not be expected from a Christian writer of that day; and probably Eusebius erred more often from credulity than from dishonesty. Yet the unbelief produced, in later times, by the fictitious character of early Christian History, may show how dangerous, how fatal, may be the least departure from truth. On pious fraud read Mosheim, Diss. i. 206, et seqq. (*The History of Christianity*, vol. iii., p. 361).

It may be conceded that present-day optimists "err more often from credulity than from dishonesty"; but it is incontrovertible that their conduct benefits the cause of Freethought much more than it does their own, because the facts are wholly against them. Whilst the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, for example, has been going up and down the country, treating crowded and cheering audiences to eloquent accounts of the present power and brilliant prophesies of the coming triumph of the Cross, an influential committee of his Church has been conducting a careful inquiry into the present position of Wesleyan Methodism, and now presents what the *Daily News* describes as "a disturbing report," which that newspaper summarizes thus:—

> One hundred and fifty selected churches in a great industrial district show an average attendance at morning service equal to 17 per cent. of the sitting accommodation, and 29 per cent. at the evening service. Centra town churches are maintained by two or three devoted members and attended only by a few score people, while new and commodious churches in "villadom" have never attracted those for whom they are intended. In the last few years the membership has declined 28,571, and this decrease is most marked in districts where Methodism had been strongest, *e.g.*, Leeds, Hull, York, Halifax, Cornwall, and Lincolnshire. Ten years ago there were over 1,000,000 Sunday scholars. This number has fallen by nearly 150,000, and there are about 100,000 fewer children between the ages of 7 and 15. The report also acknowledges a decline in evangelistic activity. "Evangelistic fervour now burns low. Here and there the flame burts out; but it is fitful, and hardly flares ere it begins to falter."

The preachers and the statisticians glaringly contradict one another, and this statement applies practically to all the Churches in Christendom. The clergy are notorious boasters, most of them, no doubt, as Milman says, "more often from credulity than from dishonesty," but all of them in shocking disregard of the facts.

But why is it that the Christian Church is so conspicuously on the decline? For several scores of years the majority of the sects have had to record serious decreases both in membership and attendance, and the Sunday-school has been visibly losing its hold upon the children. It is generally put down to a rapidly growing indifference to religion, which is certainly true; but the indifference is a symptom, not a cause. Loss of interest in religion indicates a corresponding lack of faith. No one can really believe in God, and Christ, and a future life who spends his life in complete forgetfulness of them. The truth is that the day of superstition is past beyond recall, and that it is with the utmost difficulty that any belief in it is kept alive. How many thoughtful people are there who verily believe in and rely upon the Supernatural? Is it not undeniable that the very multiplicity of different and mutually exclusive denominations

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constitutes a formidable argument against the truth of Christianity? Are not the doctrines of all the sects in their very nature absolutely unbelievable? The authors of *Christianity in History* are convinced that "the tide is setting towards Reunion"; but the following is their summing up of the situation:—

> One must sadly admit in the light of the recent past, as well as of the long persistence of exclusive, often mutually exclusive, attitude of the several forms of "Catholicism"—Roman, Orthodox, and also Anglican—that divergent conceptions of "Apostolic" orthodoxy and authority, of orders, and, above all, of valid Sacraments, are likely long to keep the bulk of Christians apart for conscientious reasons (p. 604).

Recently the Rev. N. P. Williams, R.N., delivered an exceptionally lucid sermon, entitled "Reunion with the North," at All Saint's, Margaret Street, London, in which he expressed a strong desire for the reconciliation of the East with the West, and of both with the North. Belonging to the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church, Mr. Williams lays down the conditions on which he thinks the Established Church of Scotland ought to be received into union with the Church of England. As is well known, the Established Church of Scotland is Presbyterian, while that of England is Episcopal. Mr. Williams regards the Anglican Church as a normal institution, taking no note of the fact that the Church of Rome looks upon it as heretical and schismatical. The Church, he tells us, includes both a "nucleus" and a "penumbra," or "fringe"—"the nucleus consisting of normal, or orthodox, baptized persons, and the fringe consisting of those who have indeed been baptized but are unorthodox and excommunicate." Mr. Williams graciously grants that the Scottish Church consists of persons who have been baptized, but reminds it that it is only a penumbra, or fringe, by no means a nucleus. Now, the following is the style in which they of the nucleus approach them of the fringe:—

> The contrast between you and ourselves is not a contrast between black and white; it is a contrast between grey and white. The difference between you and ourselves is one of degree, and not of kind.....We recognize that you believe such and such Articles of Faith; what we wish to point out to you is that there are certain other Articles of Faith which we should like you to believe; we also wish to point out that there is a Divinely appointed governing power in the Church with which we should like you to establish regular relations, so as to legitimate your position.

At present the only merit attaching to the Established Church of Scotland is that it consists of baptized persons; but it does not include a nucleus, but only a penumbra, or fringe. In order to be reunited with the true and orthodox Church, it must adopt Episcopacy and Catholic order, repudiate Calvinism, and "restore the Lord's Supper to its central position as the chief function of Sunday." There is a party in the Church of Scotland, no doubt, which, led by Dr. Cooper, would be willing to be united with the Anglican Church on such terms; but we do not believe there are many in that communion who are prepared to acquiesce in the classification of it as merely a penumbra, or fringe, or a heretical and schismatical organization.

Our present point, however, is that the claims which the Catholic Party makes for itself are so fantastical or whimsical that it is no wonder so many people are turning their backs upon all forms of supernatural religion, and insisting upon being treated as outsiders. Mr. Williams, by such sermons as the one under consideration, which extends to five columns of the *Church Times* for July 5, will make more Atheists than Christians. Evidently agreeing with St. Cyprian's famous saying: "He who has not the Church for his mother, cannot have God for his Father," he necessarily alienates intelligent, self-respecting people, and helps them to realize the true nature and purport of all supernatural pretensions. Mr. Williams ought to have lived five or six centuries ago, when he could have been of genuine service to a dominant Church. To-day he is an anachronism, and consequently promotes the interests of a cause he holds in derision.

J. T. Lloyd.

Under the Red Flag.

Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and a Late Victorian. By Ernest Belfort Bax. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.; 1918.) 7s. 6d. net.

The whirligig of time brings strange revenges. All that the Philistine disclaimed some years ago your middle-class gentleman adores to-day. Walter Crane's beautiful designs have long been accepted at their true value. In music, Wagner has arrived, and is, indeed, on the eve of his departure. But nowhere has the reversal of positions been so rapid or so absolute as in literature. The Socialist writers ran a great risk. They were odious, unpopular, and were supposed to exhibit all the worst features of narrow, political propagandists. William Morris is now a classic, Edward Carpenter has a large and ever-increasing audience, and Bernard Shaw is one of the foremost literary figures in the public mind. "It is roses, roses all the way."

It is men and women who make movements interesting, and Mr. E. Belfort Bax's *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian* is a very welcome addition to the literature concerned with Socialism. We hope that it will not be the last of its kind from Mr. Bax's pen, for it throws much light on the characters of the Socialist leaders, and it tells us much of the trials and struggles of the early days. Although primarily an autobiography, Mr. Bax's unique sketch of men, manners, and movements from the "sixties" of the last century to the present time, should prove of interest to all who care for the intellectual and political life of an important period of history.

To Freethinkers the most fascinating of Mr. Bax's pages will be those dealing with the religious views current in the later years of the Victorian era. Says Mr. Bax:—

> It was my lot to grow up under no very favourable conditions for intellectual development. The subjects talked of in the family circle were mainly connected with religious dogma, or the sectarian interests of the various religious bodies. Preachers of the pure quality of their orthodoxy, as opposed on the one side to "Romanism" and on the other to "Latitudinarianism," bulked largely among the topics of conversation with ours as with other middle-class families at the time. A severe censorship in the matter of literature that was allowed into the house was maintained. As usual with the bulk of early and mid-Victorian middle-class society, the theatre in all its forms was banned. In fact in many cases, ours among them, any form of amusement was supposed to savour more or less of godlessness.

This Puritan tradition of family life is nearly extinct, and few survive who think it wicked to be happy. Dreadful shadows indeed! And millions have been reared under them. They still hover over tin-tabernacles, Salvation Army barracks, and other places of worship of the intellectually lost.

Mr. Bax is himself a Freethinker, but he wears his "rue with a difference." He even suggests that the work of the earlier Secularists was "crude and coarse." As if any reform was ever instituted, or abuse swept away, without wounding the susceptibilities of some ignorant or bigoted persons. It is better to let every

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soldier of progress do what he can. It is idle to quarrel with another for being different. The bolder are apt to despise the less bold as wanting in courage, but that is usually a mistake. The less bold are still more apt to sneer at the bolder as vulgar and froward, which is usually a greater mistake.

Here is what Mr. Bax has to say of the later aspects of popular Freethought :—

> It was not till the early eighties and the prosecution of Foote for blasphemy that the better educated middle classes began to have sense and justice enough to see the movement from below for freedom of thought, commonly known as Secularism, for what it was, namely, the plucky effort of men of the small middle and working classes to emancipate themselves, up to their lights, from the thraldom of an encumbering and galling superstition, fatal to all advance in knowledge and to all independent intellectual effort.

This testimonial is very different from Mr. Bax's criticism of the older Secularists. It reminds us of the clergyman who, when invited to say grace before dinner, always began with "Bountiful Jehovah" if he saw champagne on the table, but moderated his transports in the presence of claret.

It is not as a Freethinker, however, but as an apostle of Socialism that Mr. Bax will be remembered. The story of the early struggles of that movement, as unfolded by him in these pages, reads like a romance—a romance of brave men and women fighting at fearful odds, and ultimately triumphing. His association with the Socialist movement brought with it introductions to men of genius, which, in many instances, ripened into friendship. One gets many pleasant glimpses of Bernard Shaw, William Morris, Friedrich Engels, Jean Jaures, August Bebel, Prince Kropotkin, and a whole host of famous men. These vignettes are etched with an engaging frankness, as when he tells the story of Bernard Shaw borrowing half-a-crown of him, and his returning the money next day. Bax rallied him on his promptness and scrupulosity. "Oh," said Shaw, "it is my habit to show punctilious accuracy in small money matters, so that when the time comes I may pull off my big coup with success."

The veteran Mr. H. M. Hyndman's fondness for "the frock coat, the pot-hat, and the linked shirt-cuff" is duly noted by Mr. Bax, who adds: "nothing would induce me to don this hideous and sordid uniform." Mr. Hyndman not only wore it bravely and constantly, but even sold Socialist papers in the Strand and Fleet Street whilst so garbed. Mr. Cunninghame Graham, on the other hand, is mentioned as having a "passion for fashionable dress," and as bearing a resemblance to Charles the First. Readers should turn to Mr. Bax's volume for themselves. It is a fascinating book, forcefully and modestly written, and ought to be read by all those who care about the betterment of the conditions of the majority of their fellow-men. It should also remind Socialists that Clericalism is the real enemy. Doubtless, in time, Socialists will yet discover, like Red Riding Hood, that the Church is not a grandmother but a wolf.

MIMNERMUS.

He says I'm no use! but I won't reply.
You're lucky not being of use to him!
On week-days he's playing at Spider and Fly,
And on Sundays he sings about Cherubim!
Nailing shillings to counters is his chief work;
He nods now and then at the name on his door:
But judge of us two at a bow and a smirk,
I think I'm his match: and I'm honest—that's more.

—*George Meredith, "The Beggar's Soliloquy."*

A Search for the Soul.

V.

(*Continued from p. 369.*)

IN May, 1903, Lord Kelvin, a distinguished physicist, made some remarks at a meeting of the Christian Association at University College, which were reported in the *Times*. This was followed by a letter, in which, after speaking of "the coming into existence, or the growth, or the continuation of the molecular combinations presented in the bodies of living things," that scientist said: "Here scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power.....Modern biologists are coming once more to the acceptance of a Vital principle." This remarkable statement produced replies from several eminent biologists and scientists, including Sir E. Ray Lankester, Sir W. T. Thiselton-Dyer, Sir J. Burden-Sanderson, Professor Karl Pearson, and others—who all repudiated or condemned Lord Kelvin's unauthorized statement. The following are extracts from the reply of Professor Ray Lankester, which I take from the Appendix to his *Kingdom of Man* :—

> Lord Kelvin seems to have formed the conception of a creator who, first of all, without care or foresight, has produced what we call "matter," with its necessary properties.....and then, as a second effort, has brought some of these elements together with "creative and directive purpose," mixing them, as it were, with a "vital principle" so as to form living things.....I do not myself know of any one of admitted leadership among modern biologists who is showing signs of "coming to a belief in the existence of a Vital principle.".....Modern biologists do not accept the hypothesis of "telepathy" advocated by Sir Oliver Lodge, nor that of the intrusions of disembodied spirits pressed upon them by others of the same school.

No one of any note appears to have taken the side of Lord Kelvin in this controversy; but five years later Sir Oliver Lodge published his *Man and the Universe*, in which the repudiated "Vital principle" figures as an apparently scientific fact.

We will now look at what Professor Huxley has called "the physical basis of life." When a seed is placed in the ground and well watered, it soon begins to draw into itself nutriment obtained from the earth, the air, rain, and sunshine, which substances are all non-living and contain no vital properties whatever; then, by some chemical process, it combines them all into one substance, known as protein or protoplasm, which is capable of sustaining life. Upon this subject Professor Huxley says :—

> This "physical basis of life" depends upon the pre-existence of certain compounds; namely, carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. Withdraw any one of these three from the world, and all vital phenomena come to an end. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are all lifeless bodies. Of these, carbon and oxygen unite in certain proportions, and under certain conditions, to give rise to carbonic acid; hydrogen and oxygen produce water; nitrogen and hydrogen give rise to ammonia. These new compounds, like the elementary bodies of which they are composed, are lifeless. But when they are brought together, under certain conditions, they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, and this protoplasm exhibits the phenomena of life.

Here it should be noted that the difference between plants and animals, in the matter of food, is that plants are able to draw the protoplasm necessary for their growth and development out of inorganic substances, whereas animals (including man) are unable to do so, and are obliged to obtain the protoplasm they require ready made, either in the form of grass or other vegetable substance, or the flesh of other animals. Both Professor

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Huxley and Tyndall reject the idea of a "vital principle," as do also the great majority of other scientists. In his essay on "Vitality" (1863) Professor Tyndall says:—

> To account for the origin, growth, and energies of living things it was usual to assume a special agent, free to a great extent from the limitations observed among the powers of inorganic nature. This agent was called "vital force"; and under its influence, plants and animals were supposed to collect their materials and to assume determinate forms.....In tracing these phenomena through all their modifications, the most advanced philosophers of the present day declare that they ultimately arrive at a single source of power, from which all vital energy is derived.....The source of power consists in the forcible separation of the atoms of compound substances by the Sun.....The building up of the vegetable, then, is effected by the sun, through the reduction of chemical compounds.....The primary action of the sun's rays is qualified by the atoms and molecules among which their energy is distributed. Molecular forces determine the form which the solar energy may assume. In the separation of the carbon and oxygen this energy may be so conditioned as to result in one case in the formation of a cabbage and in another case in the formation of an oak.

Here we see that so long ago as 1863 Sir Oliver Lodge's "vital principle" was rejected by the most advanced scientists of that day as purely imaginary. The real agent is the sun, which, by breaking up the atoms of compound substances, enables the plant to draw into itself the carbonic acid, water, and ammonia necessary for its life and development. There remain now in this connection but two points to be noticed. The first is that the matter constituting the organisms of both the animal and vegetable kingdoms is precisely the same as that which forms the inorganic world. There is no substance in the animal or vegetable tissues which was not, in the first instance, obtained from the earth, the water, and the air. The second point is that it is the compounding of forces belonging to the inorganic world which gives rise to the mystery called "vitality" in the organic. Before the compounding they are all lifeless (carbonic acid, water, ammonia, etc.); after the compounding the new compound is found to possess new properties, one of which, in the case of protoplasm, is the vitality which sustains life. We thus arrive at the fact that the so-called "vital principle" is simply a property of a certain complex form of inorganic matter; so that the agency of what believers in immortality call "Creative Power" is shown to be wholly unnecessary.

Before closing this paper, I must make one more extract from *Man and the Universe*, in order to indicate more clearly what is Sir Oliver Lodge's true position. That scientist says (p. 58):—

> My contention is that Life is, from the mechanical point of view, not a force nor an energy, but only a guiding and directing principle.....It directs terrestrial energy along a certain channel.....A railway guides a train to its destination, while the engine supplies the energy and propels it. Any force exerted by the rails is perpendicular to the motion and does no work.....Life and Mind have determined where the rails shall be laid down, and when and whence and whither the trains are to be run, but they exert no iota of force upon them..... A path can guide a traveller to his destination without exerting any force upon him at all.

In the foregoing paragraph we have a truly novel idea. We are told that in the human organism Life and Mind direct the cells of protoplasm in the formation and development of that organism. This is done by making grooves and channels and slits and slots and rails and paths along which the cells are to work. But in the case of a railway-train Sir Oliver ignores the fact that rails could not be laid down without "work," and that this had to be done before any trains could run. When Life and Mind had "determined" where the rails and grooves had to be placed for the building up of the organism, who did the work of laying them down? Sir Oliver does not say. Life, not being energy, could not do it. During the gestative period and that of early childhood, Mind was not in existence; and when, at a later period (after the brain had developed) it may be assumed to be in being, it had no definite knowledge of any of the internal organs of the body or of their functions. Who, then, made the slits and slots and rails which Life and the then non-existent Mind had "determined" should be laid down? Do the cells first prepare and arrange the preliminary framework of their future constructive work? If they do, how do Life and the unexistent Mind direct them? If they do not, how can Life and the unborn Mind guide them into the non-existent rails and slits and grooves along which they are to go? Is it not clear that Life and the not yet developed Mind should do something more than merely look on, if they are to guide and direct? And is it not equally clear that the idea of Life and Mind guiding and directing the building up of the human organism, or guiding anything whatever, is pure nonsense? As we have already seen, Life and Mind do no guiding or directing in the process of building up the physical body; Sir Oliver's theories, then, are not in harmony with facts.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

Acid Drops.

We are inclined to think that the *Freethinker* was pretty well alone in having a leading article pointing out the real significance of the French National Day. All the newpapers wrote on it, but carefully steered clear of saying that it was the anniversary of one of the greatest and most beneficial revolutions in human history. Some of the papers left one wondering what the day really did celebrate. And the *Daily Telegraph* leading article took easily first place. For reading it one was almost bound to come to the conclusion that the French National Day was to "celebrate" France's entry into the War in 1914. The Revolution of 1789, with all that it meant for France and the world, didn't even get honourable mention.

Now, we do, of course, honour France for the stand she made in 1914, and for the stand she has made since. But those who remember the services of France to the world honour her the more because in this matter she has remained true to herself, to her fine instinct for right, to her readiness to sacrifice in the pursuit of an idea. All the more regrettable it is that English "society" has not yet found itself able to celebrate the French National Day on the proper date, July 14. In the first year of the War, 1915, some aristocratic ladies—duchesses and other society odds and ends—arranged for a flag day on July 7, in spite of there being one already arranged on the proper date. This year some one is responsible for having fixed it for the 12th. French people, who *have* a sense of humour, will note these things with a shrug and a smile. For ourselves, we are left wondering why if fighting to ward off tyranny in 1918 is a good thing, we cannot frankly acknowledge the benefits of a similar stand made in 1789? Is it because to be celebrating the anniversary of a Revolution is considered dangerous?

France, of course, kept its National Day on the proper date, July 14 And America, we see, celebrated it as "Bastille Day." That is a better acknowledgment of its origin than writing as though the main purpose was to keep the public in ignorance of the cause of the birth of Modern France.

The Archbishops' Second Committee of Inquiry on "The Worship of the Church" will arouse mixed feelings among

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the faithful. The astute ecclesiastics recommend ten-minute sermons, the greater use of the best classical music, the curbing of clerical authority, free and open places of worship, and other measures for the popularizing of the Church. In plain English, the secularization of religion is proceeding rapidly.

As in a lady's letter the postscript is often the most important item, so the appendix to the Archbishops' Report is very illuminative. Three Army Chaplains declare that the Prayer Book authorizes and perpetuates a view of the Bible which is "untrue and offensive to any lively conscience or intelligence." Those Army Chaplains are to be congratulated. Let us hope that they will convert their clerical brethren to the same healthy views. The Prayer Book does present the Bible in a sense that has died out of the minds of all decently educated Christians.

In a well-written article on "The Unmarried Mother," the *Daily News* quotes the terrible indictment: "There are few darker blots upon Christianity than the way in which illegitimate children have been sacrificed in the name of religion and morality." Remembering the origin of the Founder of Christianity, the admission is all the more remarkable.

The Rev. F. C. Unmack, Rector of Horsley, relates, as an instance of answer to prayer, the recovery of his bicycle, which was stolen last February. Police investigation failing, he prayed for months, and finally found the machine at Leatherhead Station. Brother Unmack is too late with his testimonial to the value of prayer. Is there one church that shows so much belief in prayer as to dispense with a lightning-conductor?

But while the Lord was hunting round after the missing "bike," seven of his Churches have been destroyed around Mackay, Queensland, by a cyclone. To save a bicycle and lose seven churches, doesn't seem very wise economy. The *Church Times* is opening a fund to make good the Lord's carelessness in Queensland.

Columns were printed in the Press concerning Independence Day. The pressmen had much to say concerning Washington and his colleagues; but they all forgot to mention Thomas Paine, the man who first wrote the words "The United States of America," and whose virile pen was as instrumental in forming the great Republic of the West as the swords of Lafayette and Washington.

During the last ten years the United Methodist Church has had a net decrease of 10,000 in its membership, the present total church roll being only 153,268. To that total we are informed that, during last year, twenty adult members were added. Thus we see that this sect, like the Wesleyan Methodist, fails to establish its divinity by any phenomenal success.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, London, pictures the Agnostic as "wistfully and blindly groping after the unknown God," thereby showing most clearly that about the genuine Agnostic he knows absolutely nothing. We know it to be an incontrovertible fact that the overwhelming majority of so-called Agnostics are perfectly contented without any God at all, and that they are not lower, to say the very least, in the scale of character than the most ardent believers. Mr. Phillips seems to be incapable of doing the simplest act of justice to those who do not share his fanatical beliefs.

Rev. C. A. Frith, former Curate of Stavely, was cast in £150 damages for having slandered the Headmaster of Stavely Church of England School during the course of a sermon. Mr. Justice Lush said it was a monstrous thing for a minister to use the pulpit to attack the character of people. In defence of Mr. Firth, we beg to point out that this has always been the practice of the pulpit, and it might well have been thought that this conferred immunity on a clergyman. Some of the worst of slanders have been voiced from the pulpit. And the fault is really due to the training Christian ministers receive. Still, we are pleased to see one parson brought to book. It may teach others to be more careful; although on that point we have our doubts.

Falstaff and his men in buckram were heroes compared with the clergy. At the City Temple (London), recently, an American parson appeared in the pulpit in full khaki uniform. Then the hero of a hundred tea-fights fought the Devil for an hour, and the victory was as shadowy as the spiritual opponent. Let us hope that the girls and grandfathers in the pews were duly impressed.

Miss Rebecca West, in a review of a book on Russia, declares that some writers, when dealing with that country, have the "remarkable conviction that any idiot using a religious vocabulary is the mouthpiece of divinity." This idea is by no means restricted to writers on Russian subjects. The phenomenon may be witnessed much nearer home.

Thirty Church of England training colleges are to be placed under the control of a Board of Supervisors, in order to modernize the buildings and to develop the religious instruction. It would be far more to the purpose if the instruction was modernized as well as the bricks and mortar.

The Bishop of Hereford hopes "The God of Love and Justice will be with us in our effort to answer His declared will by drawing His servants together." Meanwhile, his servants are having a row as to what is his declared will. What the Bishop should do is to ask "Him" to send someone along to give an authoritative statement as to what the dickens he really desires.

The *Irish News* of July 6 contains an account of another death of Atheism in France. But Atheism has died so often that one may regard this as quite a normal condition. This time the account is taken from Madame Suzanne Duprees, an actress. This lady writes that—"Atheism, which never gnawed more than skin-deep into the average Frenchman, has been swept clean away." The War has done it, apparently. The soldiers have seen the French priests in the ranks, etc., and the War has "swept France clean of Atheism." In that case, the duty of our own clergy is plain. Let them all join the Army, fight as common soldiers, and then England will be swept clean of Atheism. We present the tip to our bishops. But they may reflect that imagination is a good quality in an actress.

The worst of it is that it makes the French people such idiots—and we certainly never took the French people for fools. We never heard that millions of people called themselves Atheists in France because they were dissatisfied with the priests, but rather because they were dissatisfied with the priests' religion. And whether a particular priest turns out a blackguard or a hero can't make the slightest difference. A priest dying in the trenches—when all has been said—can't prove the truth of the Virgin Birth to a logical-minded Frenchman; nor will the administration of the Last Sacrament on a battlefield prove the resurrection of Jesus. The kind of thing retailed by Madame Duprees is good enough for an English audience—when told of France; but there is no need for her to paint her compatriots as fools. When a man becomes an Atheist by reasoning, he is not likely to recant from funk.

The new Bishop of Hereford says that he accepts the Creed *ex animo*. The *Church Times* wants to know what Dr. Henson really means by *ex animo*. English Church liberals complain that he has "said too little as to the sense in which he recites the Creed"; while Dr. Kirsopp Lake, an American, accuses him, in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, of having said too much. Dr. Lake, speaking for American Church liberals, declares that they do not accept the Creed *ex animo*, his contention being that they have entirely outgrown it. They recite without believing it, merely "as a matter of Church discipline and custom." Theological leaders being thus confessedly hypocrites, is it to be wondered at that the trend of the age is emphatically away from all religious rites and ceremonies, even from every form of supernatural religion itself?

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To Correspondents.

E. STURGISS.—Your suggestion is a good one, but until the resources of the *Freethinker* enable us to get regular help, we don't know how we could find time to carry it out. We already work from breakfast till bed-time, and the only way we can see how to do more is to knock off the bed-time.

R. DAVISON.—See "Acid Drops."

A. P. BROOMFIELD.—It is absurd of the *Daily Chronicle* to say that they do not publish correspondence of a religious nature, particularly when your letter was a comment on a bishop's speech reported in that paper. What the editor probably means is that he does not care to publish anything that attacks Christianity. And that is the policy of most of the London newspapers.

W. BARTON (Ipswich).—(1) Both books are out of print. (2) Securing two new readers in a week is good work, and your newsagent displaying the paper and chalking the contents outside is capital. We also dream of a *big* circulation one day, and it will not be our fault if we do not get it. (3) Pleased you found the Pioneer Leaflets useful. We are sending on a further supply.

H. BULL.—Humbugs all—or nearly all.

R. ELIOT.—We have been considering reprinting, but cannot say when. It means a considerable expenditure, and that spells capital. Our great difficulty at present is just that, but we are doing our best. Perhaps one day we shall be better off, and can then do more.

MR. HOWARD RUFF, Secretary of the Royal Society of St. George, writes that the rejoinder of "Mimnermus" in our issue of July 7, in no wise refutes the statements made by himself. Mr. Ruff complains that "Mimnermus" merely repeats the statements made originally by himself, without dealing with the objections raised to them.

T. MAIR.—Pleased you found our notes on France "inspiring." But you are a little out in your chronology. In 1791 Burke wrote to the English Minister at Turin, suggesting the restoration of the Monarchy, and added that "nothing else but a foreign force can or will do. In this design, too, Great Britain and Prussia must at least acquiesce." Burke's reason was that "if they are suffered finally to triumph in France," they may "extend themselves to us, and blast all the health and vigour of that happy Constitution which we enjoy."

L. MYERS.—We have given the approximate numbers in our leaflet, *What is the Use of the Clergy?* a parcel of which has been sent you. We do not think exact figures are available.

B. F. B. writes, *apropos* of our notes on "Religion and Medicine," that the praiseworthy work of medical men among the troops is accompanied by payment of a fixed salary. In private practice a doctor depends upon fees, which discriminates in favour of the wealthy. He thinks doctors should be paid in peace as they are in war, from the State Fund raised by a "Health Tax."

MAJOR HUNTER.—Thanks for journal. We are glad to have your appreciation of our editorship.

T. A. MCKEE.—We quite appreciate your comment on articles, and are glad you find the paper so interesting. The initiative in the discussion rests, of course, with Dr. Lyttelton. We have no doubt but that it will prove instructive.

H. AUSTEN.—Pleased you found our notes on the French Revolution so useful.

A. STOCHARD.—Sorry we are unable to find space for your letter.

J. ROBINSON.—The Act you inquire about is the 29th of Charles II.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A conference of South Wales Freethinkers will be held on Saturday, July 20, at the Wyndham Hotel, Bridgend, at 5 o'clock. The meeting will be addressed by Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd. The immediate topic of the conference will be "Christianity and Freethought," and, it is hoped, the conference will lead to serviceable developments.

On Sunday Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in the Gem Cinema Palace, Maesteg, at 2.30 and 7.30. July is not the best of months for indoor lectures, but the friends thought it a pity not to have some lectures while Mr. Cohen was in the neighbourhood, and he agreed to deliver them. There will be nothing in the way—except faulty train service—of friends coming from a distance.

The Manchester Branch undertakes its next "Ramble" to-day (July 21). Members and friends will meet at the Mosley Street end of Piccadilly, or Altrincham car terminus. Tea will be provided at Ashley. Committee meeting after tea.

We have just received the Fortieth Annual Report of the Malthusian League, copies of which can be obtained at one penny from the Society's office, 48 Broadway, Westminster. The League faces the work of driving sane ideas into the head of the none too pervious British public with its usual courage, and is evidently making progress. The Report notes that the opposition of the Churches is weakening; which, of course, means that Malthusian opinion is gaining. For the Churches never retreat nor reconsider until forced.

A very large number of papers and magazines have ceased to exist in consequence of the War, and nearly all have had their appearance and price considerably altered. We have watched the disappearance of many without concern, but we do regret that *Notes & Queries*, a most valuable medium of information for all students, is now appearing only monthly instead of every week. Saturday's *Daily Chronicle* reported that several hundred newspapers had also ceased to exist in the United States. So the question of the price and supply of paper is making itself felt there as well as here.

MORALITY INDEPENDENT OF THEOLOGY.

To place anything in God, or to derive anything from God, is nothing more than to withdraw it from the test of reason, to institute it as indubitable, unassailable, sacred, without rendering an account *why*. Hence self-delusion, if not wicked, insidious design, is at the root of all efforts to establish morality, right, on theology. When we are in earnest about the right we need no incitement or support from above. We need no Christian rule of political right; we need only one which is rational, just, human. The right, the true, the good, has always its ground of sacredness in itself, in its quality. Where man is in earnest about ethics, they have in themselves the validity of a divine power.

—*Ludwig Feuerbach.*

Obituary.

We deeply regret to announce the death of a young and promising Secularist, Annie Hypatia Margaret Harwood, at the early age of eighteen. The deceased was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Harwood, of Tottenham, who for upwards of thirty years have been strenuous supporters of our Movement in Northern London. The immediate cause of her death was gastric trouble, accelerated by influenza. The funeral took place at Tottenham Cemetery on Thursday, July 11, when, by special request, a Secular Burial Service was read by Miss K. B. Kough. The profoundest sympathy of all who knew them is extended to her grief-stricken parents and family.—E. M. VANCE.

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The War and God.

II.

(Concluded from p. 382.)

IN the early days of the War many professional Christians claimed that it was bringing people back to God—and, of course, they always meant *their* particular Christian God. (The process was generally stated to be going on in some other part of the world than that in which the assertion was made.) More recently, parsons (and others) of all denominations have been forced to admit this is *not* so. And they have lamented it. I could quote you articles and books galore in which these admissions are made. Quite recently a book was published, written by an Army officer who is evidently an earnest Theist, if not a Christian. Going over his own experiences in the Army, he *laments* that, beyond a vague belief in some nebulous kind of a God (who doesn't appear to do much good), there is very little religious belief in the Army. A kind of Fatalism is the nearest approach to any widespread religious belief amongst men engaged in the War. That is quite an understandable phenomenon—quite common in similar circs.—and is not, perhaps, a bad belief for the ordinary fighting men, though a rotten kind of testimonial to the "benevolence" of the God who directs that fate. I, myself, have had fairly good opportunities of observation in the Army, in France, in the Navy, and amongst "civvies" (both in Britain and France), since the War began; and I am a keen observer. All my experience more than bears out the admissions made by these various "believers." From the beginning till now, I have seen only one man pray before turning in. He was a young sailor in barracks. You know the story of our half-hour on the deck of a sinking boat in a mid-winter storm—with no hope whatever—until the last few moments. I heard no prayers, and certainly "Nearer, my God, to Thee" was *not* sung. "What the Captain said" when the boat received its final "damage" was not a prayer! Nor were the utterances of the engineer below. I know how few would attend Church Parade were it voluntary, and really voluntary, as it ought to be. The Chaplains, who follow a God of Peace, Poverty, and Humility (but who do so in a Sam Browne belt and with a Captain's commission) like compulsory Church parades (naturally), because thus they have bigger audiences than they have ever been able to get in recent years.

Remember, I am not saying that the great mass of men, either in or outside "the Services," are definite Atheists from intellectual conviction (though the number of *them* is greater than *you* think). There are not so many who can say they have been Atheist, with a philosophy based on reason and knowledge, since 1891 (as I can). And that philosophy is stronger to-day than ever. Unfortunately, the sway of reason has not yet become anything like general; but the bulk of people, so far as my experience goes, realize in a dim kind of a way that this War, with all its attendant horrors, is only a complete *debacle* for Christianism, but is utterly irreconcilable with the idea of a Personal God, omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent, creator, and director of the universe, and all that therein is. This dim conviction with the mass is emotional rather than intellectual or rational. But it is a great advance. After all, it is the only position.

To postulate such a personal God as the cause of all phenomena (and such a phenomena as the War) is to make a fiendish nightmare of life, and is the worst of blasphemies. It is a far more horrible belief even than that which Rabbie so finely satirized when he sang—

> O! Thou, wha' in the Heav'ns dos't dwell,
> Wha', as it pleases best Thysel',
> Sends yin ta Heav'n, an' ten tae Hell,
> A' for Thy Glory,
> An' no for ony guid or ill
> They've dune afore Thee.

In the last analysis the great majority of decent people, no matter what religious belief they profess, are Atheists in their daily life. Apart from such religious observances that may be still maintained in greater or less degree, they conduct their lives, they base their morality, on reason and knowledge. They are, in a practical sense, Rationalists. (And Rationalism is only the positive side of Atheism). It is like poor Sir Oliver Lodge, who believes so earnestly in spooks, that he is not ashamed publicly to assert that his son, Raymond, smokes spook cigars and drinks spook pegs in the "Summerland." Yet, when, as a physicist, he enters his laboratory or study, he carries on his work as the veriest Atheist, and quite ignores the puir spooks in experiment or calculation. Only on that basis of Atheism can a sane, quiet, practical, and rational Meliorism be built up; a philosophy that can give us some hope for men and women, and some satisfaction in life.

Tennyson was not an Atheist. He *wanted* to believe; but he had to admit that "nature, red in tooth and claw, with ravine shrieks against the Creed." The most he could do was: "Oh! yet we *hope* that somehow Good will be the final goal of ill." Old Omar's braver hope was—

> Ah Love! Could you and I with Him conspire
> To grasp this sorry scheme of Things entire,
> Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
> Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

These hopes can only be realized in any measure by the steady and growing co-operation of men and women in rational and practical betterment of the here and now. Whether there be one God, many Gods, or no God; whether we be mortal or immortal, we can (and we will) make this world far better than it is for men and women, and happier. That is Atheism, Rationalism, Humanism, Secularism, Meliorism—call it what you will.

And in striving towards that, we must destroy alike the fanatic, brutal, military, megalomaniacal religion of the Germans, and the servile, Pacifist, Resist-not-evil, Impossibilist religion that is the predominant brand preached in Britain.

France has borne herself in this War with greater courage, calm, and determination, than ever before. France, from the outset, has been *The* nation that has been resolved this ghastly struggle must be the end of militarism. "Jamais encore" is the cry in France, as in no other country (except, perhaps, now the U.S.A.). That has been done under the ægis of Atheism. It was under the same auspices, led by Emile Zola (Atheist), that Dreyfus was vindicated, the Clericals routed, the Army purified and re-organized. And it is Anatole France (Atheist) to-day who, more than any other, voices the aspirations of France—nay, of Europe.

So, looking around, even during this tragic time, I can see the increasing bout of Christianism and Theism. I can mark, with satisfaction, the advance that has been made, and the steadily growing success of Freethought since I joined in that "best of causes" in 1891. Much remains to be done to complete the task, *ecrasez l'infame*, but I can see the sun of victory rising in gradual, growing, glow on the banner of Freethought.

Before I close this somewhat lengthy epistle, just one word on the personal factor in the equation. In your references thereto, you appear to mix up "success in

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life" (from the orthodox point of view) with "happiness in life." But, perhaps, that *is* the orthodox view, though strangely contrasted against the life, teaching, and example of the reputed Christ of the Canonical Gospels!

My life has not been an unhappy one. I have done many things I ought not to have done, and many of the things I ought to have done have been left undone. Just as the principles and ideals of Rationalism are so much grander than those of Christianism so are my shortcomings the greater. While regretting the "lapses" 'twere foolish, as futile, to be "unhappy" on that score. The rational thing to do is to try to use them as stepping-stones to higher things. Happiness is a personal matter. It is difficult (if not impossible) to measure or compare the quantity and quality of happiness in different individuals. So far as that can be done, my life has been in quality, certainly, and in quantity, probably, a happier one than yours. I have done much, seen much, and been through a lot. But my Humanism has enabled me to preserve a certain philosophic imperturbability and calm happiness that one could never hope to have, if one *really* believed in the Christian God. What sustained the noblest of the human race as Socrates, Lucretius, Omar, Bruno, Marcus Aurelius, Ferrer, or Tyndall when his wife accidentally poisoned "her poor John," has never failed me in my tinpot way. In the few instances of acute unhappiness in my life, religion has played not a little part. In any case—

> To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
> Creeps in this petty pace, from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time.
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death.
> Out! Out! Brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow;
> A poor player who struts and frets his hour
> Upon the stage, and then is heard no more.
> It is as a tale told by an idiot—
> Full of sound and fury—signifying nothing.

Last point of all that ends this story—my "failure" to use the "chances" that I had, my lack of "success." But have I failed? A verdict of failure or success in life (or in any venture) must depend on what the objective was at the start. I don't suppose you have any idea of the utter contempt with which I regard conventional standards of success and "successful" men. In this (as in so many other things), the views I held in 1891, are sound to-day, and still hold good. Even from the conventional point of view, I cannot be convicted of failure in life when, at the outset of the War, I was fit to "do my bit," and ever since have done it both by land and sea.

But, apart from the War, the wealthiest merchant prince, or the biggest pedigreed ('tis a good word!) "nobleman" in Scotland (or elsewhere), or the greatest king that may be, or any such person, has nothing that I envy. I have much that they have not.

Or if I look at "successful" statesmen (Where?) or politicians (of *any* party) to-day, or even, parsons, what puir, puir, stuff! More than their feet are fit to "stop a hole te keep the wind away" *before* they're dead. What low ideals should I have to envy them. *Their* "success" would be rankest failure to me. Soldiers (from the private to the top), sailors (of all ranks and ratings), munition and other workers, have been "successful"; but, largely, just as conventional standards of success have been disregarded or scrapped. You may call this swank (probably will), but 'tis sober truth. At least, I have the success (or satisfaction) of saying "I told you so." For many of the thiugs I said, and many of the ideas I advocated many years ago, have been accepted since—some since the War began. "'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis 'tis true," that such a ghastly tragedy as this War should be the means of confirming those philosophical and sociological ideas that I (one among a comparative few) held so many years ago.

And still, to-day (touched, perhaps, with a *healthy* cynicism), I have as much zest in life, as much *joie de vivre* (and *savoir vivre!*), as much interest in life, as ever I had, and I've had not a little.

I have lived with the real "immortals" all along. My greatest pride and satisfaction in life has been, and is, that I have fought as a soldier in the Grand Army of Freethought—have enjoyed the comradeship of the noblest of the human race. *La verite oblige* is the unequalled motto of *that* comradeship.

Worthily to bear my part in that grandest and "best of causes" (as George Meredith called it) is the greatest aspiration that I have ever had. To HAVE borne it is the greatest success that I could reach.

With best wishes to yourself and family, I remain, with imperturbability, that combination of *beau sabreur* and philosopher, your old friend,

ATHOS ZENO.

Playing at Sunday-School.

I HAVE always had a fondness for stories relating to Virginia. It may have been the romantic adventures of Captain John Smith and the wonderful story of the Pocohontas maiden that first aroused that interest. Or I may have inhaled it from the fragrant weed for which the State of Virginia is so justly famed. I cannot say. But Thackeray's *Esmond* and such tales as *By Order of the Company* have always specially interested me, and so, when I first came across *The Valiants of Virginia*, it was a foregone conclusion that I must sample its pages. And when I had read it I was ve-e-ry glad. It is not only an interesting and thrilling tale, but one of the chapters—the heading of which might justly be altered to "Playing at Sunday-School"—contains one of the funniest missionary stories that I have met with.

The reader may try and imagine an old Virginian garden which has been allowed to go to wreck and ruin through long years of neglect, and a group of children, under the leadership of Miss Rickey Snyder, gathered to amuse themselves according to whatever whim or fancy seized them.

"It was Sunday afternoon, and under the hemlocks Rickey had gathered her minions—a dozen children from near-by houses, with the usual sprinkling of little blacks from the kitchens." And after some little altercation between Rickey and Cozy Cabell and Greenie Simms, one of the number proposed to play something—King, King Katiko for preference. One little urchin objected to this on the ground that they were forbidden to play anything but Bible games on Sunday.

"Well," decreed Rickey, "we'll play Sunday-school then. It would take a saint to object to that. I'm superintendent, and this stump's my desk. All you children sit down under that tree."

They ranged themselves in two rows: the white children, in clean Sabbath pinafores and go-to-meeting knickerbockers, in front; and the coloured ones, in ginghams and cotton print, in the rear—the habitual expression of a differing social station.

After some little further parley as to classes and lessons, the self-constituted superintendent silenced the meeting in her peremptory way.

"The lesson is over," Rickey said, "and I've just rung the bell for silence. Children, this is Missionary Sunday, and I'm glad to see so many happy faces here to-day."

Getting her eye upon an indolent little darkie in the back row, she said, sharply:

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"Sit up, Greenie. People don't lie on their backs in Sunday-school."

Greenie yawned dismally, and righted herself with injured slowness. "Ah diffuses ter 'cep' yo' insult, Rickey Snyder," she said. "Ah'd ruthah lose mah 'ligion dan mah laz'ness."

"Let us all rise," continued Rickey, unmoved, "and sing 'Kingdom Coming.'" And she struck up lustily, beating time on the stump with a stick:

"From all the dark places of earth's heathen races,
O, see how the thick shadows flee!"

And the rows of children joined in with unction, the coloured contingent coming out strong on the chorus:

"De yerf shall be full ob de wunduhful story
As watahs dat covah de sea!"

"We will now take up the collection," said Rickey. "Remember that what you give to-day is for the poor heathen in—in Alabama."

"That's no heathen place," objected Cozy, with spirit. "My cousin lives in Alabama."

"Well, then," acquiesced Rickey, "anywhere you like. For the poor heathen who have never heard of God or Virginia. Think of them, and give cheerfully."

After severely reprimanding one of the children who had put a toad on the piece of bark used as a plate, Rickey announced:

"The collection this afternoon has amounted to a hundred dollars and seven cents. And now, children, we will skip the Catechism, and I will tell you a story."

Her auditors hunched themselves nearer, a double row of attentive black and white faces, as Rickey, with a preliminary bass cough, and in a drawling tone, whose mimicry called forth giggles of ecstasy, began to spin the following yarn:—

"There were once two little sisters who went to Sunday-school and loved their teacher ve-e-ery much. They were always good and attentive—*not* like that little nigger over *there!* The one with his thumb in his mouth! One was little Mary and the other was little Susy. They had a mighty rich uncle who lived in Richmond, and once he came to see them, and gave them each a dollar. And they were ve-e-ery glad. It wasn't a mean old paper dollar, all dirt and creases; nor a battered silver dollar; but it was a bright, round, *gold* dollar, right out of the mint. Little Mary and little Susy could hardly sleep that night for thinking of what they could buy with these gold dollars.

"Early next morning they went down-town, hand in hand to the store, and little Susy bought a bag of goober-peas, and sticks and sticks of striped candy, and a limber Jack, and a gold ring, and a wax doll with a silk dress on that could open and shut its eyes.

"'Huh!' said the captious Cozy, 'you can't buy a wax doll for a dollar. My littlest, littlest one cost three, and she didn't have a stitch to her back!'

"'Shut up!' said Rickey, sharply. 'Dolls were cheaper then.' She looked at the row of little negroes, goggle-eyed at the vision of such largess.

"'What do you think little Mary did with *her* gold dollar? She loved dolls and candy, too, but she had heard about the poo-oo-r heathen. There was a tear in her eye, but she took the dollar home, and next day she went to Sunday-school and dropped it in the missionary-box.'

"'Little children, what do you reckon became of that dollar? It bought a big satchelful of tracts for a missionary. He had been a poor man with six children and a wife with a bone-felon on her right hand—not a child old enough to wash dishes, and all of them young enough to fall in the fire—so he had to go and be a missionary.

"He was going to Alabam—to a cannibal island, and he took the tracts and sailed away in a ship that landed him on the shore. And when the heathen cannibals saw him they were ve-e-ery glad, for there hadn't been any shipwrecked sailors for a long time, and they were ve-e-ery hungry. So they tied up the missionary and gathered a lot of wood to make a fire and cook him.

"But it had rained, and rained, and rained for so long that the wood was all wet, and it wouldn't burn, and they all cried because they were so hungry. And then they happened to find the satchelful of tracts, and the tracts were ve-e-ery *dry*. They took them and stuck them under the wet wood, and the tracts burned and the wood caught fire, and they *cooked* the missionary and ATE him.

"Now, little children, which do you think did the most good with her dollar—little Susy or little Mary?"

. . . . .

Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the ethics of such a ticklish question, there is no doubt that the verdict of the heathen cannibals would be in favour of little Mary.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Thoughts Awheel.

..... and dear the schoolboy spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.—*Byron.*

IT was Sunday, and early in the present summer—too early in fact; we had hoped, even planned, that the sun would be shining full in a valley far away, and it was so; though, at starting, the skies were overcast, and the north wind had a wintry sting, the sun shone warm in the sheltered vale. One could even bathe in the dappled amber stream, and afterwards recline in Pagan state upon a bank of flowers—and my lady would just be home from prayers!

They were Freethoughts and happy thoughts; the day was fine, and the wheel was free. You pick them up as you go these thoughts, or they awaken in the mind as you speed along, as scene after scene unfolds itself as the wheelman warms to his work, as freedom and action and fresh air chase the last phantom from his brain, and his whole being shouts hurrah! These are great moments. Life was made for joy after all. One feels one in ten thousand, and one is. The "Great War" seems so negligible, crude, and obscene, remote, absurd, impossible, so stupid, brutal, and ugly. Life was made for love, and joy, and happiness. And yet, just in front, at the foot of a short, sharp, sylvan declivity, are the cot, the mill, the sandstone cliffs, the trailing woods, and the solemn, slumbrous, Ayr, stealing slow along, sounding, one would think, in long drawn-out monotone, the everlasting music of its name, and there at the heart of the valley the little sylvan alluvial "holm," where, tradition says, Burns pondered and composed "Man was made to Mourn" after his meeting with the "reverend sage" on this same Barskimming Bridge. As the present writer has said in another place, this dirge-like poem is a sublime presentment of the dark half of life's medal, as true, nay, more significant than the brighter side. Our poet had known and felt both. The poem was the result of a peripatetic reverie: There was the hermit stream, the solemn waving pines, and central, in the mental and material scene, the old, old man, in whose person and condition, "Age and want, oh, ill-matched pair," stood forth revealed. The chords trembled, the harp awoke, and the poet bowed himself before this revelation:—

and broke forth
In the resistless eloquence of woe.

You can picture the scene as you pass: the lonely figure in "hodden grey"—the poet who should have been ploughing. What business had he to be bothering about social questions? He should have left these things to his betters. And yet the damned, idle peasant has become a king of men beside whom such betters are but dust and vermin. And yet he never fired a shot to kill a man, much less a million, in his life! What was Fame thinking about?

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As the wheelman came through the famous village of Mauchline a passing lady suppressed the ghost of a sneer at the dusty pilgrim; and yet she was the "savage" going to her Joss House, and the wheelman the "civilized" person intent upon a wider, more exalted, worship.

But those thoughts, how they swarmed like chemist bees, finding arts nectar in the weeds of common things (Ingersoll). Minutest blooms were noted in the swarming herbage of the hedge roots, the wild strawberry and the violet blooms, small, but perfect things, insistent, redeeming the waste places, breathing life and beauty, romance, and dream, memory and forgetfulness! reminding one of the little *Freethinker* in *its* wilderness, perfect too in its way, and for which it is a pride and a pleasure to write.

We hurry on. The sun, as arranged, shone warm in our happy valley, where we bathed and basked on flowers, and our lady would just be home from prayers.

Returning *via* Ballochmyle, we traversed the road along which we used to creep miserably enough to school. The hive swarmed again, and, though mutely, the wheelman was mightily happy now. To sit on the dry grass—green still mixed with sere—to note the budding hedgerows and trees he used to know; to list the strident rustle of the lone brown beechen leaves astir, while the eye wandered over the landscape of old association and the mind dwelt in the charmed atmosphere of an old joy; there seemed to him in that hour no pleasure like to this.

At Sinclairston, the solemn loch is a deep, deep, beautiful blue as it reflects the skies in its quiet hollow of the grey-brown rather than green fields, and laps a copse of willows on its leeward shore. "The Island" is still there, the goal of schoolboy emulation for slide or swim, a mere bunch of willows, and its only treasure an occasional water-bird's nest. But the boyish mind can magnify and make miraculous the meanest object of existence. And the boy still left in the man makes him exult, but more, over similar common things—that it may be fulfilled, as they say in Scotland, that "there's nae fules like auld fules." Byron and Burns were both much prone to a majestic dirge-music. For instance, the former:—

No more—no more—oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,
Which out of all the lovely things we see
Extracts emotions beautiful and new,
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the bee:
Think'st thou the honey with those objects grew:
Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy power
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

It was a psychological moment; and this passing glimpse, under rarest conditions, of the lonely, lovely tarn, though brief, is everlasting in its refreshment and inspiration; nor time, nor distance, nor cares, nor despairs, nor pleasures, nor any other creature or creation, can dim for a moment the impression of that tranquil lakelet, lying there so still, under the sunlit skies, in its hollow of the hills!

Small but majestic mountain ranges bound the horizon hereabouts, and on the clear skyline stand out serenely grand. There was the distant smoke of heather fires, a copse, some ruined gables in a wood on a hillside, a hundred varied objects of interest and beauty, all limned and softened in that crystalline atmosphere. Soft shadows fell among the thick-set woods of Ballochmyle, though the sun, white and dazzling, was still high, and wheeled, with ours, his chariot behind the trees. This, oh this, is a delectable denizen. But we had grown tired; sixty miles at "fifty" is no joke. We swore we would not do it again.

Repentance oft before I swore—
But was I sober when I swore?

Home, and full of tired bones and the memory of old joys. The latter are very precious things; but, considering the fatigues and pains and risks, the occasional deep sadnesses, solitudes, and desolations of these sentimental journeys, we said: No, we will not do it again; heaven itself is not worth it. But we will!

ANDREW MILLAR.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
God and Us.—The Editor	397
"Nearer, My God, To Thee."—J. T. Lloyd	398
Circulating the Scriptures.—Mimnermus	399
Christianity and Dirt.—E. Lyttelton	400
The Story of the Tea Plant.—T. F. Palmer	404
Another Scientist's Profession of Faith.—W. Mann	405
Tales for the Ethiops.—F. J. Gould	406
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

God and Us.

Whatever we may neglect in this country we never overlook religion and our religious duties. Long before we provided the people with schools we plastered the country with churches. We praise God when we go to war, and when he has given us a victory we return thanks—with a hint that we hope to secure a continuance of his patronage in the future. We have daily prayers in the House of Commons, the efficacy of which is seen in the veracity and uprightness of its members. We have bishops in the House of Lords, and thus secure a disinterested spirit in public affairs. We thoughtfully provide the monarch with a religious creed, in order to avoid the danger of having one who should be non-religious. We may be careless of social conditions that lead men and women to prison, but we take care they shall have regular religious services once they are there. The making of the criminal may be our—that is, society's work, but we do see that he is not lacking in spiritual ministration, even to the very scaffold itself. And every good Briton knows that God looks with favour upon our activities. To conclude otherwise would be to charge the Deity with want of judgment.

* * *

The Solemnization of the Absurd.

So one need not be surprised that both Houses of Parliament have decided solemnly to attend church on August 4, which is the anniversary of the outbreak of this most Christian War. We haven't yet heard whether the German Parliament will, with equal solemnity, march to *its* church and lay before the Lord its reasons why God should help the Fatherland; but, we daresay, something of the kind will be tried. In our own Parliament Mr. Lloyd George moved: "That the House will attend at St. Margaret's, Westminster, on Sunday, August 4, being the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war, to invoke the divine blessing on our just cause." We are not sure for whom the reminder, "fourth anniversary" was intended. Members of Parliament could hardly have needed it (many would recall it by their increased dividends). Perhaps it was a diplomatic hint to Deity that, after four years, it was time he bestirred himself and did something to show his real interest in the Allies. For one notes that the Christian service to which the Jews, and Atheists, and Agnostics, and Nothingarians of the House are invited, is not, in the words of the motion, to thank God for already blessing our cause, it is to *invoke* his blessing. Perhaps it would be too much for even the British public for Mr. Lloyd George to say we have already had the "Divine Blessing." When we went to war with Germany we presented her with an ultimatum. Why not do the same here? Why not announce formally and publicly that, unless we have some clear indication of the Deity's good will within a given time, all the churches and chapels will be closed, the chaplain of the House dismissed, and the rest of the clergy put to some kind of useful service?

* * *

Proving Our Case.

Seriously, Christians have little for which to thank God in this War. For four years we have been witnessing a demonstration, on an enormous and costly scale, of the futility of the Christian religion. All the special qualities associated with religious wars—uncurbed ferocity, unlimited lying, and boundless credulity—have been manifested in full measure. And of the piety of the German people and leaders there can be no question. Yet it is these people of whom we read stories that show a complete unscrupulousness as to the means employed, so long as it is hoped they will achieve the end desired. What has been the value of centuries of Christianity in Germany? Has the Freethinker ever drawn a more damning indictment of the uselessness of Christianity than our own Christians unconsciously draw in their indictment of Germany? Would the Germans have been worse without Christianity? Are they the better for it? Some of our clerical leaders here are busy indicting "materialistic science" because, they say, it has placed all its resources at the service of war. But the *ethical* character of war is not altered thereby. To kill more quickly or more numerously does not alter the quality of war. And why blame science? Who is it that has utilized scientific discoveries to the end of slaughter? Christians. It is a Christian nation that, while comparatively indifferent to the claims of science during a time of peace, can pour out money like water to utilize scientific research for purposes of war.

* * *

God's Plan.

The Rev. Samuel Chadwick, addressing the Wesleyan Conference at Manchester on July 17, said he regarded—

> the war as part of a great world movement rather than as a thing detached. A materialistic interpretation of the universe and a rationalistic interpretation of knowledge had been unfolded. In Germany this found its highest expression. Its professors taught that might and right were synonymous, though the spiritual hunger of the people insisted on asserting itself again and again When they were looking forward to a great revival, then came war. He believed, however, that the war was a part of this revival. It was in God's plan. Men could start war and devils keep them going, but God ruled them.

Mr. Chadwick is speaking—like a clergyman. A materialistic interpretation of the universe rules in Germany

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no more than in England. It may rule in German scientific circles, but so it does here. And in neither country has it any vital connection with the forces that make for war. It is ethical Materialism—the thirst for more trade and territory, the mania for expansion and empire—that leads to war. And who is fit to cast the first stone here? And on what ground is the Christian Bernhardi or the Bible-loving Kaiser accused of "Materialism"? And if the War is part of the revival of religion, why complain of Germany? It is, says Mr. Chadwick, "in God's plan"; although men start a war (as part of the plan), God rules throughout it all. Then it is all *his* business. We are only puppets in the game. All the filth, and disease, and slaughter of the War is in God's plan—part of the revival he has arranged! Blasphemy is defined as speaking disrespectfully of God! We earnestly invite the attention of God Almighty to the Rev. Samuel Chadwick.

* * *

Two Pictures.

Among the Bantu tribes of Northern Rhodesia, says Frazer, before an army marched to war the head chief prayed for days for victory, then he and his wives went to the shrines of the dead kings and prayed that the gods would keep the war-path clear from foes, and help them to defeat the enemy. Then the army was marshalled, and the chief performed a solemn war-dance; and the soldiers set forth in confidence of victory. In 1918, in this country, our war chief solemnly invites his subordinates to march with him to one of our shrines, also dedicated to a dead person, and join with him in prayers and songs and supplications to their God that he will clear our path of foes and lead us to victory over the enemy. Our war chief will not dance before the shrine; he will only kneel. His wife will not beat her breast; she will only sit demurely apart and pray. But except for these differences of detail, will anyone be good enough to point out what difference there may be between a Bantu chief going through his incantations to secure the blessings of his gods on the war the tribe has in hand, and our chief leading the Members of Parliament to one of our "joss-houses" on a similar errand? The prayers and songs are the same in spirit, the purpose is the same in kind, and the response will be the same in value. But which is the savage and which is the civilized person in these two performances? And so far as the ceremony is concerned, might not Bantu and Briton change places without any transfer of mental adjustment?

* * *

Playing at Savages.

Is it not time we stopped this apeing of savages in the name of civilization? A crowd of educated legislators solemnly marching to a temple to ask the help of their Mumbo-Jumbo to give them victory in war! How many of them really believe that their procession, and their prayers, and their hymn-singing will have the slightest influence on the course of the War? It is an insult to their intelligence even to assume they believe. They know that, whether they pray or don't pray, not a soldier less or more will be killed on our side or on that of the enemy. The "Divine blessing" will not make a soldier shoot straight, or give a foolish officer intelligence. Four years of war, four years of slaughter, of rapine, of incendiarism, of ruined homes and blasted lives, and the Parliament of a civilized people resolving on a church parade to secure victory! The Bantu chief calls his followers to pray to the tribal gods to keep the war-path clear of foes and to give them victory. Poor savages! The ignorance of such people is appalling.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Nearer, My God, To Thee."

THIS well-known hymn is generally supposed to be the great city of refuge provided for the spiritual safety and consolation of the people of God when hard pressed by his and their enemies. It was specially constructed for that purpose by some Divinely inspired poetic genius. There is no other hymn in the English language that appeals with such soothing, steadying, and comforting power to the children of affliction and sorrow. When the night is dark and the fires burn low and the storm is raging, how naturally, how irresistibly, the pious soul bursts into the wistful song—

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

We were told that, when the great Atlantic Liner, the *Titanic*, was sinking in 1912, the passengers kept cool and collected by singing this hymn. That may be more or less of a legend, but the fact remains that superstitious people, when calamity overtakes and threatens to overwhelm them, betake themselves to prayer, as so many Britons did lately when the God of Battles seemed to be favouring the Germans. It used to be a saying not long ago that even Atheists always call upon God when danger stares them in the face. According to this hymn, the goal of life is nearness to God, which we are to reach by prayer and supplication. Whatever happens, however heavy the cross or dense the darkness, whether angels beckon or devils pull back, our aim should ever be—

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Is it not the proud boast of many of the clergy that this bloody War has been sent on purpose to drive the careless and indifferent back to God? The War, seemingly the direst curse, is thus in reality the greatest conceivable blessing. Stony griefs and clayey woes which look like formidable hindrances on the march of life, are but so many goads urging us upwards towards God. To free-thinking Ishmaelites all that may sound laughably absurd, and the absurdity seems to touch its climax in the last verse:—

Or, if on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be—
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Now, the very conception of nearness to God is in itself ridiculous. On theological grounds alone it represents an utter impossibility. Orthodoxy teaches not only that God is a being who fills and transcends the Universe, but that the whole of him is everywhere at one and the same time, and, naturally, to think of getting nearer to him is to touch the summit of irrationality. Coolly admitting this, the divines claim that they use the term "nearness" in a spiritual, not a geographical, sense. Very well; but what are we to understand by spiritual nearness to the Deity? By its very vagueness, "spiritual" is an adjective that covers a multitude of sins against Reason. Etymologically, spirit is nothing but breath or wind, and the adjective of necessity partakes of the quality of the noun. Judging by the recorded experience of the saints, nearness to God signifies an exceedingly pleasant sensation, and nothing more. It is simply an agreeable emotion which comes and goes. It may be induced by solitary meditation and prayer, by listening to impassioned religious discourses, by joining in the singing of wildly sensational hymns, or by being present and possibly taking part in noisy and excited Methodist prayer-meetings; but however

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brought on, it is really nothing but a dangerous species of neurosis, and sometimes ends in raving madness. During the notorious Evan Roberts' revival a friend of the present writer got so near to God that he had to be confined for six months in a lunatic asylum. Is it not a recognized fact that most of the great saints of history were more or less insane, and that the degree of the insanity corresponded to the height of the saintliness? We can see them at their nightly meetings singing twelve psalms pointed out by an angel, as was their invariable custom in the Cœnobitic establishments of Egypt. They lived apart from the world in arid and rocky deserts, completely isolated from the occupations, amusements, and enjoyments of their fellow-beings. Describing them, Milman says:—

> At the close of each Psalm, the whole assembly prostrated itself in mute adoration. In every part of Egypt, from the Cataracts to the Delta, the whole land was bordered by these communities; there were 500 Cœnobites in the desert of Nitria alone; the total number of male anchorites and monks was estimated at 76,000; the females at 27,700. Parts of Syria were, perhaps, scarcely less densely peopled with ascetics. Cappadocia and the provinces bordering on Persia boasted of numerous communities, as well as Asia Minor and the eastern parts of Europe (*History of Christianity*, vol. iii., p. 209).

In addition to these Cœnobitic communities, there were also thousands of hermits who lived in solitude, "some in clefts and caves; some in huts, into which the light of day could not penetrate; some of whom hung huge weights to their arms, necks, and loins; some confined themselves in cages; some on the tops of mountains, exposed to the sun and weather." Everybody is familiar with Tennyson's poem, *St. Simeon Stylites;* but few, perhaps, know the impression Simeon made on his own age, as described by Evagrius (H.E. i. 13):—

> Rivalling, while yet in the flesh, the conversation of angels, he withdrew himself from all earthly things, and doing violence to nature, which always has a downward tendency, he aspired after that which is on high; and standing midway between earth and heaven, he had communion with God, and glorified God with the angels; from the earth offering supplications as an ambassador to God; bringing down from heaven to men the Divine blessing.

All such men and women, whether living in monastic communities, or scattered abroad in all sorts of solitary places as hermits, were regarded as saints, who were in the happy state of exceptional nearness to God; but, judged by common sense, they were the victims of severe mental aberration. No man, in his senses, could address the Divine Being in the terms Tennyson ascribes to St. Simeon:—

> Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
> This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
> Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
> In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
> In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
> A sign between the meadow and the cloud,
> Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
> Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet and snow.

Even in the modern hymn there are not wanting signs that the writer was under the spell of a wholly unsound view of human life. Both the words and the tune to which they are set are morbid in the extreme; and, as one listens, the impression is made that the singers are trying hard to make the most and best of a thoroughly bad situation, or desperately endeavouring to enjoy their "stony griefs and clayey woes." There is an unwholesome sense of weirdness about the whole thing—an unnaturalness which cramps the finer instincts and potencies of our nature.

J. T. LLOYD.

Circulating the Scriptures.

> Christianity has never lost the instinct of universal dominion. *Bible Society Report.*
>
> The only hope for the future of society lies in the absolute extermination of Christianity.—*G. W. Foote.*

AGREEABLY to the law of supply and demand, the annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society makes its appearance. The one before us bears the title, *Deep Calleth Unto Deep*, a pleasant nautical alternative to a preceding issue which was entitled *The Book and the Sword*. In the piping times of peace less attention is paid to naval and military nomenclature, and less insistence is laid upon the warlike character of the Bible, which is often referred to as the work of the "Prince of Peace." However, variety is the spice of life, and the report before us covers so wide a field that it should appeal to the taste of the jaded Freethinker, bored to distraction by the multifarious financial appeals from the innumerable churches, chapels, and tabernacles of Christendom.

The editor of the report is a brilliant journalist, and he relieves the monotony of his plaintive appeal for money from his readers by introducing quotations from all sorts and conditions of writers, some of whom one hardly expects to find in a pious work of this kind. Pronounced Freethinkers such as Montaigne, Balzac, and Heine are dragged in by the heels to bolster the cause of Superstition, and even Victor Hugo is laid under contribution. Apt quotations are made from many authors, from demure Jane Austen to "that little ape called Keble," as grim old Carlyle dubbed the author of *The Christian Year*. These elegant extracts are used with the unerring skill of the patent medicine advertisers, who attract readers to their pills and potions by all the resources of literary artifice.

As an example of the up-to-date method of conveying information, one may refer to the statement that in the year under consideration the British and Foreign Bible Society issued a total of 9,539,335 Bibles, New Testaments, and portions of Scriptures. The total issues by the Society since its foundation have exceeded 284,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, complete or in parts. Versions of the Bible, and parts, have been circulated in 504 different languages, and 104 new languages have been added in the last eleven years. By the most stringent War-time economy, the Society's expenditure was brought down to £257,262; during a year, in which the report informs us, "when God makes bare His arm" and when "it is surely a solemn and inspiring thing to be alive."

This, it will be seen, is a decided mixture of keen business and oleaginous piety; but the reader must remember that the report is intended to invite subscriptions, and instructions as to legacies and the payment of cheques and money orders are given in detail in the volume. In previous years the public used to be informed courteously that H.I.M. the German Emperor and the Viceroy of India and other notable Christians had contributed, but of late these important names have mysteriously disappeared.

One thing the report brings out quite clearly, and that is, the Germans are not all Atheists. The Rev. Otto Schultze, who is an Honorary Foreign Member, writes that "the German missionaries in China will never forget the great help to their work given by the British and Foreign Bible Society." More testimony is given by the Rev. C. Schmitt, an interned missionary; whilst in an earlier report issued by the Society it was stated:—

> During the first eight months of war, and mainly through the kindness of friendly Germans, 360,000

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> Testaments and Gospels went out from our Berlin depot.

The words of the editor of the report for 1915 settles the matter, for he must know where the Society's work is done :—

> No feature of the War has been more grievous to English Christians than the hostility which it has created between the religious and theological life of England and Germany.

Despite the modern business methods, there is an old-fashioned theological flavour in the report which is reminiscent of the days of John Wesley, and the early corybantic days of Methodism. Listen to this account of a convert in the good old blood-and-thunder style so pleasing to our forefathers :—

> Shortly before Christmas, 1916, the Bishop in South Tokyo confirmed forty-five Japanese in the pro-cathedral at Tokyo. One of them had just undergone fifteen years' penal servitude for deliberate murder, committed when he was a youth of nineteen. He looks a pretty good ruffian, but he's a dead-keen Christian.

With what art does the editor describe the dangers and risks of a colporteur's life :—

> We hear of one man pelted in Egypt, another arrested in Italy, and another imprisoned at Athens. In Ceylon one colporteur had to hide from a wild elephant in the forest near Trincomalee. In Peru a colporteur was attacked and beaten by a fanatic. Several of our men were both robbed and beaten in China, and one was in danger of being shot as a spy.

The most heroic action was not performed by a man, but by an English married lady, who, in the touching words of the report, "is not afraid to sell farthing vernacular Gospels in the streets of Lahore."

The reports of the colporteurs are full of literary surprises. Here is one. In a restaurant at Rome an agent was offering Testaments for sale, when a man took up one and said : "I have never seen this book before. Do you know the best book I have ever read? It is *The Imitation of Christ*." After further conversation the matter ended in a purchase by the phoenix of culture who had read *Thomas a Kempis* but never seen a Bible.

Ingersoll once said that when a thing was too stupid for the pulpit it was passed on to the missionaries. The truth of this jest is seen in the account of the work in China, where copies of *Genesis* and the *Book of Jonah* were sold and expounded literally. This happens, be it noted, at the time when the preachers at home are assuring their credulous congregations that the Book of Genesis is an early edition of *The Origin of Species*, without Darwin's tiresome details.

These are but a few specimens of the gems to be found in this work. That such an appeal is worth issuing is evident, for the balance-sheet shows receipts for the year totalling £250,657, including legacies amounting to £29,535. The expenditure amounted to £257,262. The report itself costs ninepence, so that it is evident that the directors are as shrewd as they are pious.

Figures such as these should make any Freethinker pause and reflect that Rationalist propaganda has to make headway not only against gross ignorance, but against a most heavily endowed system of superstition. The British and Foreign Bible Society is but one of many similar institutions which have enormous incomes. Hardly a week passes but one or the other of these organizations receive legacies, and collections are made constantly in the various branches associated with them. Against all this Freethought propaganda is most severely handicapped. Its publications are boycotted in public and private libraries, and few booksellers have the courage to stock them. In spite of it all, the "intellectuals" are making headway. If Freethinkers would support systematically their own institutions there would soon be a great alteration, and the struggle would be carried on under far more favourable conditions. What is needed continuous support, for spasmodic supplies embarrass rather than help. If numbers of Freethinkers contributed small sums regularly for propagandist purposes, more literature could be issued and circulated. Every Freethought pamphlet, and every copy of the *Freethinker*, are ambassadors for reason against superstition. In fighting this stupendous battle, we are opposing a superstition entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. In money lies the power of the clergy and their Book, but, as Shakespeare reminds us, gold can "knit and *break* religions."

MIMNERMUS.

Christianity and Dirt.

SIR,—Taking advantage of your courteous permission I select some notes in your June 30 issue as material for discussion. It is, probably, not a matter of importance what the selected topic is. My object is to show that between you and orthodox Christians there is very much less disagreement than is commonly supposed.

Mr. Cohen produces a number of interesting facts which are certainly evidence that various people, some centuries ago, who professed to be Christians were disgustingly dirty. There is no dispute as to the facts, and Lecky's trenchant summary of them is not too strong. The question now is what is to be inferred ?

I think I am right in saying that Mr. Cohen infers from them a natural, perhaps, an inevitable alliance between Christianity and dirt. This would mean that professing Christians to-day wash less frequently than Agnostics—let us say British Agnostics so as to simplify the point as much as possible. I have an extensive acquaintance among Christians sincere and less sincere, and also among Agnostics. Judging from the evidence of the two principal senses concerned, I should say there was no difference whatever between the groups in their belief or disbelief in soap and the nail-brush, corresponding to their belief or disbelief in a Deity.

So that while I am heartily with him in your denunciation of dirt, I think Mr. Cohen has jumped too far in his inference from admitted facts. He writes: "This alliance between religion and dirt has been frequently manifested, and was in consequence of the ascetic preaching of Christianity combined with opposition to sanitary and medical science." Now, even if this be an accurate historical diagnosis, it leaves the reader still hungering for the only evidence that would be relevant to Mr. Cohen's view that there is a natural alliance between religion and dirt ; evidence, namely, that during the last 150 years in England there has been such an alliance.

My opinion is—but I should be glad to be corrected—that down to about 1800 personal cleanliness, as we understand the expression, had hardly begun to be thought of among ninety-five per cent. of the population ; that the chief religious revivalists in the nineteenth century welcomed the spread of cleanliness as cordially as any Atheists of the time. If that is so, the alliance between Christianity and dirt was only for a time, and was not Christian in its origin.

But I fancy Mr. Cohen would say that the admitted facts—about Stylites and the rest—are sufficient to prove his point. Let us examine them a little more closely. I know very little about these pious, dirty people, but would readily admit that they preached the duty of dirt as a way of pleasing God. But does that go to

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prove that there is no God to be pleased? Or let us take Christianity in particular. Let us agree that very many Christians were at one time, for religious reasons, very dirty; that is a different thing from saying that there is any necessary connection between the *doctrines* of Christianity and dirtiness of person or habit.

We have, in short, to ask ourselves if religion is to be condemned for the folly or blindness or barbarism of its votaries. Of course, it is difficult not to answer with an emphatic yes. But everything depends on whether the follies, etc., are the outcome of the teaching or example of the founder. People believe the purest time in the history of any religion is directly after the foundation. Well, how does Christianity stand this test? As an answer, I point to the example in the teaching of Christ, who was not in the least ascetic, and taught, indirectly, such reverence for the human body that, in time, one race after another learns to wash. No doubt after a long time—but he foretold that there would be a great amount of failure in his work; and I care not how wild or unseemly has been the conduct of his followers, so long as it cannot be traced to his teaching or example. We treat other creeds with this much of consideration. Why not Christianity? For instance, I have known some vociferous Radicals, on coming into a property, suddenly become staunch Tories; but that is a reflection on them, not on Radicalism.

One word more. The worse one finds the conduct of Christians has been, the greater wonder it is that the creed still survives in vigour. And never before have Christians striven so hard as now to recover the primitive purity of their faith, by studying the doings and sayings of the Christ of History; rather than the Christ of later fiction.

E. LYTTELTON.

Acid Drops.

The plot regarding religious instruction is unfolding. A report has now been issued as a result of the conferences between Churchmen and Nonconformists which says that the following has met with agreement:—

> In the first place, inasmuch as an education which excludes religion is incomplete, and, as incomplete injurious, it should be the concern of the State, which has assumed responsibility for education, to secure religious teaching during school hours for all children whose parents desire them to receive it, and also to provide adequate opportunity of study and training for teachers who desire to give it. We are of opinion that the nation generally would welcome legislation to this end if it could be attained without religious controversy. Secondly, it should be the concern of the Churches, in co-operation with the local educational authorities and the teachers, to determine what particular form the instruction so provided should take.

It is again observable that the whole question is considered, not as a citizen's question, but as one that concerns Christians alone. The different sects quietly and calmly arrogate to themselves the right to speak for the nation, and it is that assumption that should be challenged whenever possible. They represent Church and Chapel-goers only, and not all of them. And Church and Chapel attendants are not even a majority in the nation. Their claim to speak for the nation is sheer impudence.

The committee says it aims at securing religious instruction for all parents whose children desire it. That is not the case. It is to be given, as is the case now, to all children whose parents do not expressly forbid it. And the distinction is important. The parsons know better than to trust to parents clamouring for religious instruction. It is extremely probable that if parents had to ask for it to get it, the majority would not bother about religion at all. And nothing could be more dangerous than to permit the creation of a committee of clergymen to work in conjunction with local education committees. That would invite intrigue of all descriptions, and any amount of underhand pressure brought to bear upon teachers generally.

In the circumstances, we again beg Freethinkers all over the country to busy themselves in this matter. We are gratified to know that, owing to our insistence, very many resolutions in favour of Secular Education have already been sent to Mr. Fisher from trade and other organizations, but we should like to see many more forwarded. If Freethinkers don't put up a fight here, no one else will.

Emma Dixon, a dressmaker, of Blyth, was fined £5 at Morpeth for telling fortunes. No one fines the clergy for telling people what will happen to them in "another world."

Catholic journals on the Continent state that there is a rumour in Vatican circles that the Nobel Peace Prize will this year be awarded to the Pope. The "peace" alluded to in the paragraph must be the peace which passeth all understanding.

A Wesleyan minister, the Rev. Josiah Mee, of Doncaster, dropped dead in the street outside the Central Hall, Westminster, where he had been speaking. Had he been a speaker at a Freethought Congress, there would have been an impressive moral.

Mr. George Lane-Fox, the late Vice-Chancellor of the Primrose League, was a Roman Catholic. It is curious to recall that the League was founded to commemorate a Jewish statesman, and that one of its objects is to upbold the Protestant religion.

"Dear Father, I am one of God's sheep, led astray from the fold," was the pathetic note left by a servant-girl of Moulton, Cheshire, who was found drowned. One of God's sheep! And what of the shepherd's care for his flock?

Mr. Rudyard Kipling has not always been complimentary to coloured folk, whom an old divine described as "God's image carved in ebony." Hence there is real humour in the circumstance of Mr. Kipling's portrait appearing in silhouette on the cover of a recent pamphlet. Unwittingly, the popular writer looks like the corner-man in a minstrel troupe.

According to a newspaper paragraph, charwomen employed in schools have been granted a bonus up to nine shillings weekly, but the highest bonus granted to women teachers is eight shillings weekly. This shows the real appreciation of education in a Christian country.

The British and Foreign Bible Society's report is nothing if not topical, and it declares that the Scriptures whisper "the sure and certain prospect of immortality" across "the uncounted graves of our young soldiers." This is very significant. It shows that the Churches are getting ashamed of their theological hell, and are becoming more and more humanized.

The clerical statement that the Germans are Atheists is refuted by the latest report of the above Society. Here are the facts concerning the Society's work for the peoples of Central Europe: "It has already published twenty-six million volumes in German, three million in Hungarian, two million in Bohemian, besides nearly half a million for other polyglot races in the Austrian Empire, 800,000 in Bulgarian, and 300,000 in Turkish."

Speaking at York Convocation the Bishop of Hull said:—

> The bottom of Germany's idea in the present War was the need of expansion for her growing population; and if we were to have a League of Nations the Church must reconsider her attitude of blessing large families and saying "be fruitful and multiply." There must be moral restraint in the size of families.

The Bishop appears too sensible a man for his job. He ought to throw it up.

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Our boasted civilization is largely veneer, and charity plays too important a part in the community. "In the hospitals of the London area alone, at this moment, between 11,000 and 12,000 beds are filled with sick, while every year 1,400,000 persons submit their sufferings to their ministry," says a writer in the *Daily News*. It is a bitter commentary that these hospitals have to depend upon the alms' dish; that the nurses are, as a class, overworked and sweated, and that the hospitals constantly tremble on the threshold of insolvency. Truly, Christian charity covers a multitude of shortcomings.

From the *Anglican Daily Times* of July 12 we see that Rev. N. H. Patrick is quite alive to the future. He says the Churches must show "more interest in the agricultural labourers, who have been neglected. Their wages would not be less than 25s., perhaps never lower than 30s. per week, and they would require all the care the Churches could give them." Now, does Mr. Patrick mean that when the agricultural labourer gets 25s. per week he will need careful guidance how to spend such an enormous amount of money on himself and family; or does he mean that if the Church attends to its business they may get more out of him; or does he mean that, with more wages, the labourer will be more independent, less subservient to "parson," and that the Churches may lose him altogether?

Journalists find out everything in time, and the London *Evening Standard* has found out why men are Atheists. The "intellectual," says our contemporary, does not believe in God, "because so many people believe in God." Our contemporary had better try again.

Rev. F. B. Meyer is disturbed on learning that the Anglo-American Baseball League have decided to hold Sunday matches. It fills him with "dismay"—which we can quite understand. For if people can get healthy outdoor—or indoor—entertainments on Sunday, the churchgoing population will be still further reduced. Mr. Meyer protests in the name of "religion, of the home, and of physical efficiency." Religion we can well understand. But what have the last two to do with it? Physical efficiency can hardly be encouraged by listening to Mr. Meyer, and we feel the home is quite safe without his watchfulness.

The Bishop of Chelmsford has been addressing an Intercession meeting at Buckhurst Hill, and asked how could we expect God to stop the War when out of London's six and a half millions you would not find a quarter of a million in churches, chapels, and mission halls? Evidently, keeping the War going is God's way of getting level with us. His lordship also asked, "Why was it we have not more men to send to the Front?" And replies, Because we had neglected the housing question, etc. A nice man is the Bishop of Chelmsford! This representative of God finds the chief reason for looking after the young is the need of men for the Army. We must breed quickly, and preserve what we breed, or we shall fall short of our supply of material for killing.

Sir Henry Lucy, writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, says that in the last year of the eighteenth century the then Archbishop of Canterbury kept house at Lambeth Palace on an income of £2,682. The Archbishop of York drew £1,610, and the Lord Bishop of London £1,000. These sums are far below the incomes of the present prelates, which are now £15,000 (Canterbury), and £10,000 each for the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London.

The Bishop of Hull has been saying to his fellow-clergymen that if they were to advocate a League of Nations the Church must reconsider her attitude of blessing large families and saying: "Be fruitful and multiply." Fancy the Church ceasing to stimulate wars and turning pacifist.

The clerical conscience is just as elastic as that of a schoolboy who ties a tin-can to a poor dog's tail. The Rev. E. Millard, vicar of St. Anne's Church, Grantham, was fined £10 for wrongly using foodstuffs in feeding animals and birds. Perhaps Mr. Millard, being in an exempt profession, has not yet realized that there is a War going on.

At Southend-on-Sea an intercession service was held on the Cliffs, and music was provided by a military band. Perhaps the promoters imagined that the more noise they made the greater their chance of a gracious recognition from Providence.

Describing the Protestant celebration of the Battle of the Boyne, near Belfast, the *Daily News* says "A witch-doctor on the Gold Coast might have been proud of the show." The same remark might apply to a number of religious observances.

From the *Star*:—

> Speaking in Convocation the Bishop of Exeter said in some places in the country there was the church, a large parsonage, and nothing to do. "I know one man," he said, "who has not had a marriage in his church for twenty-eight years; there is one child in his parish; and now he is suffering from nervous breakdown."

William Taverner, who was sentenced at Chester Assizes to fifteen months' imprisonment for falsifying the books of the Middle Age Pension Friendly Society, and for obtaining money under false pretences, was a very religious individual, the *Star* notes that:—

> He always opened his meetings with prayer; there were always one or two local chapel lights on his platform; and his talk was larded with pious expressions. He cultivated the personal appearance of a Methodist preacher, soft black hat, white tie, and black tail coat complete.

Taverner evidently knew his business, but was probably in too much of a hurry. Hence his downfall.

In the recently published *Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Hooker*, the famous botanist is quoted as saying: "The most candid clerical disputant I met with would allow the freest and fullest discussion, but only in Latin." Perhaps that clergyman thought the best way of defending a dying religion was to use a dead language.

Speaking in Convocation on the extension of the franchise, the Bishop of Exeter regretted that political meetings were not opened with prayer. It would be almost as exciting as singing "God save Ireland" at a Primrose League meeting.

Fancy religionists are not welcomed in the Army. At the United Methodist Conference it was stated that the Methodist recruits were often registered as Church of England, and men who were registered as Methodists were kept in camp on Sundays doing work.

The Gospel-Temperance folk will be uneasy at Mr. Ben Tillett's statement that the majority of the Conscientious Objectors are teetotalers, whilst the majority of the fighting men are non-abstainers. Perhaps the Cocoa Press will have something to say on the matter.

Cardinal Bourse has designated Saint Michael as patron-saint of the Allied airmen. Unfortunately, the Greek Church authorities have already nominated Elijah to the same post. Of the two, the prophet seems the better choice. At least he drove his "bus" up to heaven.

The old Wesleyan Chapel at Kempstone, near Corfe Castle, Dorset, has been destroyed by fire. It appears a fitting ending for a building in which so many folk have been threatened with flames.

The promised revival of religion is long overdue, and one result of the prolongation of the War is the stoppage of church and chapel building. Perhaps the faithful will now turn their attention to paying their debts.

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Save Your Papers.

WE hope our readers are bearing in mind the need we have for all their old papers, books, and magazines. We want as much as we can get, and as soon as we can get it. Send all you have in parcels of from fourteen pounds to one hundredweight to the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. If the bundles are just tied round strongly with string it will be enough. They should be labelled "Scrap Paper," and can be sent carriage forward. We will send labels on request, or, if possible, sacks when they are preferred. But we must have all your old papers as soon as possible. If old ledgers—without covers, please—and other business documents are sent, we will see that they are properly destroyed. Remember that no parcel is too small to send. Full schedule prices will be paid.

To Correspondents.

— MATHEWS.—Received, acknowledged later.

J. GREAVES.—Glad to hear from so warm an admirer of Mr. Foote. Many more widely known men have not left behind so many sincere friends.

L. H. W. MANN.—Letter to hand, and shall receive attention. Will write you later.

W. CUMMING.—Received with thanks, and will prove useful. You would further oblige by dating cuttings. It is sometimes necessary for reference.

D. DAWSON.—Thanks for parcel, also for securing new readers. We are greatly encouraged by the ready help of our readers in both these directions.

W. REPTON.—Will do as you desire. We have heard no news of Ambrose Bierce of late. He was a good writer, and some of his short stories in "The Midst of Life" were very powerful. He wrote his most "blasphemous" work under the name of "Dod Grile." His *Fiend's Delight* is a good specimen, but has been long out of print.

F. VENABLES.—Man very early discovered the use of fire, the usual way of getting it being by rubbing dry sticks together. We agree with you as to the pity of reformers who have no belief in a God worth bothering about continuing to use the word as though they were more or less in agreement with the current religion.

J. GAIR.—If you could secure a hall in Pontypridd in November or the latter part of October Mr. Cohen would arrange to visit the place. Sorry you were unable to come to Bridgend.

A. ALDWINKLE.—Charles Bradlaugh joined the Freemasons in 1859. He belonged to a French lodge, which did not invoke the use of the name of the Deity You will get particulars in the *Life*, by his daughter and J. M. Robertson. You are being written on the other matter.

E. P.—We have received copies of Upton Sinclair's Journal, and, but for pressure on our space, should have "lifted" some paragraphs therefrom. It is a noteworthy publication, and the chapters on "The Profits of Religion" are very striking. Those of our readers who would care to investigate may secure a year's issues—twelve—by sending one dollar to No. 1513 Sunset Avenue, Pasandena, California.

DOGO.—No single work would give you all you require. Mr. John M. Robertson's *Short History of Christianity* would probably be most suitable for your purpose.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We publish on p. 400 the first of Dr. Lyttleton's promised communications to the *Freethinker*. We feel sure that it will be read with considerable interest. Mr. Cohen will reply next week to the points raised. Meanwhile we suggest to our readers that the present would be a good occasion to introduce the *Freethinker* to Christian friends.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at Maesteg on Sunday last, the hall being quite full in the evening. Both lectures were followed with keen interest, and some lively discussion followed the afternoon meeting. This was Mr. Cohen's first visit to Maesteg, but he will be back again during the autumn.

The informal Conference of South Wales Freethinkers held at Bridgend on Saturday, July 20, holds out promises of important development in the near future. Both Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd were present, and both were much impressed by the character of the gathering. A number of towns were represented, including representatives from the Swansea and Maesteg Branches of the N. S. S. The meeting elected a Committee for the purpose of carrying out the work of the Conference, and we feel sure the result will be the formation of a number of new Branches of the N. S. S. and a more sustained propagandist effort.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures this evening (July 28) at the Tillery Institute, Abertillery. We are not informed as to the time of the meeting, but assume it will be either 6 o'clock or 6.30. We hope there will be a good meeting.

Mr. Lloyd writes: "In the article entitled 'Side-Lights,' which appeared in the issue of July 14, through some inexplicable trick of memory, I attributed the hymn commencing, 'God moves in a mysterious way,' to Isaac Watts, instead of to William Cowper, immeasurably the greater poet of the two. It was an unpardonable mistake, committed against knowledge, which, unfortunately, was for the time buried in my sub-liminal consciousness. For its resurrection, my thanks are due to Mr. Murray, of Aberdeen. I also tender humble apologies to the shade of the genial Olney bard."

Messrs. Watts & Co. are offering Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought* for sale on the instalment system. The work is in two handsome volumes, running to over 1,000 pages, and is offered at 12s. 6d. Payment may be made in five monthly instalments of 2s. 6d. each. This is an offer of which many Freethinkers will be glad to avail themselves. It is a work that should be in the possession of all Freethinkers and reformers.

We regret that, owing to a blunder in our issue of July 14, the announcement concerning Mr. Palmer's addresses before the Christian Evidence Society read as though both were to be delivered at Craven Street, Strand. The second should have been announced for Tavistock Place. The mistake was made in the rush of Tuesday's work, and we apologize for the annoyance of those who were directed to the wrong address.

There is a vacancy in our publishing office for a lad of fourteen or fifteen. The labour is not arduous, neither does it involve long hours, and it affords a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with the routine work in a publishing office before launching out on a wider career. Particulars may be obtained any day on application to the Manager. No previous experience is necessary.

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The Story of the Tea Plant.

V.

(Concluded from p. 381).

AFTER the withering process has been completed, the tea leaf should be rolled in cool and clean surroundings provided with fresh air. The leaf is subjected to rolling for the purpose of rupturing the plant-cells which contain the juice of the tea. This stage of production must be most carefully conducted, for while the leaf requires bruising, it should not be torn. When the cells have been ruptured, their sap is set free to flow over the surface of the leaf, so that, when subsequently submitted to the drying stage, the water alone is allowed to escape into the atmosphere, while the substance extracted settles on the exterior, all prepared for easy dissolution when boiling water is poured over the tea in the home.

The rolling processes ended, that of fermentation begins. The elaborate researches of Kelway Bamber, the eminent chemist, prove that the "fermentation" of the tea leaf arises from the action of a plant ferment. This phenomenon is quite distinct from that form of fermentation due to the activities of micro-organisms, which promote putrefaction and decay. But if the "fermentation" generated by the vegetable ferment or enzyme is long continued, organic fermentation supervenes, and the leaf turns sour.

As a result of the rolling, the leaf curls up. This curl is more or less lost during fermentation, and most manufacturers afterwards re-roll their leaf to restore the curl. Some planters, however, refrain from this rolling, but others, more fastidious, roll as many as three times. This latter method is thus described by Wallis-Tayler: "The first time after the withering or limping operation has been effected; the second time when the process of fermentation has been about half carried out; and the third and last time after the completion of the process of fermentation."

For many centuries the Chinese have employed charcoal for drying their tea. And for a long time in India the fumes of open charcoal fires were deemed indispensable for the production of good flavour. This idea is now completely exploded. To-day, in India, the leaf is extensively dried by machinery, with highly satisfactory results.

The tea is first dried, in order to arrest fermentation, and then the leaf is slowly desiccated. All moisture is thus extracted, while the essential oil and other important tea properties are retained. It is imperative to guard against the loss of the essential oil, which is extremely volatile, and if the tea is wrongly treated, this oil will escape. The essential oil gives the leaf its flavour, and its loss is therefore serious. A temperature above that of boiling water is demanded for the initial drying of the tea. Tea is usually run through the drying machine twice, so as to secure its thorough desiccation. A temperature of from 230 deg. to 280 deg. F. is requisite for the first drying, while for the second, one of about 200 deg. will suffice.

After the drying operation is over, the leaf is sorted and sifted. Where choice teas are produced, as a rule, the following five classes are prepared. These are:—Broken Orange Pekoe, Orange Pekoe, Pekoe, Pekoe Souchong, and Pekoe Fannings. These products are of different qualities, and command different prices. Orange Pekoe is the best, while Pekoe Fannings—fine broken tea—proves least profitable to the producer.

After sifting, the separated teas are severally refired, and this operation completes the preparation of the commodity for the table. Moisture is highly injurious to tea, and even brief exposure to a damp atmosphere proves very detrimental. The final firing just mentioned is designed for the purpose of evaporating any moisture absorbed by the leaf during the process of sifting and sorting. It is therefore for a short time subjected to a high temperature. The finished commodity is now conveyed to the packing department, and placed, either by hand or with a packing machine, inside lead-lined chests, or, better still, in steel chests, and then the tea merely awaits transport to the neighbouring market. Many experienced planters favour the plan of storing their products in bins for a time, before packing in chests. Tea certainly mellows and evolves a finer perfume when stored, so long as it is protected from the action of the atmosphere. The maximum flavour of tea is not attained until it is three months old, and, when hermetically sealed, tea will retain its prime quality for several years. But it is an all-essential condition that it must be perfectly air-tight, otherwise deterioration is certain to supervene.

All ordinary black teas are produced by the processes now described. Green tea, however, merits brief notice. Now, the main difference between black and green tea consists in the absence in the latter of fermentation, while the withering or wilting treatment of the former is replaced in the production of green tea by a rapid system of steaming. In the manufacture of green tea, the natural fresh colour of the leaf must be preserved if the product is to present a verdant appearance. After this tea is steamed, rolled, and dried, it displays an unprepossessing dingy green colour. The more delicate leaves retain their freshness, but the larger and older leaves are transformed into a dirty gray. Hence the "green" tea's uninviting aspect. To restore to the herb its original colour the use of pigments was employed. The sage Chinese long proved themselves adepts in the art of removing this blemish by resorting to the tricks of the adulterator. Green tea of splendid colour adorned the markets which owed its fresh appearance to the presence of prussian blue, tumeric, indigo, and other alien ingredients in its composition. Planters in India are largely opposed to the addition of pigments in the production of green tea. But in the various markets where green tea is in keen demand "finished greens" are the only teas purchased by the dealers. Manufacturers of these products are, therefore, driven to adulteration.

The vast bulk of Indian teas are pure black. But in the Kangra Valley green teas are elaborated for the Persian and Afghan trade. And there is still an extensive market for green teas, notably, in North America, a continent which continues the importation of the major part of its supplies from China and Japan. In other tea-drinking lands where green tea was once popular, the black variety is now in practically universal use. When the taste for the rich black beverage has been acquired the preference for the comparatively insipid green tea rapidly declines. This change will, probably, occur in the United States, and the export of Indian tea to the Republic will then materially increase.

Brick tea is a Chinese product, and is the only tea consumed in Tibet. The best Chinese brick teas are ordinary leaves pressed into the shape of bricks. But the commodity which enjoys the widest sale in Tibet is prepared from coarse leaves and stalks which usually form the prunings in India where they are burnt or utilized as manure. Were these waste materials turned into tea they would furnish a handsome profit to the planter, and a brick tea similar to that in vogue in Tibet is now being produced in India. The brick tea in general use in Tibet is employed as currency for dealings of all kinds. Tablet tea is also in demand, but this commodity is mainly manufactured in China almost entirely for the Russian trade.

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Tea is seldom associated with turbulence, although the destruction of the tea-chests by the Americans in Boston harbour precipitated the War of Independence and helped to establish the famous festival of the fourth of July.

The largest consumers of tea are, in the order specified, the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, Australasia, and Canada, while on a far reduced scale the beverage is used in Holland, Germany, France, Austria, and Denmark.

In 1864 practically all the tea imported into Britain came from China. In 1902, with a vastly increased consumption, only seventeen million lb. arrived from China, while over 277 million lb. were imported from India and Ceylon.

The cultivation of tea in Ceylon has progressed at a prodigious rate. Until 1880 there was no material export, but since that year exports have so rapidly expanded that in 1903 nearly 150 million lb. were shipped for abroad from that island. On a similar scale, the cultivation of coffee, for which Ceylon was long so celebrated, has constantly declined.

T. F. PALMER.

Another Scientist's Profession of Faith.

From our earliest childhood we have been made familiar with the accounts of the sacrifice of bulls and goats, with the burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, with the ghastly details of the temple ritual, with the horrors of the professional shambles set up in Jerusalem. That the smoke of the fat of the victims ascended as a grateful savour to the Lord, seemed a perfectly natural statement; that the blood of the slain beasts, poured down from the altar over the temple floor, did not strike us as an abominable thing. It was all unreal to us, we had never seen it; it was, we were told, all typical of something in the New Testament.

When Saint Bonaventura dilating on the joys of the saints in the Day of Judgment, counts this among them that "He shall wash His hands in the blood of the sinner," he is using a metaphor which, however natural to one accustomed to the sights of the Hebrew sacrifice, is simply revolting to any right-minded modern. No less revolting is the degradation of language preserved for us in a hymn still sung in some Protestant Churches:—

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

For that ghastly conception it is difficult to express adequate condemnation.—*Professor Silvanus Thompson, "A Not Impossible Religion,"* pp. 150, 151, 155.

THE latest event in the theological world is the publication of the late Professor Silvanus Thompson's confession of faith, under the title of *A Not Impossible Religion.*

Professor Thompson was a great scientist; as a Professor of Physics his fame was international, he was an authority upon Electricity, Magnetism, and Light. The announcement that such a distinguished scientist had finished a work in favour of religion must have raised the highest hopes and expectations in the hearts of the beleagured garrisons of the Faith. These hopes and expectations are not fulfilled in the book. Indeed, far from finding in the Sciences, with which he is familiar, facts to buttress up the leaning walls of Religion, the Professor pours the vials of his contempt upon those who make the attempt. He speaks of the "crude divagations of the new school of sentimental philosophers who mix physics and psychics for us in facile and graceful oratory. Because radium emits mysterious corpuscles, or ether-waves are found to be generated by electric sparks, we are not bound to deduce therefrom the probability that our dead friends can speak to us through a planchette, or that the doctrine of the Trinity can be developed from the triple conservation of matter, of energy, and of ether. To the truly spiritual man who is groping after the eternal truth, these new fashions in philosophy are as unsatisfying as the old atheisms which they replaced."[1]

Later on he makes an attack upon those champions of religion, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor William James, and the redoubtable Bergson, who are always relied upon by the apologist as representing the opinion of the scientific world upon religion. Professor Thompson says:—

> Almost alone Sir Oliver Lodge seems to attract the public ear on questions of religious controversy, though the interest which his writings have evoked seems to be due not to his competence in criticism or philosophy, nor to his scholarship, but to his cultivation of the quasi-science of psychical research. The newer psychologists, of whom the late Professor William James was the shining example, tickle our ears with the jargon in which they dress up the half ascertained, half-unknown facts on the borders of our consciousness, and attract us by their skill in essaying the manufacture of an exact science out of the very elements of inexactness. One wonders in what terms the men of the next century after ours will estimate their labours. We applaud Bergson as if he were a second Plato, but we forget to ask him to define what he means by his favourite term "becoming." In all this whirr and noise of to-day, what single contribution is there that has been, or ever will be, of the smallest avail or help to the soul in conflict with itself.[2]

Of all the multitudinous religions and sects which exist to-day, Professor Thompson could not find one that he could subscribe to. Of the orthodox faith he says: "No one can read Milman's *History of Latin Christianity* without an appalled sense of the utter paganism which ruled, as well as of the utter profligacy which accompanied the triumph of the faith called 'orthodox.'" Of the other sects he says: "If the spectacle presented to-day by the immense variety of sects with conflicting doctrines and practices, all claiming to be the true exponents of Christianity, does not sicken the earnest seeker after truth, assuredly it saddens him. He finds the exclusiveness of the Roman or Anglican priest to grant remission and absolution for sin. The doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren and the Salvation Army are as impossible for him as the dogmas of the Greek Church. The shining eloquence which draws to the City Temple tends as little to his edification as the ethical paradoxes of South Place Institute. He looks in vain to Saint Peter's or to Saint Paul's, for at Saint Peter's there is a shrivelled pallid old man playing at holding the keys of heaven, yet himself ruled by the Curia, and at Saint Paul's there is a gorgeous performance attended by comfortable Canons who are not exactly like the fishermen of Galilee" (p. 21).

After another denunciation of Catholicism, Professor Thompson goes on: "And Protestantism from its thousand chapels every Sunday sets forth another Gospel, a 'plan of salvation' an invention of the theologians, a web of celestial tactics to outwit the devil and to rescue the soul from eternal torment in hell, by the aid of a bloody sacrifice. How utterly foreign to the Gospel of Galilee!" (p. 103).

For the Sacraments of the Church he professes the utmost contempt. "The rite of water-baptism," he declares, "alike of infant or of adult, with its accompanying piece of materialistic jargon that thereby we have been made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, we may

[1] Silvanus Thompson, *A Not Impossible Religion*, pp. 32 33.
[2] *A Not Impossible Religion*, p. 202.

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freely set aside as being of no importance and of much spiritual harm." Of the Eucharist, known among Protestants as the "Lord's Supper" and the "Holy Communion," and among Catholics as the "Mass," and regarded as the greatest of all the sacraments, he observes: "Modern chemistry has had this salutary effect, that it has rendered it for ever impossible for any educated person to believe in either transubstantiation or in consubstantiation as a fact. The bread remains bread; the wine remains the juice of the grape" (p. 126).

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

Tales for the Ethiops.

IN a recent article, I gave some account of a gospel in the Coptic language, and closed with the reflection that, to me, the so-called Apocryphal gospels, such as the Coptic *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, and the so-called Canonical Gospels (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*) were of equal historical value. That is to say, all alike were valuable as illustrations of the mind of the people who, in the early centuries, were slowly building-up the Catholic legends and doctrine. On the present occasion, I give a few notes on a gospel which French scholars have translated from an Ethiopic version,[1] but which is believed to derive from a Greek text, written in Egypt or Palestine. It is known as *The Testament in Galilee of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*.

The book opens with an address by Jesus to his eleven disciples, in Galilee, after his resurrection. Speaking to them as to "the Sons of Light," he tells of the end of the world, and the Day of Judgment; he prophesies earthquakes, drying-up of rivers, withering of vegetation, flights of devouring locusts. In particular, he foretells disasters to Syria, Cilicia, Pontus, Armenia, Phœnicia, Judæa, and his discourse is charged with groans, blood, and affliction.

In such revelations of early Christian psychology, one observes the remarkable difference between the attitude of the second and third centuries, and the attitude of the twentieth. In the one case, there is a sense of oppression and horror, relief from which is sought in heavenly visions. In the other and modern case, however much we suffer in the present War, the general thought of humanity is turned towards a reconstruction of civilization on earth, by human means, and in a spirit of hope and confidence. Eighteen hundred years ago, the race was far less sure of itself and its capacities than it is to-day.

Jesus proceeds to describe the approach of the Evil One, or Antichrist,—head flaming, right eye bloodshot, left eye blind, the pupils white, the lower lips swollen, the feet over-large, the limbs twisted. From Antichrist, and from all dangers, the Elect People are carried in safety to Paradise, where they dwell among angels for countless thousands of years; while the Sinners, who hated the commandments of the Lord, are consigned to fire.

Warnings are uttered against "false apostles," especially Simon and Cerinthus. Of course, to us Twentieth Century people, one apostle was no more false than another; and Simon and Cerinthus, who were Gnostic propagandists, had as much right to preach their conception of God and Spiritual Powers as the other propagandists had to circulate the more dramatic and picturesque folk-tales of Jesus, Mary, Shepherds, Wise Men, Miracles, Crucifixion, etc. But the reference to Simon and Cerinthus is an interesting reminder of the way in which a variety of ideas had to struggle for existence and supremacy in what was to be Mediæval Europe.

The next section is practically a brief summary of the life of Jesus, his marvellous works of healing, and his rising from the dead. At this point, a curious passage occurs, in which Jesus portrays to the Apostles his position and rank in heaven:—

> When I pass into heaven, I am clothed with the Wisdom of the Father, and with his Strength, and Power; I am like to the celestial beings, to angels, to archangels. I move among the Functions, the Powers, the Dominations, for I possess the fullness of the Wisdom of the Father who sent me; and the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael have followed me even to the Fifth Heaven.

And so on. The singular anecdote follows of the angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary to announce her coming motherhood. Jesus himself, who was to be her son, was the very Gabriel who figured as the messenger in the Annunciation.

The Apostles ask Jesus when the Day of Judgment will arrive. In the Canonical accounts, he replies that it is not for them to know the secret of the divine seasons. But in this Ethiopian gospel he openly informs them that the advent of the Father will date in the year 150. Since, however, we do not know the starting-point from which the Ethiopian evangelist reckons, we cannot make a definite calculation. But we can see how certain early Christians had become impatient of the use of vague terms, and demanded unmistakable figures.

Jesus relates to his friends how, after his crucifixion, he had gone down into hell and conversed with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other Hebrew patriarchs and prophets. This hell would seem to have been merely a kind of Sheol, or cool and shady underworld—not a place of torment. Jesus baptized the ancient patriarchs, and thus enabled them to qualify for entrance into heavenly rest. In this legend we see an effort of early Christian logic to justify the translation of pre-Christian and orthodox Hebrews to Paradise, even though, through the accident of chronology, they had never been privileged to hear the preaching of Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem.

Towards the close of these Galilean discourses to the faithful Eleven, Jesus recites a parable of the Wise Virgins. Here we have the tale of the ten women who slept while waiting for the Bridegroom's procession, five being wise because they had lamps filled with oil, and five foolish because they had no oil. But a new turn is given to the story. Jesus explains that the five Wise Virgins are Faith, Charity, Joy, Peace, Hope, and these sit down with the guests at the wedding-feast. The five Foolish Virgins, who are shut out from the banquet, are Intelligence, Knowledge, Obedience, Continence, and Mercy. This division is surprising, and no intepretation is offered. The doctrine lying behind the parable is, perhaps, that of the superiority of certain moral aspirations to the qualities of wit, keenness, good manners, and mere good nature. It is an amateur and clumsy psychology, but, possibly, there is an attempt to discriminate between a noble temper and disposition, and a shrewd compliance with a social code in order to secure comfort and a respectable situation. At any rate, that is all I can make of it.

After Jesus has finished these revelations a clap of thunder is heard, lightning blazes, the earth trembles, the sky opens, and a luminous cloud carries Jesus upwards, while a multitude of angels bless him and shout,—

"Gather us, O Priest, to thee in the light of thy glory."

Portions of this Gospel, maybe, were produced in the

[1] In *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. ix. (1913).

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second century, others added in the third. Some parts are popular narrative, and some—such as the passage about Christ among the Functions—incline to the dreamy, metaphysical scheme of thought which the Gnostics loved. Perhaps a rather uncritical collector of legendary odds and ends pieced them together, and the result is a considerable medley. One item—the portraiture of Antichrist—is somewhat original. It looks like an endeavour to associate moral ugliness with physical ugliness, and to present the Enemy of God as a kind of Caliban.

F. J. GOULD.

Correspondence.

ATHEISM, ANARCHISM, AND ACCURACY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the course of a recent article in the *Freethinker*, Mr. A. B. Moss says:—

> ..... the doctrine of non-resistance carried to its logical conclusion would mean not only the abolition of our Army and Navy, of our law courts and police courts, our judges and our magistrates, but our police constables also, *and this would inevitably lead to the villain riding rough-shod over the virtuous*, and to the masses being left a prey to revolution and anarchy.

I must protest against this all too common misrepresentation of Anarchism, and against the inference conveyed by the portion which I have italicized in the above paragraph, that armies, judges, policemen, etc., exist to prevent rough-shod villainy.

Like Mr. Moss, I am rather fond of logical conclusions, and, just as the Atheist's view of life entirely without any conception of God is unthinkable to the Christian, so the no-government philosophy seems absurd to most intelligent persons, *who have never given the subject a thought.*

It is a commonplace with Freethinkers that organized religion is maintained largely to keep the people in subjection; exactly, but the reverence for government is inculcated for the same reason; indeed, investigation into the evolution of government shows that God and the State are twin oppressors. Mr. Moss, I feel sure, would think that we were more highly civilized, if we were *completely without* priests, churches, and all their socially wasteful and useless ceremonies, yet he has not outgrown reverence for the judge with his wig and his wisdom, and for the policeman (guardian of virtue and professional enemy of villainy) the "justice" of courts, and the belief that society could not exist without those repressive institutions.

If Uncle Joe were to say that the masses had become so degraded that they lapsed into immorality and Atheism, I am sure it would promptly be pointed out to him that disbelief in God had nothing in common with moral depravity. Yet Mr. Moss falls into the common error (there are many journalists who do it maliciously) of writing "anarchy" as a synonym for social confusion.

Standing on the battlefields of Europe to-day are millions of men whose sole immediate concern is slaughter. Armed with the deadliest of weapons human ingenuity has devised, supported by all the most scientific appliances for the destruction of life, these men, who are not Anarchists with bombs, but law-abiding citizens (with hand-grenades) of the best governed countries in the world, these men, having committed "man's first sin, obedience," are prepared at the word of command to shoot, bomb, asphyxiate, bludgeon and bayonet their fellow-creatures, to revolutionize even the physical character of the earth, and with great gallantry and courage to sacrifice their own lives.

While we contemplate this magnificent manifestation of the triumph of government, of discipline and order, let us recoil with horror from the awful prospect of "the masses being left a prey to revolution and anarchy."

J. EFFEL.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Dr. Lyttelton and the "Freethinker."—The Editor	409
"Nearer, My God, to Thee."—J. T. Lloyd	410
The Pomp of Yesterday.—Mimnermus	411
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	412
A New Lucian.—Geo. Underwood	416
Another Scientist's Profession of Faith.—W. Mann	417
Notes from Ireland	418

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Dr. Lyttelton and the "Freethinker."

It was with much pleasure that we received Dr. Lyttelton's offer to open a discussion on the points at issue between himself and Freethinkers, and his first letter will have been read by all with considerable interest. As his object is to discuss broad and fundamental issues rather than superficial and unimportant differences, we shall endeavour to imitate his example, and hasten to deal with the more important points raised in the article. The facts cited in our notes on "Religion and Cleanliness" are, of course, admitted. Dr. Lyttelton rightly says the whole question is, What are the legitimate inferences from the facts produced? Our own inference was that religion and dirt were, historically, not unusual bedfellows; that lack of cleanliness was *once upon a time* accepted as an indication of saintliness, and that this was a consequence of a preaching of asceticism, combined with opposition to medical and sanitary science. Indeed, this was hardly an inference—it was little more than a statement of historic fact. The teaching of Christians and the practice of Christians are there for all who care to study the subject.

* * *

Modern Influences on Religion.

But we must demur from Dr. Lyttelton's inference that in saying an alliance between Christianity and dirt existed for several centuries, and that this alliance was inevitable, inasmuch as it followed from certain aspects of early Christian life and teaching, we implied that "professing Christians to-day wash less frequently than Agnostics," or that, in order to justify our position, we are bound to prove that there has been an alliance between Christianity and dirt "during the last 150 years." We should be much surprised to discover that Christians wash less frequently than Agnostics—other things equal—and we quite fail to see the relevancy of the "last 150 years." For it is just part of the Freethought case that for considerably more than 150 years freethinking and secularizing ideas have been rationalizing and humanizing Christians to such an extent that they have been compelled to drop some of the more objectionable doctrines, and mould their lives more in accord with the dictates of science and secular common sense. The last 150 years has seen a great change in Christian doctrine and teaching, and the contention of the Secularist is that this change is the result, not of a new revelation from heaven, not even of a more correct understanding of the old revelation, but is entirely due to the pressure of a more secularized social life on religious teachings. And the settlement of that issue is of vital importance in the controversy between Christians and Freethinkers.

* * *

The Implications of Christianity.

Dr. Lyttelton submits that the issues are whether there is a "necessary connection between the *doctrines* of Christianity and dirtiness of person," and whether "religion is to be condemned for the folly or blindness or barbarism of its votaries." It does not seem to us that issues raised in this way admit of a plain and simple Yes or No. Of course, there is no specific command in Christianity, "Thou shalt not wash," nor "Thou shalt kill the unbeliever," nor "Thou shalt obstruct or suppress science." But when we find in the Christian Church from the earliest times these things being done by people in the name of their religion, and done in virtue of their intense belief in the Christian religion, then we submit we are warranted in believing there was something in Christianity that encouraged such conduct. To say they misunderstood Christianity hardly meets the case. A religion that can be so early, so easily, and so universally misunderstood is clearly no *safe* guide for mankind. And in the terms of the Christian hypothesis, Christianity was given to man as a guide; it was not something he slowly elaborated by the method of trial and error, such as rules in secular affairs. And the case is still more startling when we discover that the correctives to these alleged misunderstandings of Christianity have been supplied by those who had least belief in it, and often by those who rejected it altogether. There is clearly much better ground here for attributing the modifications of Christianity to the rationalizing and secularizing spirit of the age than to any genuine discovery of the real message of Christianity.

* * *

Were Christians in Error?

But is Dr. Lyttelton quite justified in repudiating the Christian Church of the ages, and the vast majority of Christians—until, we presume, about 150 years ago—as so many perverters of Christian teaching? And, if true, is it not, to a Christian, as damning an indictment of Christianity as any Freethinker could frame? Dr. Lyttelton is endeavouring to save Christianity at the expense of Christians. It is left for the Freethinker to say a saving word on behalf of Christians. When Jesus came before the world as a celibate, when he indulged in lengthy fasts, and so entered into communication with the supernatural world, was he not illustrating in his own person the common practice of the Eastern ascetic religious teacher? When he cured epileptics and lunatics by a mere touch, and declared that such could be cured by prayers and fasts, when he declared that diseases could be cured "In my name," was not that giving an encouragement to the theory of demonism in disease, and discouraging scientific medicine? And

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when eternal salvation hereafter was made the end of human life here, and salvation made dependent upon right religious belief, was not that laying the seeds for persecution? And there is the final, and to our mind, damning fact, that in our earliest acquaintance with Christians we find them manifesting, in some degree, all the evils upon which we have dwelt. The Freethought case is that the evils manifested by the Christian had their germ in Christian teaching, and that given the teaching the evils were certain to develop. And one proof is that they have developed wherever Christianity has established itself.

* * *

The Survival of Christianity.

We are endeavouring to keep to broad issues rather than to run after mere expressions that are open to criticism. As Dr. Lyttelton says, it is not a matter of importance what the selected topic is, so long as it gives the chance of discussing something of importance. And in this spirit I take my critic's concluding words:—

> The worse one finds the conduct of Christians has been, the greater wonder it is that the creed still survives in vigour. And never before have Christians striven so hard as now to recover the primitive purity of their faith, by studying the doings and sayings of the Christ of History; rather than the Christ of later fiction.

We are afraid we cannot share Dr. Lyttelton's wonder at the survival of *a* Christian creed, when we consider the manner and conditions of its survival. For it has survived, not in virtue of intrinsic strength or merit, but on account of extraneous and adventitious agencies. It has used the power of the State to enforce its own teachings, and to suppress the teachings of others. It has corrupted history in its own interests, and has made the road to political preferment and social advancement dependent on the acceptance of its teachings. It has terrorized where it could, and bribed where it could not terrorize. For centuries it maintained a social environment in which criticism of the Creed was a crime, and in which credulity, and docility, and submission were extolled as the supreme virtues. *Anything* could have survived with equal success given the same means, and the same ruthlessness in their use. With equal success, we say, because one may well ask *what* creed has survived? Is not the modification of Christian teaching in the face of hostile criticism a commonplace of history? What has become of Biblical inspiration, of salvation by faith, of the doctrine of possession, of witchcraft, of eternal damnation, of miracles, and a dozen other things, on behalf of which the Churches fought and slaughtered? Christianity has survived in little else but name; and one may question whether Christians are now really trying "to recover the primitive purity of their faith." Are they not rather trying to see by what means they can read modern ideas into primitive beliefs, and convert a supernaturally conceived, miracle-working, legendary Christ into a figure-head for current social reforms and ethical aspirations?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The One Thing Needful.

THERE is a "menace," Clergy say, in Sex.
And Drunkenness "increaseth day by day."
Such evils do our virtuous Parsons vex,
And must be settled now without delay.
So stifle sex, and Beer let all abhor.
Strafe all things earthly—all—
—Except the War!

A. F. T.

"Nearer, My God, to Thee."

II.

IN the cinemas, at present, an interesting film, bearing the above title, is being exhibited, and every now and then the half-minor tune to which the popular hymn seems indissolubly married is slowly played. The story opens amid most beautiful rural scenery in the bewitching month of May. It is a love-story, teeming with blood-curdling episodes, but ending in apparent peace and happiness. What there is in it ever so remotely suggestive of the hymn, beyond the mere fact that at two or three religious services it is shown as being very indifferently sung, is not at all obvious. In the first scene we are brought delightfully near to Nature's heart. On the edge of a lovely forest we are introduced to a small village school-house, and roaming among the flowers are a dozen or so of little children, with the headmaster and pupil teacher. The first fact that impresses us is that the misshapen schoolmaster, with the fine face, is deeply in love with his lady assistant. But a man from London turns up, whose plausible, seductive ways win the young lady's heart. They get married, and settle down in the Metropolis. It was a most unfortunate union, of which a son was the only issue. John Boden became a drunken, good-for-nothing scoundrel, and ere long committed a crime for which he was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. During his absence, the schoolmaster befriended his broken-hearted wife, and adopted their son. Boden hated his wife, and had been guilty of maltreating her; and no sooner was he out of prison than his savage behaviour was resumed. She left him and returned to her native village. Boden traced her there, and shot her benefactor, severely wounding him. Afraid of the law, he committed suicide. Now, the curious thing is that the religious people in this tragic story were despicable hypocrites, utterly incapable of appreciating any noble action, and who were even shocked at the spectacle of unselfish service and the sincere gratitude it elicited. John Drayton was doubtless a religious man, but his heroic conduct was the outcome of a noble nature which was his quite independently of his religion, which would have been his and found a similar outlet in like circumstances had he been a Pagan or an Atheist. The people who went to church and sang "Nearer, my God, to thee," were narrow-minded, bigoted, self-righteous, censorious, and hateful, however God-fearing and heavenly minded they may have been. Their very saintliness dehumanized them.

Now, nearness to God and saintliness being synonymous terms, we may lay it down as a principle that the possession of this Christian product, by whatever name it may be called, is in no sense a guarantee that its possessor is a noble-minded, brotherly hearted person. As the divines will surely challenge this proposition, it may be advisable to verify it from history. Few defenders of the sanity of the saints as a class are to be found to-day, the abnormality of such characters as Catherine of Sienna being indisputable. The sincerity of the majority of them may be taken for granted, but sincerity is a token neither of sanity nor of moral excellence. Some who had the reputation in their day of being saints, were but brilliant rogues in disguise, whether canonized or not. Our present point, however, is that saintliness is not necessarily accompanied by high ethical qualities. Of Dean Milman's belief in and advocacy of the perfection of the Christian religion in its original purity there can be no intelligent doubt. "Its essential doctrine," he tells us, "was, in its pure theory, insepar-

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able from humane, virtuous, and charitable disposition"; but he is not blind to the fact that the balance between piety and beneficence was seriously disturbed at an early stage in its history, with the following disastrous result :—

> Thus, in a great degree, while the Roman world became Christian in outward worship and in faith, it remained Heathen, or even at some periods worse than Heathenism in its better times, as to beneficence, gentleness, purity, social virtue, humanity, and peace (*History of Christianity*, vol. iii., p. 409).

St. Bernard, of Clairvaux, who flourished at the commencement of the twelfth century, is universally acknowledged to have been one of the very greatest, if not the greatest and most illustrious, of all the saints Christianity has produced. He was, certainly, the most powerful personality of the twelfth century, or of almost any other century. Milman describes him as "at once the leading and the governing head of Christendom." He ruled supreme in the multitudinous convents that were rapidly springing up in all the lands, in the councils of State, and even in the intellectual world. His word was final on every subject. Of noble birth and brilliantly endowed, he might have won immortal fame as courtier and statesman, or in the Church as bishop, cardinal, or even pope; but he chose the severest monastic retirement from all worldly allurements or ecclesiastical honours, joining the new Cistercian Order at Citeaux, which was characterized by the most rigorous discipline and ascetic practices. Here he denied himself the simplest comforts of life; he punished his body in every conceivable way, eating only just enough to keep himself alive, and yet undertaking the hardest, most menial, and degrading offices, and devoting himself to solitude, prayer, and study. Soon the Citeaux monastery became so thronged with votaries that a new one had to be opened with Bernard as its first abbot. Clairvaux, situated in the valley of Wormwood, not far from the river Aube in France, shot into repute as the most hallowed spot in Christendom, and its abbot as the holiest and most saintly of men, whom the people more than half worshipped. His nearness to God overawed all who came in contact with him. His brothers followed his example, and were inmates of the same monastery. But did Bernard's sanctity incarnate itself in those shining virtues which ought to adorn social life? Did his nearness to God co-exist with sympathetic, compassionate, and helpful nearness to his brother men? One day his sister, who had married a nobleman, appeared, in great state, and with a magnificent retinue, at the gate of the monastery, desiring to see her brothers. But they were altogether too holy to have anything to do with so worldly a woman. Milman says that "she was spurned from the door as a sinner." Stung to the quick by their attitude towards her, she exclaimed: "If I am a sinner, I am one of those for whom Christ died, and have the greater need of my brother's kindly counsel." Bernard was sorry for her, and tried hard to separate her from her husband, but did not succeed, though eventually she did renounce all her worldly treasures and retire into a convent. Are brothers ever justified in treating their sisters with such disdain?

St. Bernard was a tremendously orthodox man who bitterly hated both heresies and heretics, and was resolved to do his best to crush both. Abelard and Arnold of Brescia, were the two chief objects of the saint's vehement detestation, the former being the most distinguished intellectualist of that century, who championed the cause of Reason in an age of Faith. Bernard denounced him in the most virulent and sarcastic language at his command. Abelard was undeserving of any sympathetic consideration. Writing to his friend, the Pope, Bernard said :—

> Which is most intolerable, the blasphemy or the arrogance of his language? Which is most damnable, the temerity or the impiety? Would it not be more just to stop his mouth with blows than confute him by argument?

Arnold of Brescia, like Abelard, declined to submit to the authority of the Church, and Bernard could not find terms harsh enough to express his abhorrence of him. He called him the enemy of the Cross of Christ, the fomenter of discord, the fabricator of schism, who ought to be seized and imprisoned. Milman cites another instance of Bernard's mean action :—

> The Abbot of Clairvaux was involved in a disputed election to the Archbishopric of York. The narrow corporate spirit of his order betrayed him into great and crying injustice to William, the elected prelate of that See. The rival of the Englishman, Henry Murdach, once a Cluniac, was a Cistercian; and Bernard scruples not to heap on one of the most pious of men accusasations of ambition, of worse than ambition: to condemn him to everlasting perdition (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., pp. 390-1).

Milman adds that whether Bernard was imposed upon, or was the author of these calumnies, his interference in the election forms "a dark page in his life."

The truth is that piety, nearness to God, or saintliness does not necessarily either arise from or lead to a loving, compassionate, and beneficent disposition. A man's religion may yield him the most exquisitely sweet and joyous experiences without producing in him any marked elevation and nobility of character, as was notably the case with Benvenuto Cellini and many others whose history is known to us.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Pomp of Yesterday.

> Genius hovers with his sunshine and music close by the darkest and deafest eras.—*Emerson.*
>
> And yet what days were those, Parmenides!
> When we were young. —*Matthew Arnold.*

Time works wonders with reputations. Gladstone's statue "in London's central roar" exhibited but one solitary wreath on the anniversary of his birth a few years after he had passed away. A predominant figure in British political life for over half a century, Gladstone was scarcely cold in his grave before his life's record was being revised. Generations after Beaconsfield's death his statue is loaded with flowers, and his name acclaimed by the descendants of the people who regarded him as a pariah. Byron, who woke one morning to find himself famous, and whose poetry crossed all European frontiers, is now but little read. Shelley, who woke many mornings to find himself called infamous, is now recognized as one of the supreme glories of our literature. Wellington, dying at an extreme age, had long outlived his popularity; whilst his great rival, Napoleon, our lifelong enemy, upon whom had been exhausted the vocabulary of vituperation, is acclaimed as one of the world's greatest men.

A similar reversal of verdict has been applied to the Victorian era. Our parents and grand-parents were self-complacent folk, and deemed themselves the heirs of all the ages. And now their age is a common synonym for a narrow and conventional view of life, and every journalist has his fling at them. Truly, the whirligig of time brings in its revenges.

These ideas are prompted by Mr. Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (Chatto & Windus), an acidulated and witty study of some of the best-known personalities of that period. His survey is comprehensive and entertaining, and includes, among others, Dr. Arnold, the

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famous headmaster of Rugby, Florence Nightingale, the heroine of the Crimean War, Cardinal Manning, the Catholic statesman, and General Gordon, of Khartoum fame, all of whom Mr. Strachey criticizes with a playful freedom and cool detachment which will irritate some readers and amuse others. Under Mr. Strachey's microscope the heroes and heroines of the Victorian era are dissected, and the result is more entertaining than the pages of most modern novels.

Mr. Strachey's manner is shown in his caustic account of Cardinal Newman's visit to Rome, where he says Italian ecclesiastics looked at the great English Cardinal "with their shrewd eyes and hard faces, while he poured into their ears—which, as he had already noted with distress, were large and none too clean—his careful disquisitions; but it was all in vain." Gladstone does not escape the knife, for Mr. Strachey points out that, "in spite of the involutions of his intellect and the contortions of his spirit, it is impossible not to perceive a strain of *naivete* in Mr. Gladstone." How biting, too, is the writer's denunciation of the Taeping leader in the Chinese rebellion, who is described as being "surrounded by thirty wives and one hundred concubines," and devoting himself to the "spiritual side of his mission." Perhaps the most amusing example of Mr. Strachey's quality will be found in the account of General Gordon's departure from Victoria Station on his last adventure into the Soudan:—

> Gordon tripped on to the platform. Lord Granville bought the necessary tickets; the Duke of Cambridge opened the railway-carriage door. The General jumped into the train; and then Lord Wolseley appeared, carrying a leather bag, in which were two hundred pounds in gold, collected from friends at the last moment, for the contingencies of the journey. The bag was handed through the window. The train started. As it did so, Gordon leant out, and addressed a last whispered question to Lord Wolseley. Yes, it had been done. Lord Wolseley had seen to it himself; next morning, every member of the Cabinet would receive a copy of Dr. Samuel Clarke's *Scripture Promises*. That was all. The train rolled out of the station.

Few things, it will be observed, escape Mr. Strachey's critical eye. Perhaps it is human to be pleased with this, but in some cases the pleasure is short-lived. Even the brilliant Mr. Strachey may not be infallible in his judgment of men and affairs. Apart from the foibles of individuals, there is something to be said on behalf of this maligned period. So far as literature is concerned, there must have been a high level of taste which made it possible for Robert Browning, Thomas Carlyle, George Meredith, and Alfred Tennyson to be acclaimed so loudly. These writers, of such varying degrees of genius, all required more constant and active intelligence on the part of their many readers than any authors who are popular to-day. Science, too, made its appeal, and never lacked enthusiastic support. So far-reaching, indeed, were the changes wrought by Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and their brilliant colleagues, that at the present time we have eminent ecclesiastics adopting a breadth of interpretation which would have seemed the absolute limit of scepticism to an earlier generation. The intellectual energy of the great Victorians precipitated a silent revolution, and we owe our present wider outlook to these men. Mental energy must be inferred in the pioneers of the Victorian era; more than in the many ordinary intelligences who now profit by their achievements. When great questions have to be answered, may we deal with them with the same fervour as the despised Victorians:—

> Who knew the seasons when to take
> Occasion by the hand, and make
> The bounds of freedom wider.

MIMNERMUS.

A Search for the Soul.

VI.

(Continued from p. 389.)

IN one of the volumes of "Science and Art" by the great Dionysius Lardner, published many years ago, that writer says in his article on "Man":—

> There is a principle called personal identity, which consists in the internal consciousness by which each individual knows his past experience, so as to be able, with the greatest certainty, to identify himself as existing at any given moment during his earthly life, or at any former time and place in it.

Then, after referring to the fact that in the course of life the entire mass of "matter" composing the body has many times undergone a complete change, he says:—

> Yet no one doubts that there was *something* there which *did not undergo a change* except in its relation to the mutable body, and which possessed the same thought, memory, and consciousness, and constituted the personal identity of the individual. This something must necessarily have been something *not matter*, but something spiritual.

This continuous consciousness of identity, he states, "is a proof of a *spiritual essence* connected with the human organism." At the same time, however, he admits that if there is nothing in the phenomenon of death "to demonstrate the simultaneous destruction of the spiritual principle, there is on the other hand nothing to prove its continued existence." This argument, drawn from what is sometimes called "the persistence of the self," has been constantly advanced in support of the existence of an immortal soul from the time of Lardner to the present day.

Upon looking at the question as stated, we find the position deduced to be (1) that there is *something* in the human organism which *did not undergo a change*, like the material portion of that organism, during the whole course of life; (2) that the *something* which remained unchanged must be *spiritual*, and may legitimately be called the Soul. This is the dualistic argument. But how do we know that such a "spiritual principle" really exists? The reason implied is that the Mind (which is said to be a part of the Soul) is not a material substance, and could not therefore have undergone any change in its composition like that of the body; and, such being the case, it felt no change in its own personal identity.

Now, as a matter of fact, all the mental functions which give rise to the phenomena we call "mind" have been generated by certain activities of the molecules of the brain, in conjunction with the cerebral energy residing in that organ. But since both the molecules and energy have been many times renewed during life—so that the mental manifestations have been produced by continually changing particles of matter—it necessarily follows that the mind has changed as well as the body. If we take into consideration that the functioning, and the thought which arises from it, are but two aspects of the same thing, we shall see that this change of the Mind is an undoubted fact. And this brings us back to the question, How do we *know* that an immaterial "spiritual principle" exists in the human organism? The answer is, We do *not* know. But we know that there was a time in the childhood of every human being when these phenomena were unknown. They could not, in fact, arise until after a host of impressions from the external world had been registered by the sense organs on the brain. In the case of an individual born deaf and blind these impressions from the outside world, which are mainly derived through the senses of sight

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and hearing, would be unknown, and could not therefore be registered; there would consequently, in such cases, be no phenomena of Mind whatever. The mental faculties, though latent in the brain, have to be developed by outside impressions before their existence can be manifested. The so-called "mental faculties" are thus purely materialistic. In his essay on Vitality, Professor Tyndall says:—

> After a certain number of years the whole body is entirely renewed. How is the sense of personal identity maintained across the flight of molecules? Like changing sentinels, the particles of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon that depart seem to whisper their secret to their comrades that arrive, and thus, while the Non-ego shifts, the Ego remains the same. *Constancy of form* in the *grouping* of the molecules, and not constancy of the molecules themselves, is the correlative of this constancy of perception.

Upon the same subject the eminent physiologist, Dr. Maudsley, says in his Gulstonian lectures upon "Body and Mind" (p. 127):—

> Every part of the body is in a constant state of change, and within a certain period every particle of it is renewed, and yet amidst these changes a man feels that he remains essentially the same.....It is not absurd to suppose that in the brain the new series of particles *take the pattern* of those which they replace, *as they do in other organs and tissues* which are continually changing their substance, *yet preserve their identity*. Why, then, assume the necessity of an "immaterial principle" to prevent the impression of an idea from being lost"?

It appears, then, that in renewing the waste particles of the brain, as well as those of all the other organs and tissues of the body, the new molecules are careful to preserve, not only the outward form, but all the registered impressions, so that when renovated, every portion remains precisely the same in size, shape, and position as before. It seems quite clear, then, that it is the preservation of the exact forms of these registered impressions on the brain which gives the feeling of personal identity, as we see is the case in the minutely marked surface of a gramophone record. Suppose a hundred of these records to be cast from the same original mould, so that every one of them bears precisely the same marks and registered impressions throughout. The material particles of which each record is composed are entirely different in every case; but the *form* of the registered impressions upon the surface of each (made by the speaker or singer on the original blank record) is identical in all. Yet from each of the hundred records we shall hear the identical tones of the same well-known human voice, either in word or song—say, that of the late Dan Leno in his comic speeches about "buying a house." This result is in perfect agreement with Professor Tyndall's statement that the sense of personal identity is derived from identity in form and grouping of the molecules, and not identity of the molecules themselves.

But, after all, what is it which causes a man to feel that he is essentially the same, notwithstanding all the changes that have taken place during life in every portion of his organism? This is nothing more nor less than Memory—which recalls to him a multitude of his own sayings and doings in the past, as well as people he has known and places he has visited. Take away memory and his personal identity is gone; he knows not who he is, who are his friends, where he lives, or anything that has happened in the past. Many such cases have been recorded at different times, though the loss of memory was only temporary.

In his *Riddle of the Universe* Professor Haeckel says that "Ewald Hering, in a thoughtful work, showed memory to be a *general property of organized matter*," and he adduces reasons of his own in confirmation of the fact. Dr. Maudsley, in the work already quoted from, says (p. 19):—

> The acquired functions of the spinal cord, and of the sensory ganglia, obviously imply the existence of memory .....The impressions made upon them, and the answering movements, both leave their traces behind them, which are capable of being revived on the occasions of similar impressions.....Memory is the organic registration of the effects of impressions, the organization of experience, and to recollect is to revive the experience —to call the organized residua into functional activity.

Memory can only go back to the time of the dawn of thought, that is, to the time when impressions from the external world had been registered upon the brain. No trace of remembrance of the embryonic condition or of the first two or three years of childhood has ever been found in man's after life.

Abracadabra.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Scotsmen have a reputation—fairly well deserved, I believe—for being intelligent, level headed, and cautious; or, to use a word of their own which includes all these admirable qualities—canny. Yet, at times, they are apt to become sentimental and perfervid, and then there is no stopping them; they go the whole hog. Who of us would engage to measure the volume of tepid and turbid eloquence in which they have done their best to drown the memory of Burns? And R. L. Stevenson, whose talent was genuine enough if a little meagre, would have cut a handsomer figure to-day if he had not been mis-praised and over praised by those of his countrymen who find the pavement of Fleet Street more attractive than the bonnie heather of their dear "hielands."

A correspondent has been kind enough to draw our attention to a leader in a recent number of the *Hawick News*, from which we gather that the Bible runs the author *Tam o' Shanter* pretty hard, and puts poor R. L. S. in the shade altogether. The writer is moved almost to tears by the work of the Bible Society, a monument of British stupidity as solid as the building in which it is housed. "With sublime faith (we are told) it trusts the book to convey its own message; to give its own lights; and to hold its own place by its own intrinsic merit. And this faith justifies itself. It never did so more effectively than in this present moment." There certainly can be no doubt that only with a "sublime faith" are we able to find *a* message in the mixed collection of history, legend, and ethics, known as the "Bible"; without faith, sublime or otherwise, we find that it conveys not one but many messages reflecting very different stages of culture, from the barbarous militarism of nomadic robbers to the humanitarianism of the Gospels. But we are not the only people who have faith in the Bible fetish. The Hun, too, has been nourished on the Hebrew diet. While we were sentimentalizing over the New Testament, he was bracing his moral sinews and nerves with the *real politik* of the Old Testament. It is not for the British Bibliolater to object that we are not now under the Mosaic dispensation. That may be so, yet we as a religious nation and with our genius for compromise, have always tempered the softness of the New with the blood and iron of the Old dispensation.

We send New Testaments to a race of savages whose only weapon against the invader is indomitable courage. The virus of slave-morality, from which we have long ago obtained immunity, acts upon the savage mind as the diseases we introduce act upon his body. We are not, however, content to impose a culture unsuited to a lower race. We make its failure an excuse for destroying what a religious writer recently described as "blind alleys in the evolution of spiritual humanity." In our concern for the raising of the spiritual type we send out missionaries and Testaments, trade

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rum and gaudy cottons, followed by land prospectors and maxim guns. We present the heathen with hell in a moral sense, and if they don't take kindly to it we give it to them in another and more compelling form. Mr. Safroni-Middleton has pictured for us the devastating effect of Christianity in the Marquesas and other South Sea Islands.

Our Harwich apologist is impressed by the persistence of the Book. Yet there is little cause to wonder. Given a vast body of men whose living it is not to tell the truth about the Bible, with laymen stupid enough to accept what they are told, and the position of the idol is fairly secure. Yet there is less talk now than there used to be of the secret of England's greatness. The Bible is often left out altogether. According to the point of view, it lies in our sea-power, constitutional government, free trade, genius for colonization, or diet of beer and roast beef. The less we say of the Bible at the present moment, the better. If the Christian is consistent, he must cry back, not to Jesus, but to Moses, to Joshua, and to that arch-Machiavellian David, the man after God's own heart; and in that case, denunciation of the methods of the enemy is not unlike hypocrisy. The fact of the matter is that we neglected the Old Testament, with its vigorous if unscrupulous nationalism, for the brotherhood and sentimental humanitarianism of the Gospels, which we are now contented to leave to the Quakers and Mr. Snowden. Consistency was never one of our strong points.

Although the clergy are exempted from military service, they do not like admitting the soft impeachment. According to the Bishop of London, if many more parsons volunteer for the Army, sermons at morning and evening services will soon be the exception rather than the rule. Many people would like to know how many of the 50,000 clergy of this country are actually fighting, and not strutting around in khaki uniforms as Army Chaplains.

The Duke of Rutland is either very pious or something of a humourist. Recently he suggested that the bishops should instruct their clergy to read the prayer for rain. Even the mildest-mannered curate might resent undertaking the duties of a rain-doctor in a civilized community.

Four hundred additional names of clergymen have been submitted by the Archbishop of Canterbury as Army chaplains. Presumably, these men will receive officers' pay, and their chief duties will comprise religious services at the back of the Front.

At the coronation of Napoleon the First as Emperor of the French, one of his generals remarked that nothing was wanting to complete the ceremony but the million or so of men who had given their lives to put an end to that kind of thing. We were reminded of this on reading of the requiem service for the Ex-Czar of Russia, held in London, with the King and Queen in attendance. All that was wanting was another service in memory of the many, many, thousands of men and women who had suffered torture, imprisonment, and death, under the rule of the Russian autocracy.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer, writing with reference to Sunday baseball games, says the proposal "fills me with dismay." Just so! So many things produce that unhappy result in brother Meyer.

According to the report at the annual meeting of the London Mendicity Society, many thousands of pounds are given away yearly to beggars in the streets of the metropolis. No mention is made of the dear clergy who are the cleverest beggars on earth.

The Court of Appeal, on July 22, confirmed the judgment of the lower court, that various legacies for the saying of Masses for the dead were null and void. We do not see how, in the present state of the law, any other decision could have been reached. But, as we believe in liberty for others, as well as for ourselves, we hasten to add, that the sooner this kind of law is wiped out of existence the better. It is a stupid use for a man to put his money to, and the picture of a number of priests mumbling so many hundreds of pounds worth of Masses for the souls of the dead is an insult to civilized intelligence. But the cure for this is education—not legislation. Our interest in freedom of opinion is not for ourselves alone but for all.

Here is an excellent opportunity for the clergy to test the efficacy of prayers for the weather. Ocean Island, in the Pacific Gilbert and Ellice group, has suffered for two years from drought.

Bible and Beer! A Labour member stated at Edmonton Tribunal that a certain trade union opened meetings with prayer and ended by sending the hat round for "beer-money."

A Yorkshire parson, owing to labour shortage, has had to act as minister, sexton, bellringer, and gravedigger. Quite a quick-change turn!

Sandbagging the statue of Charles the First at Charing Cross has cost £450. Has this anything to do with the king's canonization by the bishops?

The hard work of the clergy does not tend to shorten their lives. The Bishop of Marlborough has resigned the Deanery of Exeter at the age of ninety-one, but he still retains the title of Bishop.

The Bishop of London told a story of the transformation of a Bethnal Green boy at the anniversary of the Sunshine Guild. He said he saw "a most gorgeous" footman at the Athenæum Club, and this impressive person had come from a tiny room in Bethnal Green. The point of the Bishop's story was that this "gorgeous" footman owed his progress from the slums to such Christian agencies as the Sunshine Guild, what the Bishop did not add was that the Christian religion was admirably adapted for training flunkeys.

An authentic case of conversion is associated with the late Father Clements, of St. Ethelberta, Slough. He went to Slough thirty-seven years ago, and converted a stable into a church.

A *Daily Chronicle* reviewer cites the following in a review of the *Collected Poems* of that brilliant writer, Rupert Brooke, who met his death in the War:—

> Did you hear of the British private who had been through the fighting from Mons to Ypres, and was asked what he thought of all his experiences? He said: "What I don't like about this 'ere b—— Europe is all these b—— pictures of Jesus Christ and His relations, behind b—— bits of glawss.

Brooke adds: "It seems to express perfectly that cheerful Atheism which are the chief characteristics of my race." None but a Freethinker at heart could have written that last sentence. But what will the clergy say?

The Wesleyan Committee on Spiritual Advance emphasizes "its conviction that the greatest need of the Church at this hour is the recovery of the vision of the Risen Lord and of the apostolic experience of the power of the Holy Ghost." The Committee has hit the nail right on the head. The vision has vanished, the power is no longer felt—why? Simply because the belief that made both possible has been lost. Neither the Risen Lord nor the Holy Ghost does anything at all; it is the faith in them that does everything. When *that* is gone, the situation is hopeless.

The most humiliating of all admissions on the part of a clergyman has been made by the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. As reported in the *British Weekly* for July 25, the reverend gentleman said that "the Church had been weighed in the balance and found wanting." For repeatedly saying the same thing we have been set down as liars; but our judgment is now confirmed by the chief official of a great Church.

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To Correspondents.

Robert Miles.—We have read both your letters with considerable pleasure. The one published was well expressed, and we are not surprised the editor felt called upon to reply. Perhaps that was to save himself reproach from pious quarters. Anyway, it is a good thing to ventilate *our* side of the case. We are dealing elsewhere with the article.

J. H. Round.—Sorry your letter is "crowded out." We agree that if the "Day of Prayer" has given the Lord as much amusement as it has given to some mortals, it will serve the purpose of a much-needed diversion.

A. Russell.—We should liked to have printed your communication, but, with our restricted space, we must forbear. We think you are right in saying that "religion" is not the right word. Our objection to the use of the word is that long usage has clearly fixed its meaning to the average man or woman, and its use nowadays in a new sense is bound to mislead. It puzzles us also why some people should be so anxious to prove they have a *religion*. If one rejects the thing, why not the name? It reminds us of the clinging of some people to an ideal "Christ" after criticism has demonstrated the mythical nature of the character.

R. Martin.—The Pioneer Press would gladly quote special terms for 500 or 1,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's *Religion and the Child*. Certainly, their circulation would do good, while the subject of education is so much to the fore. Now is certainly a good time for pleading the cause of Secular Education.

T. Fisher.—The question of reprinting is under consideration. Cost and scarcity of paper is the only real obstacle. We share your appreciation of "Abracadabra's" articles.

We have received a letter from Mr. W. Walters, of Derby, which we regret being unable to print in full, in which he argues that Humanism is essential to Atheism, and Vegetarianism essential to Humanism. Mr. Walters hopes that all Freethinkers will give the subject their earnest attention. We fancy we are right in saying that this subject has received more attention from Freethinkers than from any class in the community.

Another Corp.—Your advice was quite correct.

A. G. Early.—Your judgment of Butler is, we think, quite sound. His *Analogy* is now little more than an exercise in dialectics. It was a powerful piece of work, written for a special purpose—against Deism—and it was conclusive. Too conclusive; for it pointed to Atheism as the logical end of the journey. The work must always be read with an eye to the times and the purpose for which it was written. Butler's sermons on morals are, however, on a different level. In our judgment, they represent a valuable contribution to the literature of the subject. They will always repay reading.

J. Gair.—Shall be delighted to meet you again after all these years.

Glendalough.—Thanks. Will appear next week. MSS. will do. We hope you enjoyed your holiday, and are the better in health for the change.

E. Lechmere.—Thanks for paper. Will deal with it next week. The sender must have a very inadequate idea of the strength of your convictions.

G. Bosworth.—MSS. received. Thanks.

R. Dunlop.—We did not receive a review copy of the book named or would have found room for a brief notice of it. The daily illustrated papers are, we presume, largely written for those who do not read, and by those who are not over-careful in their thinking.

L. J. Roe.—Darwin's *Life and Letters* is published by John Murray. We believe there is a cheap edition. Mr. C. T. Gorham has published (Watts & Co.) an account of the Spanish Inquisition, which you will find useful. *Darwinism To-Day* is sold by the Pioneer Press, price 3s., postage 6d. "Atheist" should have been placed on your identification disc at the beginning. Why not apply to your C.O. for rectification?

Miss Vance asks us to announce that in the obituary of Miss Annie Harwood, in our issue of July 21, the name of her father was inadvertently written as "George Harwood" instead of "Charles."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We printed an extra supply of the *Freethinker* last week, but in spite of this it ran out of print, and we were unable to supply all orders. This is gratifying, although we regret not being able to satisfy customers. We have, however, increased our printing order this week so that none will be again disappointed. We do not mind how often we are compelled to repeat the same policy.

We presume the letter comes from a new reader, but a correspondent writes asking whether we think it would be good work to send out Freethought literature to the troops in France and elsewhere. Certainly we do, and we have been doing this ever since the War commenced. A great deal of it has been sent at our own cost, although, as announced, we have had a little unsolicited help from readers from time to time. Still, the literature has been and is being sent. We do not think we have refused a single request for a free parcel of literature during the past four years. And we are quite sure much good has been done thereby.

While we are on this point, we may take the opportunity of acknowledging the letters of thanks sent us by soldiers who are receiving the thirteen weeks' free copies of this journal, and which have been chiefly paid for through the generosity of one of our readers. We feel sure some of these will continue regular subscribers. When a man reads the *Freethinker* for thirteen consecutive weeks it is not very likely that he will drop it altogether.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive permission was given for the formation of two new Branches, and twenty-nine new members were admitted. One of these Branches is located at Barnsley, and it hopes to get well to work by the autumn. We hope it will have a prosperous career. The other Branch—we hope missionaries will note—is at far-off Lagos. This Branch owes its existence, we believe, to a "Blasphemy" prosecution which occurred there last year, and on which we wrote an article in the *Freethinker* for November 4, 1917. That article has been reprinted as a leaflet and circulated in Lagos. We hope the missionaries are pleased with the outcome of their bigotry. We are.

Mr. Cohen has been asked to visit Pontypridd, South Wales, during the autumn, and he has agreed to do so if it can be arranged. Heresy has been more or less rife in Pontypridd for centuries, and there should be a good organization. Will those in the district who are willing to help communicate with Mr. J. Gair, 4 St. Catherine's Street, Pontypridd.

The following has been sent us for publication:—

> A line to let you know the funny little experience I had to-day at "Base." I had to get a new identity disc here; so in I went to the counter-cum-clerk at the Q.M.S.'s. Right. "No.," "Rk.," "Name," "Unit," "Religion." That did it. Of course, I used the *Freethinker* denomination. Up jumps the dear "Bath bun and glass of milk" gentleman, and, with a dramatic attitude worthy of Robey or Tree, the dear fellow cast aside the branding-irons that almost caused him to "fall" (and really he looked almost "without visible means of support" as it was, so underfed the poor fellow looked) and dramatically declared, "Never!" and said he would not soil his hands by so doing. I told him point blank he had a personal animosity, and that did it. He ordered me out. Of course, I went next to the Q.M., and, after an argument, I

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produced the W.O. letter you gave me. He said it referred only to various religious denominations, and not to "Atheism"; and there we left it. To-morrow I leave for the line, with no religious denomination on my identity disc. What am I to do? Can you give me further advice?

The proper course would be to apply to the superior officer to have the matter put right. A soldier is fully entitled to have "Atheist" or "Freethinker" on his disc if he desires it.

Too late for insertion this week, probably owing to postal delay, we have received a reply from Mr. Moss to Mr. Effel's letter on "Atheism, Anarchism, and Accuracy." It will appear in our next issue.

We see from the *Times* that Herr Conrad Belzuangen, editor of *Der Atheist*, organ of the Proletarian Freethinkers of Germany, has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for high treason. We do not know what is the nature of the high treason. Perhaps he had been speaking disrespectfully of the Christian Kaiser and his Deity.

The Portsmouth Branch of the N.S.S. is, we are glad to hear, taking seriously the work of collecting waste paper on our behalf. Mr. N. Crosby, of 5 Fratton Road, Portsmouth, has undertaken to receive small or large parcels of papers from friends in the district, and will, when collected, forward them to us. This is an excellent plan, and we hope to hear that Mr. Crosby is being "snowed under" with old papers and magazines.

Paper is getting steadily dearer and dearer, but we have some for sale at this office. They are only very small slips, the size of a sheet of ordinary notepaper, and we are selling them at 5s. 3d. and 10s. 6d. each. The holder of one of these slips is entitled to receive by post a copy of the *Freethinker* every week for six or twelve months. We have also a supply of two-and-eightpenny slips, which will secure the same privilege for three months. It would not be at all a bad thing to send one of these slips to a friend. We feel certain he would appreciate it.

A New Lucian.

THE average man is an incorrigible sentimentalist in what concerns his own actions and ideas, and those of the social group to which he belongs. He regards all criticism which is not mere praise as irrelevant when it is serious, and scandalous when it is bantering or ironical. We may be certain that the windy demagogues and hustlers, the trimmers and placemen who did their best to ruin Greek Democracy, had a poor opinion of the humour and wit of Aristophanes. And we may be equally certain that Lucian was no favourite with a public that liked to be gulled, the late Greek counterpart of the unsophisticated folk who are nowadays cheerfully putting money into the pockets of the Pelmans and other memory-quacks. For the majority of people, irony is either foolishness or a stumbling-block; for the intelligent minority it is the subtlest, the most delightful form of literary pleasure; but it needs for its enjoyment a refinement of intellectual emancipation. It requires, if I may say it without self-conceit or flattery, the freethinking temperament, a rare mental detachment. It is not strange, therefore, that the *National Reformer* was the only paper that had any suspicion of the ironical nature of Samuel Butler's defence of orthodox Christianity in *The New Haven*. No! irony is not an intellectual form that commends itself to the average man.

I.

It was a Unitarian parson who once said that the best way to deal with Biblical difficulties was to look them boldly in the face and pass on. A better way, or at least a more general way, is to ignore what you cannot understand, or do not want to understand. This was the sort of treatment meted out to a little book published a month or so ago, entitled *1920; Dips Into the Near Future*, by Lucian (Headley Bros.; 2s. net). If my memory serves me, only one paper gave anything like an adequate review of it; the rest were contented merely to record its publication among "Books Received," although the literary editors had no doubt enjoyed the ironical touches when it irradiated the rather dull pages of the *Nation*. It is an attempt to give an idea of what England may be like two years from now if the War should go on. It is not a cheering picture of our social future, but only the congenital optimist or the born fool would be rash enough to maintain that it is wildly impossible.

Charteris is an Oxford man, a parson, who for two years before 1920 has been opening new missions in the interior of China. He comes home for a needed rest, knowing little of recent happenings and still less of the social conditions of England, where he finds the War still going on. His first impression of the new England is disturbing. The morning after his arrival, as he stands on the steps of Morley's Hotel, he sees a long procession of aged men and women, led by a bishop, and seemingly heading for the Abbey. A friend whom he happens to come across is surprised to find that Charteris knows nothing of the Aged Service Act, which, he tells him, was ordered by the *Morning Bull* and passed by the new Government of young newspaper and business men. By this Act compulsion was applied to the aged, who had not responded willingly enough to the nation's call to them to save the food situation by voluntary sacrifice of their useless lives. It was now working fairly smoothly, and only those who had the biggest pull could dodge it. For some time Dedication Services had been held regularly at the Abbey, when the new Archbishop (the youngest to attain this high office) spoke in glowing language of the privilege of being allowed to make the supreme sacrifice. The music, the impressive address which aroused in them a sense of patriotism, and lifted up their hearts as the old people marched, a long and sombre procession, to the crematorium at Golder's Green.

Another new development in 1920 was an immense extension of the practice of Reprisals. The War had become a struggle for the mastery of the air; trench-fighting was a thing of the past. Official London (every man with any "pull" at all had a Government job) had dug itself in; it worked and enjoyed itself underground, where its innocent luxuries could not be seen by an envious lower class. There was a sort of competition between the combatants as to which of them would kill the greater number of children. The War being likely to go on indefinitely, this new policy was a far-sighted one. The old-fashioned sentimental humanitarian, of which a few still existed, was silenced by insisting on the "hard logic of frightfulness," and by proving that, as the enemy had forced us to imitate his barbarities, our vile deeds would be transferred to his account.

> The Churches (of course) rallied gallantly round the spiritual emergency. Indeed, the last scruples of anti-patriotic sentimentalism were stifled by the famous vote of Convocation in favour of a "diluted Christianity" operating through the instrument of a National Intelligence Department, to practise Mosaic morality for the duration of the war. This entailed some readjustment in the services. "Back to Moses" became the spiritual slogan, and a drastic reconstruction of the rubric removed from the Lessons of the Day the more pacific chapters of the Gospels, and gave due prominence to the bracing incidents in Joshua and Judges. A general assent was readily accorded to the charge which the good Bishop of Peterborough gave to his diocesan clergy: "Above

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all, remember that a genuinely Catholic Christianity must learn to adapt itself to the peculiar spiritual requirements of every great occasion in the national life. Thus, and only thus, can it maintain its full potency as a living, an organic creed."

II.

An amusing, and for some, perhaps, a provocative, chapter describes the intellectual outlook of England in 1920. The working of the department known as "The Laboratory of War-Truth" is explained to Charteris by Paston, an Oxford acquaintance of his, who had been a philosophical don, and a bright exponent of Bergson. He was now applying Pragmatism to the manufacture of War-truth. This up-to-date department was the outcome of a conviction that in a war of ideas the State must have full control of the intellectual and moral ideas of the nation. Censorship was seen to be the merest fumbling. It had made a distinction between the suppression of news and the suppression of opinions. It had set up a sham voluntarism. It was Pragmatism that supplied the fundamental conception of truth as being—

> a raw material infinitely malleable and adaptable to the purposes of the State.....We begin (said Paston) by accepting the familiar distinction true for me, false for you. This idea of the relativity and adaptability of knowledge is then generalized and applied in the processes of our laboratory, for producing out of the same raw material the separate truths which war requires for the home consumer, the Ally, the neutral, and the enemy. The crude fact is the same for all; everything depends upon the treatment.....It is our duty to compose the sort of news which it is good for the respective parties to receive, and to mould the sentiments and opinions it is good for them to hold. And then, when the expert taster says that we have got it just right, it is pumped into the news-agencies and the other publicity machines.

The State, in 1920, was not satisfied with inventing the truth that would work. It drew up a formidable index of forbidden books, among which were "such well-known works as Milton's *Areopagitica*, Locke's essay on *Toleration*, and Mill's *Liberty*. But this did not exhaust the energies of the department. It soon got the Universities to shed their early scruples about "objective facts" and "absolute reality." The famous monograph "How Blucher lost us Waterloo" struck the shrewdest blow to Prussian military prestige, and equally valuable support to the Allies was given by the "Disparagers" whose business it was to discredit German literature and philosophy. Here they had more success than they had with the music of the enemy. First, they had tried to cure the musical amateur of his unpatriotic infatuation by changing the name Wagner into Scholes and Strauss into Boughton. Then some one suggested hiring third-rate orchestras to do their worst with Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner:—

> The first performances were rehearsed with care and given with really murderous effect. At least, such was the intention. Unfortunately, the more cultured musical public took the perverse fancy to treat the most excruciating passages as a novel and fascinating phase of what they termed futurist transvaluation; and so the Hun names that had been advertised for execration came to acquire a fresh lease of undeserved glory.

III.

It would seem that by 1920 people had got quite used to D.O.R.A. The didn't object to her reading their private letters, licking up their envelopes, tapping the telephones, and generally interesting herself in other peoples' business. The people is now so tame, says Roxburgh, who is in the service of the incomparable young lady, "that it comes to feed out of Dora's hand. There isn't a week passes but some well-signed memorial or petition comes up, begging for another regulation, or reporting the discovery of some little surviving liberty that needs stamping out."

"But," broke in our old-fashioned Liberal, "what about liberty making the world safe for democracy? Is there no loss of liberty in the doings of Dora?"

"There is just as much liberty as ever," was the answer, "only it is concentrated at the top."

The Military Service (Females) Act, War bondage and War aims in 1920, are three chapters that will make the reader smile, look serious, complacent, or irritated, according to his philosophic standpoint and political bias.

The wittiest chapter is the last: "The New Jerusalem in 1920," with its amusing picture of the Temple used as the International Gold Reserve Bank surrounded by mansions in the Park Lane style, and Lyons' new caravanserai the "Cœur de Lion" fitted out with every convenience, swimming-baths, theatre a Boots' library, and a snappy little paper the *Prophet*. The guileless Hebrew financiers turn the commissioners of the Palestine Protectorate round their little fingers, getting from them a patent to run a joy-railway up the Mount of Olives with a casino at the top.

I trust I am right in thinking that there are still people in England who have enough mental detachment to enjoy a witty and ironical book.

Geo. Underwood.

Another Scientist's Profession of Faith.

II.

(Continued from p. 406).

> His religion is a poor affair if it has been accepted only as a matter of tradition and authority, as merely the correct thing for the society in which he moves. It is this unintelligent, unspiritual acceptance of beliefs that have come down to us enforced by the weight of the pious tradition of centuries that makes a large part of that which passes for religion so terribly insincere. And in a time of advancing thought there is ever a tendency on the part of the otoise or the preoccupied to let others do their thinking for them; to accept as of faith all that is presented with authority. For fear of believing too little, they are ready to believe too much. Having renounced the duty of private judgment, they swallow wholesale the dogmas of current theology. Unmindful of the warning that "credulity is a real, if not as great, a sin as unbelief," they fall a prey to the bigotry of the ecclesiastic, and their very faith, because it has in them no sure foundation, becomes an unfaith which shrinks from the investigation of religious problems as though all such investigations were profane. It was all very well for Newman to deny the right of private judgment, but anyone who reads the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* will discover what a vast amount of private judgment was necessary before he could convince himself of the authority of the Church of Rome. He walked into credulity with his eyes open, for fear of being damned for believing too little.—*Silvanus Thompson, "A Not Impossible Religion."*

The central doctrine of Christianity, the Atonement, by which it is taught that Jesus was offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, Professor Thompson describes as:—

> A scheme of contracts and covenants, which presuppose a revengeful Deity who cannot be appeased except by blood, and who refuses even after supreme atonement to such of the human race as fail, by no fault of their own, to hear of the circumstance? Nay, I will go further, and maintain not only that this supposed contract or plan of salvation, in which the innocent is allowed to suffer for the guilty, is a piece of intellectual materialism, I will say it is a piece of revolting heathenism, which during the night of centuries has become engrafted into the creeds of Christendom in their transmission from their first source. The whole idea of

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> expiation by a sacrifice of blood is, as every student of the primitive religions of mankind knows, a survival from antiquity, which even the nobler Jews before the captivity had learned to discard.
>
> But if to consider the great All-Father as a monster only to be appeased by the shedding of innocent blood be an impiety, what are we to say of all that terrible, soul-searing, unedifying rhetoric which has been current, and is still current, about the blood of Christ? Let us endeavour as reverently as possible to divest ourselves of all materialism on this point. The mediæval scribe who emblazoned in his missal the miniature of the crucifixion, showing the priest collecting in a silver ewer the drops of Christ's blood, was he any more materialist in his ideas than he who wrote "There is a fountain filled with blood"? or than the street-preacher who exhorts his hearers to wash in the blood of Jesus? Jewish tradition again is responsible for these terrible and revolting ideas (pp. 129-132).

During the present War, and upon many other occasions, the Churches have set apart a special day for prayer, the idea being that by this concentrated attack they would make God sit up and take notice. This is how Professor Thompson regards the manœuvre: "Yet another of the idols of the temple which have been lifted up by pious hands is the quantitative prayer..... prayer manufactured, prearranged, concerted, to be uttered in a vast number of congregations at once, as if to impress the Almighty by the importance of mere numbers, is a piece of the veriest superstition. One of the least superstitious of Nonconformist bodies in England, in a recent annual bulletin, when recommending its congregations to prayer, added: 'such a volume of prayer cannot fail.' As though the efficacy of prayer were to be measured by the number of people praying or the quantity of their prayers! One's thoughts go back to Elijah's mocking words to the priests of Baal: 'Cry aloud for he is a god; peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened.' What ideas those have of the Most High who think that He can be moved by a 'volume' of preconcerted prayers? In what respect are they any more enlightened than the devout Oriental who turns his praying wheel before the image of Buddha?" (pp. 155-156).

At this point we can imagine the faithful crying, with Falstaff: "Call you that backing up your friends? A plague upon such backing." But there is more to follow.

The right of private judgment, declares Professor Thompson, is not only a right but a duty, and adds: "No honest seeker after truth will renounce his right and duty of search simply because of a pious hope, or a friendly assertion, that in some book, or Church, or priest, he may find an infallible guide." He points out that the English noun "sceptic" means "one who considers or examines, or looks about carefully. Instead of being a term of discredit, it ought to be regarded as a term of honour.....Suspense of judgment on many controverted points is often a sacred duty: the only honest course when neither belief nor disbelief would be right."[1]

He denounces "The selfish sort of religion that dominates most of Protestantism, and writes up 'Save your soul' over the doors of its chapels" (p. 174), and declares: "The tribe of revivalist preachers has much to answer for in the unwisdom of their influence upon young people, whose mental and spiritual health is injured by the unwholesome pious orgies of artificially stimulated religiosity." Then there is the familiar phenomenon of the "spiritual valetudinarian, who is morbidly taken up with the question of his own spiritual health, and whether he is going to be 'saved' or damned.'" Never do we find him, says the Professor, "working for others" (p. 213).

Of the Church, he remarks: "it has stoned the prophets and excommunicated the reformers, until now the term 'orthodox' has become a byword denoting all that is unprogressive and reactionary" (p. 214). Of Christianity itself, he observes: "In thousands of ways the failure of our 'Christianity,' the incompleteness of the 'working out the beast,' makes itself evident..... Degeneracy and disease are writ large on vast herds of toilers who seek in sheer soulless excitement an escape from the drudgery of their lives. If we have abolished slavery in its grosser form, we have not yet found means to abolish slavery in the sweating shop. The man who grinds the faces of the poor, or who defrauds the community by swindling prospectuses of public companies, is still received and honoured, provided he will subscribe freely to party funds, or build chapels for the respectable, or preside at Bible Society meetings. Our newspapers live largely on lying advertisements of patent medicines and details of ghastly murders—yet every student of sociology knows that both these things are social concerns that corrupt the community. But the task of exposing from time to time the abuses of the Press has been largely left to men who made no profession of Christianity, while the watch-dogs of the Church have been dumb, though this is not a pestilence that walketh in darkness but a destruction that walketh by noonday. The watch-dogs of the Church are, for the present, much more concerned in the jejune discussion of what they call Reunion, or in prevention of a woman from marrying the widower of the deceased's husband's sister, or in the appointment of more bishops, than in the uplifting of the sons of men" (pp. 232-3).

This is refreshingly outspoken, especially the admission that the work of reform "has been largely left to men who made no profession of Christianity, while the watch-dogs of the Church have been dumb."

(*To be concluded.*) W. MANN.

[1] Professor Silvanus Thompson, *A Not Impossible Religion*, pp. 168-9.

Notes from Ireland.

"An Unworthy Client of Mary" strongly recommends all true Irishmen three or more times daily to pray thusly: "Our Lady, our Queen, our Mother, in the name of Jesus Christ and for the love of Jesus, take our cause and the cause of Ireland's campaign against Conscription in hands and obtain for them good success." The Unworthy Client declares it to be "a little prayer he has never known to fail." The Unworthy Client is by no means the only person who puts deep credence in the efficacy of this delightful wireless message; a quasi-political journal, the *Irishman*, considers it worthy of a space on its front page. So powerful a bit of impotence is, alas, only too indicative of an untaught public, an untaught paper, and a very well-taught swarm of falcon-priests. But the worst of it is, the paper that publishes this lamentable twaddle is one of the most strenuous and widely read advocates of the stringing of the Celtic harp with the chords of autonomy. Prayer is ever a rummy weapon of defence—in its use the suppliant is especially exposed to the arrows of ridicule and the keener darts of laughter. Still, if Conscription be not applied we will cheerfully acknowledge the prophetic faculty of the Unworthy Client. But the efficacy of prayer! Only when the importuned is a poor, weak, miserable, vindictive human being does its efficacy come into the reckoning. "Though we wield an impious language, we are a prayerful nation," so say our bishops. "Man on his knees is symbolical of ignorance and helplessness," so says the holy editor of this journal. Alas! Cathleen ni Hoolihan, not yet have you the walk of a queen!

The interesting ruins of Mountmellery Abbey, co. Louth, are accessible to the public. A few weeks ago we were shown

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the holy wonders by an ancient woman of queer recollections who was good enough to inform us, in respect of our national grievances, that God is slow but he's very sure. We were joined by a stout son of rest whose face was somewhat less interesting and less animated than that of a cheap alarm clock; one of his pockets bulged with soda, another with brown-bread. His mode and manner of salutation were strange: "Oh, the struggle for life is terrible. Praises be to God!" This addition to our party added deep crimson to the already red political discussion; it now appeared that the mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small. He was a strange person; he of the inanimate features ornamented with a moustache like a couple of goats' beards. When the good woman was exhibiting a piece of "dog-tooth" work his soul became deeply moved, and, finding expression in the bulging eyes and flabby cheeks, and articulation at length in the tongue, burst out in an ecstasy of the Holy Ghost: "Praises be to God! it was a saint that did that. He's in heaven now"; then, as an afterthought, "but they are all in heaven for the matter of that" This celestial being knew an awful lot about heaven, but we found, to our dismay, he knew precious little about earth; he couldn't even tell us the distance to Drogheda.

Quite recently a highly spiced melodrama was presented at the Queen's Theatre, Dublin. The following episode, in addition to a recital of the hymn "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild" occurred:—

Villain: I'll make you a little angelo with flapper wings. I'll kill you that's what I'll do. I'll make you appeal to me for mercy.

Five-Year Old Child: I will not appeal to you for mercy but to my Saviour.

(Thunderous applause from the gods).

Apropos Views and Opinions of July 7: "Parings of saintly nails, remnants of saintly clothing, and even saintly ordure were esteemed." The *Cross*, an Irish magazine, conducted by the Passionate Fathers, asks "How is it that there is but the one Church that preserves and prizes even the rags of the first Christians?" The answer is obvious—glaringly obvious. Some time ago a man, a fully grown man, who grew hair on his chin, bequeathed £50 for the purchase of a slice of Saint Anthony's toe-nail! But this deceased intellectual was not so great a fool as it would at first appear. A holy toe-nail is a family heirloom, and, in all Catholic countries, especially this little island, is always sure of a market. It is a possession well worth having. A man fortunate enough to own a full toe-nail, even one that appertained to the smallest digit, could borrow £10,000 with that as security, and start business in the money-lending line.

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on July 25.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Braddock, Brandes, Eager, Heaford, Kelf, Leate, Lazarnick, Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Spence, Thurlow, Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Pitcher, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were accepted for Barnsley, Birmingham, Coventry, Goldthorpe, Lagos, Portsmouth, South London, South Shields, and the Parent Society (twenty-nine in all).

An application was received, and permission granted, for a Branch to be again formed in Barnsley.

Considerable pleasure was expressed at the request for permission to form a Branch of the Society at Lagos, Nigeria. This was also granted.

The President reported the result of his recent visit to and lectures delivered at Bridgend, Maesteg, and the possibility of the formation of new Branches in the surrounding districts. This was received with much gratification, and it was resolved unanimously that the Executive lend all its support to the furtherance of the work in South Wales.

The names of the delegates elected to serve on the Special Committee for Reorganization were reported, and meetings were arranged to take place at 62 Farringdon Street on August 3 and 4.

Messrs. Davidson and Roger, and Miss Kough, were elected as a Committee for the arrangement of resolutions and suggestions.

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.

Outdoor.

Battersea Branch N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): No Meeting.

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. J. B. Johnson, A Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 6, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "The Berlin Bible Depot Open—Why?"

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A Lecture; 6.30, A Lecture.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, "The Historic Enemy." All Friends invited to attend.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Kells, Beale, and Dales.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Secular Education Again.—The Editor	421
Mischievous Dogmatism.—J. T. Lloyd	422
The Tragedy of a Genius.—Mimnermus	423
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	424
Christianity and Dirt.—E. Lyttelton	427
Another Scientist's Profession of Faith.—W. Mann	428
Presbyterian Piffle.—"Z."	429

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Secular Education Again.

For some months, as our readers are aware, we have been drawing the attention of all concerned to the necessity of "getting a move on" in relation to the question of Secular Education. In addition to the work carried on in the *Freethinker*, we have written a large number of letters to people likely to help, and we are glad to note that the articles and letters have borne fruit. It has meant a lot of extra work, but the cause was worth it. As a result of this campaign quite a number of resolutions affirming the policy of Secular Education have been passed by Trades Unions and other organizations, and have been duly sent on to the Minister of Education. Mr. Fisher, at least, cannot plead that he is ignorant of any feeling against religion in State schools. In addition, members of Parliament have also been written by their constituents, and the plea of ignorance is also removed so far as they are concerned. If those responsible will not act rightly, it is well that they should not be able to plead they did not know which was the right course to follow.

* * *

An Impudent Misrepresentation.

Following out the advice we gave, one of our readers sent Mr. Bartley Denniss, M.P., for Oldham, a copy of the *Freethinker* for May 5 containing an article on "The New Education Bill." Mr. Denniss replies as a firm believer in religious education in State schools, and after reading his letter one can well appreciate it. For a grosser travesty of the argument of an opponent, a more deliberate (we use this word advisedly) perversion of a writer's meaning it has seldom been our lot to read. A single instance will prove the *moral* quality of this champion of religious instruction. In a postscript to his letter Mr. Denniss says:—

> Another writer on p. 256 of the *Freethinker* you sent me says: "At that very moment Britain's 'drunken soldiers' were opposed to the full fury of the German war machine." Do you approve of a paper which inserts such a sentence?

Now, if anyone will turn to the page named, he will find the sentence occurs in an article by Mr. Andrew Millar. *But the sentence pilloried is not Mr. Millar's.* Mr. Millar is, in fact, pouring scorn upon some religious teetotalers who had been denouncing our soldiers for getting drunk. The words "drunken soldiers" were within quotation marks. Here is the whole passage:—

> The whole exhibition was futile, effete, pathetic..... For at that very moment Britain's "drunken soldiers" were opposed to the full fury of the German War machine. And these pitiful moralists would dictate to these men their parsonic idea of perfect conduct.

What is one to make of the *moral* calibre of a man who can take that passage, convert "drunken soldiers" into the writer's own expression, and then ask: "do you approve of a paper which inserts such a sentence?" And, be it noted, Mr. Denniss believes in religious education. He himself had it. The outcome is truly appalling.

* * *

Parents versus Children.

Mr. Denniss' letter covers three pages of quarto (House of Commons) paper, and excluding the fearful misrepresentation above cited, his comments on our article come under two heads. It accuses us of intolerance. It "appals" Mr. Denniss that we should be so intolerant as to deny the "right of anyone, even of the parent, to teach his child religion." But if anyone will do us the honour to glance again through our article, he will see that what we denied was the right of the modern State to force a particular religion upon all, or even to compel all to support the religion of a part of the community. It is a fact that a parent possesses the *right* to give to his children whatever religious teaching he pleases; but we suggested that this might be exercised injudiciously, even tyrannically, and it is hard to see on what moral ground a parent can be perfectly justified in giving a child, as absolute truth, teachings which, to adults, he admits are more or less speculations. What we are asking for is justice to the child—for the child of the Christian as well as for the child of the Atheist. If we may quote a sample of our own "intolerance": "We want the child to grow up mentally fitted to select any religion it pleases, or able to intelligently reject them all should it feel so inclined." And Mr. Denniss is horrified! As one of our intelligent legislators, he is vastly concerned with the right of the parent to coerce the child, he is benignly indifferent to the fact that the child has rights as against the parent.

* * *

Why Bother?

The rest of Mr. Denniss' remarks are made up of more or less irrelevant comments, which go to show a complete want of understanding of the points at issue. Thus Mr. Denniss is quite sure that the few pence a year which religious instruction takes out of his correspondent's pocket cannot be a matter of great concern. It is a pity that so strenuous a Christian cannot lift his mind above the cash issue. Injustice is not made justice because the monetary cost is slight. Doubtless Hampden would not have missed his share of ship-money, but it was enough to act as one of the causes of a revolution. And then comes this gem:—

> If Atheists truly think there is no such thing as God, why do they trouble themselves because other people believe in him? Why do they talk of it and try to get

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> disciples if they are not faint about it, and do not want the consent of others to keep them in countenance?

Then are we to assume that when Christians try to bring others to their point of view, it is because they are faint, and want others to keep them in countenance? If not, why not? Perhaps it may one day cross the mind of Mr. Denniss that when a man sees what he believes to be truth, there is a plain duty before him to see that others see it also. The Atheist is discharging a plain social obligation in putting *his* truth before the people. Doubtless, Mr. Denniss finds it difficult to understand this. Is he not in politics? And is it not natural that he should marvel at a man troubling himself to "disturb" others when the disturbance can bring the disturber nothing but trouble and misrepresentation? Nothing but that—and a sense of duty done. Oh, these politicians! Can we wonder the world is as it is when our legislators are made of such stuff?

* * *

An Appeal to Parents.

Mr. Denniss is "happily convinced" that no one will ever "see the people of Oldham converted to such views. They are the most sincerely religious community in the United Kingdom." It may be so, and it is only fitting that Mr. Denniss should be so appreciative of the people of Oldham. For have they not elected him! And what better proof of their religion and intelligence could they give—to Mr. Denniss? And yet one wonders whether there is any real warranty for thinking that the people of Oldham are less susceptible to a sense of justice and to the trend of civilization than are other people. For ourselves, we should require more than Mr. Denniss' word before we formed so poor an opinion of the Oldhamites. All over the civilized world the conviction is growing that the teaching of religion is the concern of the individual, not the proper business of the State; that to force religion on the child and leave the adult uncoerced is an act of cowardice. The child can't hit back; the adult can. That is the sole distinction. Mr. Denniss believes that nowhere in the country do parents love their children more than in Oldham. We are glad to hear it; and it was to this very parental love that we made our appeal. We do not want to see that parental love exploited by the priest and by the vote-catching politician. We want to see the parental love of the people not only strong, but expressed intelligently, in the best interests of the child, and ultimately of the State. Give the child all the protection we can, not from physical ills alone, but from mental ills also. Let us spend our time in teaching it *how* to think, and *what* it thinks will take care of itself. We detest Prussianism in the State; and we hate it not the less heartily in the school and in the home.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Mischievous Dogmatism.

OUR land is full of broken homes and mourning hearts. Tens of thousands of bright and brave young men have been slain on the fields of battle, whilst multitudes of others have been more or less frightfully maimed, and rendered incapable of earning a living. There is scarcely a family in the whole country into which suffering, and sorrow, and bereavement have not entered during these four years of disastrous War. It is impossible to contemplate so appalling a situation without desiring to do something to help and comfort the sorely stricken ones round about us. The *British Weekly*, being a religious newspaper conducted on strictly evangelical lines, has, of late, devoted many of its leading articles to the subject of Christian consolation in bereavement. Of course, in the estimation of the pious editor, life is not worth living if death ends it. During a world-war, therefore, the most precious of all doctrines is that of immortality, and the *British Weekly* has been proclaiming it with burning enthusiasm off and on for several months. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* was laid under tribute for two or three weeks. In its issue for July 18, the leading article is entitled "In Christ Redeemed, in Christ Restored," the opening sentences in which are these:—

> In this world of death a message of Reunion in Eternity is a first necessity. It is as music to all souls in pain.

We unhesitatingly give the lie to both statements. Though this is a world in which all things die, yet its great fact is not death, but life, and the first necessity is a message, not of reunion after death, but of wise counsel and inspiration for the best conduct of life. The message of reunion after death is not "as music to all souls in pain," but rather as the baseless fabric of a dream to a great many such. There are even Christians not a few to whom those sentences are anything but true. Sir William Robertson Nicoll admits that even the bereaved do not listen to the message of reunion "in the first force of their passionate misery, while they feel in their breasts the burning of the murderous steel," though that is the very time when the message, if true, would be of the most substantial service to them. But is the message true? Sir William concedes that it "concerns only those who are in Christ." What exactly that concession means is left to our imagination. Are we to infer from it that only Christians survive death, or that there is no reunion in hell? Christ's relation to immortality is thus expressed:—

> Apart from his doing, his dying, his rising again, his testimony, there is no doctrine of the future.....He has abolished death by his resurrection. He is the Conqueror of the last enemy. He has risen and ascended and he rules.

The editor of the *British Weekly*, being a scholar, cannot plead ignorance of the fact that belief in continuation after death antedates Christianity by countless thousands of years, and that the more modern doctrine of personal immortality cannot truthfully claim a Christian origin. Possibly the idea Sir William wishes to convey is that no doctrine of the future, other than the Christian, is worthy of credence, and that, consequently, the Christian doctrine is the only one that we need to consider. But we utterly fail to perceive on what grounds the Christian theory of immortality is regarded as in any sense or degree more credible than any other.

Sir William is an incorrigible dogmatist. What he gives us is a well-nigh interminable series of naked assertions. He never condescends to argue, or to supply evidences, but contents himself with stringing together a vast number of unverifiable assumptions. His orthodoxy is undeniable, and his loyalty to the New Testament is equally beyond doubt. He is a colossal believer, and takes for granted that belief and knowledge are synonymous terms. Apparently he subscribes to what was a popular heresy thirty and forty years ago, namely, conditional immortality. At any rate, it is faithful followers of Christ alone who are to enjoy the boon of reunion beyond the tomb. Death signifies the flight of the soul out of the body, and from the moment it is on the wing Christ takes charge of it, "and as a magnet draws it upward to himself." Redeemed souls in the next life, being gathered together "unto him, to know and be known of him," will, of necessity, know one another. Speaking in their name the reverend knight says:—

> He who inspired the human love that now seeks its own, he who was himself strengthened and solaced

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> thereby during the earthly years when he walked softly in the bitterness of his soul, will never deny us our heart's desire.

The writer may honestly believe all that; but he oversteps his right when he presents it to his readers as an item of knowledge. Any man who claims to know that he is immortal is a liar, and the truth is not in him, no matter how sincere he may be.

It is an incontestable fact that the number of believing Christians is startlingly small, and is steadily growing smaller year after year, from which fact the only rational inference is that Sir William's soothing "message of Reunion in Eternity" "excludes the vast majority." Although believing that salvation is possible only in this world, Sir William evades that inference in the following sophistical manner:—

> We do not know what may pass of a sudden, in the very moment of dying, between the soul and Christ. All the great Christian teachers have told us that the very slightest recognition on the part of men of the Divine Sacrifice is enough to secure salvation.

That reminds us of a story we once heard in early life. In our neighbourhood there lived a man who was universally looked upon as an incarnation of all wickedness. He cursed and swore, openly blasphemed, was a notorious liar, and a most disagreeable neighbour. While helplessly drunk one night, he mistook the parapet of the bridge for the wall in front of his cottage. Failing to find the gate, he climbed over what he supposed to be the wall, dropped into the river, and was drowned. All the people pitied him, saying sadly, "Poor chap, he is now burning in hell-fire." A benignly disposed old clergyman, on being told of the dreadful accident that had hurled the ungodly man to the flames, coolly observed: "Well, well; but we don't know what may have happened between the parapet and the water." Here again the reverend knight is beautifully true to the Word, for he quotes the case of the penitent thief on the cross, to whom the dying Saviour said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Thus, in its very nature, salvation denotes the setting aside of the great laws of causation, which, of course, is an impossibility, and which, if possible, would involve the Divine Being in an essentially immoral conduct.

The *British Weekly* tries to comfort the bereaved by offering them a sheer illusion for an established truth. No one has a moral right to say of a purely imaginary future life that this, that, or the other is "blessedly true" or "certain" concerning it. Many scores of Atheists have lost loved ones in this ruthless War, and these, too, mourn, not in illusory hope, like the Christians, but in loving memory of lives well spent and of death bravely met. To mourn in hope is, at best, but to mourn sadly, unwholesomely, for faith often dies down and hope burns dimly and the future life itself becomes a continent of ever-shifting mist.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Tragedy of a Genius.

The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke; with a Memoir. (Sidgwick & Jackson; 1918.)

There have been multitudes of names in the tale of the heroic dead of this great War which could be said in sober truth to be a loss to their country; but few are associated with greater pathos than the career of Lieutenant Rupert Brooke, the soldier-poet, who laid down his life for England at Lemnos. For many saw in this high-minded young man the hope of a continuance of a noble poetic tradition, and watched with fascination the opening of what promised to be a great and memorable career. It is very tragic irony which closed in the War the years of earnest study before the great task for which they were to fit him had been but well begun.

The feelings of Rupert Brooke's admirers must be like those of the survivors of a shipwreck when, the morning after the storm, they contemplate the relics that the capricious sea has spared from the rich contents of the sunken ship. Their joy at the sight of each relic is insufficient to compensate for the sad memories it awakens of equally precious treasures lost. Nor is this feeling attributable merely to the fact that an early death has snatched from us a poet of genius. Many such might pass without exciting these keen feelings of regret. The world would be grateful for what it had received, and would not concern itself with speculations as how much greater might have been their achievements had more time been allowed them. But no one in the case of young Brooke, can banish the thought of what might have been, of the future that was denied him.

"There are only three things in the world," said Rupert Brooke; "one is to read poetry, another is to write poetry, and the best of all is to live poetry." How he did all three things triumphantly is seen in the volume of his Collected Poems and a Memoir.

Rupert Brooke's short life was packed with experience. He assimilated culture at Rugby and Cambridge, and he travelled extensively. When the calling bugles of England sounded, he never hesitated. He took part in the expedition to Antwerp, and sailed for the Dardanelles. Now he lies in Lemnos, a fitting grave for a poet, the guerdon of a brief and happy life.

This heroic young poet, for whom the meteor flag of England had such a fascination, was at heart as Pagan as a Greek of the classic period. The man for whom the passing hours had such possibilities of joy or sorrow was conscious always that they could never return. Young as he was, he realized "the sense of tears in mortal things." In the most exultant moments of life he was conscious of the shadow of death:—

> And has the truth brought no new hope at all,
> Heart, that you're weeping yet for Paradise?
> Do they still whisper, the old weary cries?
> 'Mid youth and song, feasting and carnival,
> Through laughter, through the roses, as of old
> Comes Death, on shadowy and relentless feet,
> Death, unappeasable by prayer or gold;
> Death is the end, the end!
> Proud then, clear-eyed and laughing, go to greet
> Death as a friend.

Again and again the young poet reverts to the working of this Nemesis. In many a lovely line we catch hints at the secret fear which was at the core of the Greek conception of life, this Pagan antipathy to that physically repulsive for which there was no consolation. His sympathies were ever with the youth who feels in his blood the hunger of an unshaped desire and revolts against Fate which would tame it. Listen to this beautiful sonnet:—

> Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
> Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
> You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
> Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
> When we are old, are old.' 'And when we die
> All's over that is our's; and life burns on
> Through other lovers, other lips,' said I,
> "Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"
>
> "We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
> Life is our cry. We have kept the faith! we said;
> We shall go down with unreluctant tread
> Rose-crowned into the darkness!" Proud we were,
> And laughed, that had such brave true things to say,
> — And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

He was saturated with poetry, and translating the poetry into action. How fine was the inspiration that prompted him to request that any money that he left

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should be divided among three of his fellow-poets. "If I can set them free," he said nobly, "to write the poetry and plays and books they want to, my death will bring more gain than loss." It reminds us of Shelley shielding Byron's body from an armed Italian. "I cannot understand it," exclaimed Byron, afterwards referring to the act, "a man to run upon a naked sword for another."

Idealist though he was, Rupert Brooke had a keen zest for life. "Is there anything better," he asked, "than sitting at a table and eating good food and drinking great drink and discussing everything under the sun with wise and brilliant people." He was only too happy in his friends, and he has written some delightful things of friendship :—

> There is nothing in the world like friendship. There is no lust in it, and therefore no poison. It is cleaner than love and older; for children and very old people have friends, but they do not love. It gives more and takes less, it is fine in the enjoying and without pain when absent, and it leaves only good memories. In love all laughter ends with an ache, but laughter is the very garland on the head of friendship.

There are smiles as well as tears in the book. Brooke would write "limericks" for his friends, and was fond of a good story. He repeated one that Julian Grenfell told of a private soldier who had been fighting from Mons to Ypres, and was asked what he thought of his experiences. The private said: "What I don't like about this b— Europe is all these b— pictures of Jesus Christ and his relations, behind bits of b— glass." Brooke's commentary was characteristic, when he added: "It seems to express perfectly that insularity and cheerful Atheism which are the chief characteristics of my race."

Sometimes the smiles and tears are very near, as in the poem on a dog, who did what he wanted "for a day," which he made a red-letter one. "He fought with the he-dogs, and winked at the she-dogs," and raised Cain Then :—

> When the blood-red sun had gone burning down,
> And the lights were lit in the little town,
> Outside in the gloom of the twilight grey,
> The little dog died when he'd had his day.

Such brief quotations only partially illuminate the genius of the brilliant young scholar who contemplated twentieth-century England like a youthful visitor from another planet. The Great War wrought a change in Rupert Brooke, and afterwards he sang with richer inspiration. In his later poems he showed more passion. In his own noble way, and as though he knew his own fate, he wrote a beautiful sonnet, which must remain his own proper epitaph :—

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England. There shall be
> In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
> A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
> Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
> A body of England, breathing English air,
> Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

MIMNERMUS.

If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley, be it so; at least there is an end of pain, care, woes, and wants. If that part of us called mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with old-wife prejudices and tales. Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories; and as the many are always weak, of consequence they have often, perhaps always, been deceived.—*Robert Burns.*

A Search for the Soul.

VII.

(*Continued from p. 413.*)

SOME months ago, in a review of a somewhat pretentious work on Immortality by Canon Streeter and other Churchmen, the reviewer, T. G. Bonney, Sc.D., LL.D., F.R.S., said :—

> To explain the relation of body to mind, three hypotheses have been advanced: (1) the *materialistic*, that the mind is only a function of the brain-cells; (2) the *idealistic*, that the brain is merely an instrument of the mind (both of which are shown to be insufficient); (3) the *psychological*—which is the more satisfactory—that the mind and brain interact, each having the power of initiation. That the body does have an influence on the mind is proved by mental disturbance from physical causes and the localization of mental functions in the brain, and it can be equally proved that the mind can influence the brain and nervous system. A man may so concentrate his attention on certain objects as to be blind, deaf, or insensible to others.

Looking at the three hypotheses here advanced to explain the relation of body to mind, the only one which may be called "scientific" is the first, the materialistic — to which hypothesis every known fact relating to body and mind points as the true one. Of the other two, the second—which the reviewer calls "idealistic"—is the modern Christian view, long held by dogmatic churchmen of the Bishop Butler type, and still stoutly maintained by the majority of orthodox believers at the present day. The third hypothesis, which is said to be "more satisfactory" than the other two, is a comparatively new idea—a kind of half and half measure—which admits part of the materialistic view in order to escape the whole.

In the last two hypotheses—that "the brain is merely an instrument of the mind," and that "the mind and the brain interact"—the mind is assumed to be an "entity" separate from the brain, the only difference being that in the latter case the mind is admitted to be not quite so independent of the brain as in the former case. Now, neither of these two hypotheses has a particle of evidence on which to rest; both are pure assumptions. Our reviewer says: "It can be proved that the mind can influence the brain and nervous system." But in this statement he is in error; for if the materialistic hypothesis be correct—as we shall find it is—then it cannot be proved that the mind can "influence" the brain. How can that which arises from the functioning of the brain exert an influence on the organ which has caused it to come into being?

The statement that "a man may so concentrate his attention on certain objects as to be blind, deaf, or insensible to other things" does not show that there is in the human organism a mind apart from the brain, but merely that the cerebral organ was considering some particular matter which it deemed of more importance than other questions that ordinarily occupied its attention. As already stated, it is only by assuming that the mind is an entity independent of the brain that the former can be said to influence the latter, and this dualistic assumption begs the whole question. Morever, Professor Bonney's admissions that mental disturbance can arise from physical causes, and that mental functions can be localized in the brain, not only prove that "the body does have an influence upon the mind," but they furnish independent proofs that the mental manifestations which are called Mind are produced by the brain. These phenomena will be noticed later on.

Now, there are scientists and medical men whose high regard for truth will not permit them to conceal from

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the public the many important facts which their investigations and experiments have proved to be correct. From the writings of some of these conscientious workers I quote the following brief statements :—

Professor Buchner (*Force and Matter*) : —

> The word "mind" is nothing more than a collective word and a comprehensive expression for the whole of the activities of the brain and its several parts or organs (p. 301). Thinking and Being are as inseparable as force and matter, or energy and body ; and the idea of thought without being, or the idea of an immaterial spirit, rests on a mere arbitrary theory which has not an inch of reality to stand on (p. 495).

Carl Vogt (quoted by Buchner) :—

> Physiology declares itself categorically against individual immortality, as against all theories in general which include the special existence of a soul. The (so-called) soul is produced by the development of the brain, just the same as muscular activity is produced by the development of the muscles, or secretion is produced by a development of the glands.

Professor Tyndall (*Belfast address*) :—

> Divorced from matter, where is life? Whatever our faith may say, our knowledge shows them to be indissolubly joined. Every meal we eat, every cup we drink, illustrates the mysterious control of mind by matter.

Professor Haeckel (*Riddle of the Universe*) :—

> The mind or the "soul" is that sum of cerebral functions which psychic dualism regards as a peculiar entity, independent of the other vital processes of the living body.....All the phenomena of the psychic life are, without exception, bound up with certain material changes in the living substance of the body, protoplasm. .....In other words, we do not attribute any peculiar "essence" to it, but we consider the (so-called) psyche to be merely a collective idea of all psychic functions of protoplasm. In this case the "soul" is merely a physiological abstraction like "assimilation" or "generation."

Dr. Bastian (*Nature and Origin of Living Matter*) :—

> The phenomena manifested by living things are dependent upon the properties and molecular activities of protoplasm, just as mental phenomena are dependent upon the properties and molecular activities of nerve-tissues, and just as magnetic phenomena are dependent upon the properties and molecular activities of certain kinds or states of iron (p. 18).

Dr. Hollander (*Mental Symptoms of Brain Disease*) :—

> Mind is still regarded by some as if it consisted of intellect alone, whereas we all *feel*, as well as *think*, with our brains (p. 1).

Dr. Maudsley (*Body and Mind*) :—

> The broad truth is that all mental manifestations take place through the brain (p. 37). Multitudes may logically believe that mind is inseparable from body in life or death—that it is born with it, grows, ripens, decays, and dies with it, without disbelieving in an intelligent Power who has called man into being. In the assertion that mind is altogether a function of matter there is no irreverence (p. 124).

This last statement was made by Dr. Maudsley as Professor of Jurisprudence in University College, London, in a course of lectures delivered before the Royal College of Physicians in 1870. Its apologetic character is due to the days in which he lived, and it plainly shows that he was fully aware of the nature of the opposition that might be expected from the dignitaries of the Church in those priest-ridden times. An example of this may be seen in the public denunciation of Professor Huxley by the bigoted Dr. Wace at a Church Congress some years later. There can be no doubt that the fear of the Church or of public opinion has been, in the past, the main cause of the silence of many scientists respecting the true nature of "the soul."

The relation of body and mind may be compared to a clock which strikes the hours and chimes the quarters, the striking and chiming apparatus representing the brain, and the sounds produced by it being considered ideas or thoughts ; while the sum of all the sounds for any given period being regarded as the mind. In this illustration, what we are asked to believe is, that all these sounds constitute an entity independent of the apparatus which produced them, and that not only have these sonorous vibrations of the atmosphere the power to "interact" with the apparatus, but that they will continue to be produced every quarter of an hour for many years after the mechanism which brought them into being has been destroyed. This is the hypothesis which Professor Bonney says is "more satisfactory" than the true one—that which is called the materialistic.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

Go To!

THIS is a well-recognized Biblical expression, corresponding to our modern colloquialism, "Get a move on." A man sometimes, when in a difficulty, decides to "go to" his parson for counsel or guidance, and often discovers that he is by doing so a nice goat too, for he usually is kidded.

In "Acid Drops" of March 3, 1918, I read that Dr. Fort Newton had said, "When a man comes to me with intellectual difficulties, I want to say to him : 'What have you been up to?'" Why should he want to say that when the man's trouble is *intellectual*, and not *moral?* Arrah, good Newton, go on—*go to!*

Seriously, however, Dr. Newton's observation has another significance, going to show that every parson *is a pope at heart.* He is the infallible counsellor of weak or undeveloped intellectualities. Is he not the repository of omniscient wisdom? The Protestant parson has for ever been protesting that the chief superiority of Protestantism over Roman Catholicism lies in the fact that the former does away with any intermediary between the lay member of the Church and his God? But this is only theoretical. *In practice*, the Protestant parson as often acts as the intermediary as the Catholic priest. So again we say to Dr. Newton as Sairah Gamp said to Betsy Prig, "Go along with you." Go to.

To "go to" one's parson is a confession of ignorance—a weakness. It is like admitting a poor hand at nap when one can only "go two." But if I "go on" like this I shall soon be meriting the editorial blue pencil in decisive characters—Go to the W.P.B.!

Are we to conclude that, according to Protestant teaching, moral rectitude is only to be found in a person with a stagnant brain, or a brain that has stopped? Aperiently so. Arrah, Dr. Newton, go hon!—go to ——!

Christians are always "going to" and never arriving.

NEMO.

AMBITION AND GREAT MEN.

We exaggerate the ambition of Great Men; we mistake what the nature of it is. Great men are not ambitious in that sense ; he is a small poor man that is ambitious so. Examine the man who lives in misery because he does not shine above other men ; who goes about producing himself, pruriently anxious about his gifts and claims ; struggling to force everybody, as it were begging everybody for God's sake, to acknowledge him a great man, and set him over the heads of men! Such a creature is among the wretchedest sights seen under the sun. A *great* man? A poor, morbid, prurient, empty man ; fitter for the ward of a hospital than for a throne among men. I advise you to keep out of his way He cannot walk on quiet paths : unless you will look at him, wonder at him, write paragraphs about him, he cannot live. It is the *emptiness* of the man, not his greatness. Because there is nothing in himself, he hungers and thirsts that you would find something in him. In good truth, I believe no great man, not so much as a genuine man who had health and real substance in him of whatever magnitude, was ever much tormented in this way.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

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Acid Drops.

We suggest the Lord has behaved rather shabbily to his followers. August 4 was the announced Day of Prayer, and it would have been good stage management to have held up the splendid counter-attack of the Allies until, say, the 5th or 6th. But the advance was made *before* the Day of Prayer, and that was not—from the Christian point of view—well done. Deity has messed another chance of a much needed advertisement.

Naturally, the clergy "did themselves well" on the Day of Prayer. They were everywhere, and a stranger from another planet might have got the impression that they believed their flummery would have some effect on the progress of the War. Everyone knows it will have no such result, and none know it better than the majority of the clergy. These are no more deceived by the performance than a professional conjurer is deceived by his own tricks. Perhaps the whole thing was a bit of camouflage, to lead people to believe that the clergy were exempted from national service because they were engaged in work of real national importance.

An association of "One Man Business Proprietors" has been formed. "General" Booth should be interested in this.

Miss Louisa Jenkins died in Cowbridge Baptist Church, South Wales, during a service. There is not even a small moral to be drawn from this event.

"Every great man has something of the Biblical seer and prophet in him," declares the oracular *Daily Chronicle*. Great Ezekiel!

If a parson looks over the rectory wall he is reckoned to have courage. "It is rather brave of Dr. Gore to be going to America again," says the *Daily News*.

A Bishop has been brave enough to occupy a Nonconformist pulpit, and the dutiful *Daily News* calls it "an event of far-reaching importance." Such language is more suited to a parish magazine than a daily paper.

According to the Bishop of Kensington, girls show an increasing disinclination to submit to authority, and he regards this as "a grave matter." We quite agree. In the long run it means the funeral of the Christian religion.

"There are too many trashy novels about." That's what the Bishop of London says. No doubt he finds them dangerous competitors to the Bible, which is the trashiest concoction of fiction in the world.

Owing to ill-health, Dr. Jayne, Bishop of Chester, is about to resign. This will flutter the ecclesiastical dovecotes, for the bishopric is worth £4,200 annually. Dr. Jayne has held the bishopric for thirty years. It was, therefore, unkind of a big London newspaper to refer to the retiring ecclesiastic as "Dr. Joynes."

Mr. H. G. Farmer, writing from Ayr, says:—

> According to the daily press, the Royal Air Force have adopted a patron saint in St. Michael, and the figure of this celestial commander of Jabveh's aerial forces actually appears as a crest on the notepaper of the R.A.F. Personally, I think this is a slight upon we terrestrials, when we can boast of such aerial heroes as Elisha and Jesus Christ, and I am sure that the former, in his fiery chariot, would make an excellent design for a crest. Of course, there may be some scoffing Freethinkers who may say that they do not believe in this "bunkum," and suggest that if the R.A F. really needed a patron, they might have adopted Montgolfier, the *Atheist*, who was the first real aviator. At any rate, Mr. Editor, you will surely allow that I have some claim to speak with authority, seeing the place I write from.

"Two hopeless and irremediable bachelors," said the Lord Mayor, introducing the Bishop of London and Father Vaughan to a Mansion House meeting. That is more polite than the continental jest that mankind is divided into men, women, and priests.

A lady writer in a London daily paper suggests that men are really the "weaker sex." Maybe the lady judges from seeing athletic young clergymen handing around tea and cakes at garden parties.

The late Mr. Percy Clarke, one of the proprietors of the *Christian World*, left estate of the value of £6,305. Let us hope that he experienced less trouble in entering heaven than the camel in passing through the eye of a needle.

The bitter gibe, "'How these Christians love one another' still retains its sting," says Sir Kingsley Wood.

Satan is supposed to be the patron saint of lawyers, but his name is not often heard in law courts now. An exception occurred the other day when Mr. Patrick Hastings, K.C., complained to Judge Dickens at the Old Bailey, "I am between the Devil and the deep sea, my lord." "In that case stick to the Devil," replied the Judge.

According to a daily paper, a number of policewomen, equipped with shields, revolvers, and handcuffs, are to be added to the New York police force. It looks as if the civilizing influence of Christianity requires the assistance of the mailed fist

The Bishop of Lichfield has been operated on for appendicitis. Not even bishops think of relying upon prayer nowadays.

It is suggested that Anglicans and the Fancy Religionists should combine in united services in parks and open places. Adversity makes strange companionship.

For having hoarded large quantities of sugar and cheese, the Rev. E. M. Madoc, vicar of Mattishall, Norfolk, has been fined £20 and costs. The civilizing effect of the Christian religion is not very apparent in this case of a man hoarding food when his fellow-citizens were threatened with famine.

A writer in the dear *Daily News* says: "the heart of the feminist does not leap when she imagines the old ladies in bombazine who would knit their socks beside Sir Frederick Banbury." It would not be a greater nightmare than the sight of the hard-faced bishops wearing expensive petticoats in the House of Lords

Mr. Rudyard Kipling declares that "the Devil is very much alive." The dear clergy will be duly grateful for this testimonial.

Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, London, declares the "blessed English people are the poorest advertisers on earth." This should bring blushes to the faces of "God's own Englishmen."

Owing to the so-called "influenza" epidemic Sunday-schools have been closed in many districts. Another testimonial to the value of prayer.

The Bishop of Manchester declares that "the Church of England is half-Wesleyanized." Indeed! Is the other half Catholic?

The President of the National Free Church Council will spend a week in August with the Grand Fleet and conduct services. A very pleasant season for open-air evangelical work.

Dr. Truby King, of New Zealand, declares that only fifty per cent. of men are fit for parenthood, and only seventy-five per cent. of women were fit for motherhood. What a criticism of Christian civilization!

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To Correspondents.

T. FOWLER.—Thanks. Shall hope to see you in Coventry during the autumn.

W. CUMMING.—We are obliged for cuttings. Our time has been so fully occupied this week that we are holding over several for use in next issue.

J. R.—Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and the Slave Trade* will be issued, we expect, about the end of August. It depends upon how soon it is delivered from the binders.

F. C. HOLDEN.—We should be quite willing to give a hand if asked to do so, busy as we are in other directions. We quite appreciate your feelings in the matter.

"M. A."—Shall be pleased to receive and consider article, but please note that it should not exceed two columns. Pressure on our restricted space causes us to reject many articles solely on account of length.

LAWRENCE WILLIAMS.—We have many new developments in contemplation, but it is useless describing them publicly until such time as circumstances make them practicable. These include your own suggestion, which we regard as an important one.

W. FITZPATRICK.—Too late this week, through holidays. Will be noted in our next.

FRANCES DUNNE.—Sorry we cannot send you copies of the *Freethinker* for July 28. That number is quite out of print.

"KERIDON."—Received. As early as possible.

R. B.—Bank Holiday prevented our getting your letter in time for this 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.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen has arranged to visit Aberdare, South Wales, on September 15, where it is hoped to form a new Branch of the N. S. S. Aberdare is quite close to Mountain Ash, Pontypridd, and Merthyr Tydfil. We have many readers in these places, and if halls could be obtained, Mr. Cohen would visit two of these towns on September 14 and 16. In that case, he would be obliged if friends would communicate with him as early as possible.

We should be greatly obliged if all those who have followed our advice as to writing their Parliamentary representative on the subject of Secular Education would let us know the nature of the replies received. We want a complete list, and we should like someone in every constituency to take the matter up. The political parties are all quietly getting ready for a general election, so are the churches and chapels. We see no reason why Freethinkers should not also be prepared to bring their case before the general public. At the proper moment we hope to make suggestions as to the methods we consider likely to be effective.

Will unattached Freethinkers in Glasgow and neighbourhood, who are willing to co-operate in any way in the promotion of Freethought, be good enough to communicate with the Secretary of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S., Mr. F. Lonsdale, 256 Calder Street, Govanhill, Glasgow. There must be hundreds of unattached Freethinkers in Glasgow, and we ask them to seriously consider whether it is not time to definitely associate themselves with a Society which represents the principles in which they believe.

We are asked to announce that a discussion will take place on Parliament Hill Fields to-day (August 11) at 3.15 between Mr. Muir, of the Christian Evidence Society, and Mr. T. F. Palmer. We cannot announce subject, as no title has been supplied.

One-third of this year's Civil List grants were devoted to the widows of scientists. No wonder Huxley said "Science does everything but—pay."

The Editor has been more than usually pressed for time this week, and a number of letters, paragraphs, etc., have to stand over until our next issue. This explanation will, no doubt, ensure forgiveness.

Christianity and Dirt.

DR. LYTTELTON'S REJOINDER.

SIR,—Allow me to thank you sincerely for the tone of your comments on my letter. In this chequered world—I take it we agree on that adjective—it is a real aid to living if one comes unexpectedly on a new fellow-seeker after the priceless treasure which we call Truth. Even if, when he announces a fresh find, or gives his opinion on one's own recent acquisition, some of his words startle, or disquiet, or even annoy, there is something bracing and wholesome in what he says; it encourages one to hope that some of one's own utterances may appeal to him in the same way. That is to say, that they may give him the impression that, if he listens, his mental horizon is not being narrowed, but enlarged; that being the impression I received on reading your notes in the August 4 issue.

The fact is, the joint pursuit of truth teaches many most cheering paradoxes: among them, that the more truth *I* find, the larger at once becomes *your* share; because dividing this treasure with a true partner means keeping more for oneself. For we are not poaching independently, but discovering as partners; so that my wish for your success, if genuine, is thoroughly selfish, at the same time as it is thoroughly unselfish.

Remembering, then, that I must try to be brief, yet that it is possible to be both brief and tedious, I must forgo the pleasure of dwelling upon more than one or two of your comments: our object being to get speedily down to the great subject which demands our attention.

Two points only, your view is (1) that the dirty habits in vogue in the early centuries were in consequence of a preaching of asceticism; (2) that it is irrelevant to bring in the last 150 years.

(1) I agree that dirt was preached and practised as asceticism; and by religious people. But what we want to get at is this: Was that preaching an essential part of the Christian religion? or, on the other hand, was it preached by those who were not Christians? To answer this we must notice, first, what asceticism is. The word is Greek, and the Greeks, especially the Spartans, practised it. It originally meant simply bodily training; then such bodily training as involves voluntary hardship; and for a time such hardship took the form of dirt. But neither the word nor the thing has any necessary connection with dirt. There is a great deal of asceticism which requires cleanliness; and we need not attach any more recondite meaning to the word than that of training (by exercise), in order to produce phy-

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sical efficiency—widely interpreted. I believe it would be true to say that no one ever really thought that dirt conduced to physical efficiency, except some tramps and the like, who find blocking the pores of the skin keeps out cold. Dirt, as Mr. Gladstone used to say, is a form of self-indulgence, and it attached itself like a parasite to asceticism, which in turn, and for a much longer time, became part of Christianity, and has sometimes been thought to be of its essence.

I must not give evidence, but would refer your readers to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, whence they will ascertain another interesting fact. Asceticism has been almost universal among every nation except the Jews. The Jews practised fasting, not as bodily training, but as a form of worship, connected with certain seasons. But into the young Christian Church Greek ideas quickly were infused, so that you find quite early the two ideas blended under the word "fasting." But that is a very different thing from dirt. I am not an historian, but I venture to assert that dirt has been held to be an essential part of asceticism only for limited periods, and adventitiously. It is no more an essence of asceticism than wearing long hair is of a poet; and notice that if all' poets for three centuries should wear long hair, that would not show that the practice is of the essence of *poetry*, though it may be universal among poets. The bearing of this will soon be evident.

(2) Therefore, we must, as Coleridge said, discriminate without dividing. Christianity, Asceticism, and Dirt are three things, and have never been one, or two, though they have been temporarily connected. It brought in the last 150 years as good evidence that between the first and the third there is no *necessary* connection; because you will probably allow that the two great movements during those years, described as the Evangelical and the Oxford movements respectively, were Christian movements, and, *taken together*, were very broadly and deeply Christian. My contention then is, that if there were any necessary connection between Christianity and Dirt we should have seen it exhibited in the light of day during the 150 years among the followers of Wesley, Simeon, Keble, and Newman. But we could not see this because it never happened; nor anything like it. Possibly you may remember that Newman wrote a lovely little poem in a young lady's album, in which he said it was her duty to look nice. There was no Dirt in that teaching, and only a very little of the loftiest Asceticism.

Now, this is all very interesting, but of no great importance till we come to weigh your remark that I am trying to save Christianity at the expense of Christians, that is, by defending the doctrines while admitting the badness of the practice. This is just one of those criticisms which are really valuable and clear the air. Is every creed, or any creed, justly, that is truly, condemned because an undefined number of its votaries have played the fool? I think the instance I gave a fortnight ago about Radicalism requires an answer. Here is another. I once met a young lout in Shoreditch who told me, with some appearance of conviction, that he had gone in for fornication because he knew if was the will of God that he should learn the difference between right and wrong. Now, that was a case of justifying self-indulgence under a plea of religion. I thought at the time, and have continued to think, that the plea was pure bosh. It reminded me of a close parallel. There were doctors forty years ago, and I am told there are still some to be found, who will tell a young man that fornication is necessary for his bodily health. That is the teaching given by men (whom I am inclined to call criminals) closely connecting moral dirt and medical science. But we don't believe any science is anything but hostile to any form of dirt; and if the whole medical profession were to unite in preaching the above lie, you know, sir, neither you nor I would lower our ideas of science because of all the sorry cant. No; no more than I lowered my idea of religion because of that poor sniveller in Shoreditch, or of any other snivellers, though clean in person, found further westward and elsewhere. A big ship is a glorious thing when launched, after some buffeting of the waves it is found to have a mass of incrustations round the keel; they take a long time to get off, and stick mighty close; but no one believes them to be part of the ship, or imputes them to the muddleheadedness of the builder, or even of the owner.

So what history teaches seems to me to be plainly this: Asceticism (a noble thing but easily spoilt) came into the Church from heathen sources—not through Christ's teaching or example, nor through Judaism. Before long it got mixed up with dirt, which, at different times, has had attractions for all kinds of people whether Christians or not. But whenever there has been a real revival of Christianity it has involved asceticism more or less severe, and dirt sometimes came in as the spirit languished; but during the last century and a half the vigorous revival of Christianity has been only slightly mixed with asceticism, and quite free from dirt; indeed, it has been contemporaneous with astonishing progress in cleanliness, sanitation, and the like. If this is nonsense, I should be really grateful to have it pointed out.

Next time shall we discuss why Christianity—according to its defenders—has been so often misunderstood and corrupted, and has done so little good?

E. Lyttelton.

Another Scientist's Profession of Faith.

III.

(Concluded from p. 418.)

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ he dismisses as "a myth," and declares it to be responsible for the teaching of the Church that motherhood is inferior to perpetual virginity; a dogma, he says, that "has wrought incalculable harm to the human race."

The doctrine of the Atonement—that Christ was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind—also shares the fate of the Holy Communion and the rite of Baptism, Professor Thompson declaring that: "Those who—like the Salvation Army—represent that the salvation of mankind depended on the shedding of the blood of Jesus, are simply declaring that which is not true" (p. 159). "Why, then, did Jesus die?" he asks; and replies: "Not to convert God from a state of anger to a state of forgiveness; although that amazing doctrine is still the teaching of the Anglican Church," as laid down in Article 11 of the Articles of Religion. "Think of the astounding utterance of a Protestant divine," says the Professor, quoting from *The Doctrines of Grace* (p. 111), by Dr. Watson, "who declared that 'The sins of the human race gathered in one huge penalty and a cloud of guilt upon the head of Jesus Christ.' What a conception this implies of the character of the All-Father. A wrathful demon who hates His children, and will only be appeased by making the innocent suffer for the guilty—that is the being presented to us in place of a God of love and justice" (pp. 98-99).

Professor Thompson also makes a clean sweep of the miraculous, declaring that "It is impossible in

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the twentieth century to build a religion upon miracles."

In what, then, it may be asked, does Professor Thompson believe? What does his *A Not Impossible Religion* consist of?

It consists of belief in a God, of whom no definition or description is given. Of a future life also undefined. And veneration of Jesus, not as a God or a supernatural being, but a great religious and moral teacher.

And what proofs does Professor Thompson bring forward in support of his *Not Impossible Religion?* From science—none whatever. His proof was not drawn from the science of which he was a master, or from Nature. He well knew that such proof does not exist. His proof was the same as that offered by Methodist or Salvationist—neither more nor less. The proof is inward and spiritual. He says:—

> To him who possesses the spiritual perception the facts are as real as eyesight is to the man who can see. .....He possesses something that they have not, and which, possibly by analogy, they cannot understand.[1]

If that is the case, how is it that every person does not possess this inner conviction? Competent travellers and men who have lived among savages tell us of numerous tribes who have no idea of God whatever. Buddhism, which counts a larger number of adherents than Christianity, has no God. Confucianism teaches nothing about God, and many good authorities contend that Confucianism is not a religion but a philosophy. Even among the nations, nominally classed as Christian, there are many unbelievers. In France there are many millions, the State itself has severed all connection with religion, and England is following fast in her footsteps. Therefore, Professor Thompson's statement that: "The instinct of religion is then innate, as natural as the instinct of hunger, or of self-preservation, or of sex" (p. 15), is diametrically opposed to the facts. And if it were not for the fact that children have these religious ideas implanted in their minds, before their reasoning powers have been developed, there would be no instinct for religion. In another part of his book Professor Thompson admits as much. He says:—

> Most of us, without being conscious of it, grow up in a set of religious ideas and beliefs simply as the result of our environment from birth. We grow up in a certain spiritual atmosphere, and breathe it in as a part of our national and racial inheritance. The outward religion of men is at least largely determined by that of the nation into which they are born; and they adopt it more or less unconsciously without discussion or deliberation. Very few men, in all probability, set themselves in any calm philosophic mood to consider whether they shall choose for themselves a religion, or having so far decided that they will adopt a religion, proceed to investigate what sort of religion they will choose. To the great mass the choice of religion does not come about in that way: it is made not with scientific deliberation but under stress of emotion.[2]

That is what Freethinkers have always contended, a man's religion is merely a matter of geography. If he is a native of India, China, or Turkey, he will believe in one of the Asiatic religions—and according to many good Christians be consigned to Hell. If he is born among a tribe without religious ideas he will have no religion.

That Professor Thompson's religion was the result of his emotions, and had nothing to do with science we have his own admission. He says if we "admit that the intense convictions that drive men to decisions in matters of religion lie in the province of emotion rather than in that of thought, we are but accepting as axiomatic that which experience and history, at least, in a majority of cases, affirm" (p. 162). Really, the Professor has no ground for his contemptuous references to the Salvationist, for his religious belief has no firmer foundation. Both have their origin in emotion.

We do not think the Church will advertise this book, containing, as it does, a demand to abolish bishops, priests, and clergy, but Professor Thompson's name will come in handy when religious apologists are compiling those lists of religious scientists, which are so fashionable now, on the same principle worked by the great Barnum, who, when the newspapers attacked his show, had some advertisements printed giving a glowing account of "The Greatest Show on Earth," and finishing up in large type: "See Daily Press." They will use his name trusting to the publics' ignorance of his book.

W. Mann.

[1] Sylvanus Thompson, *A Not Impossible Religion*, p. 64.
[2] Sylvanus Thompson, *A Not Impossible Religion*, p. 166.

Presbyterian Piffle.

A recent number of the *Presbyterian Messenger*, a monthly organ dealing with Presbyterian Church of England matters, contains a survey of the 1918 annual meeting of the Synod of that Church. The report itself is somewhat discursive, and from it one can hardly tell whether the church "elders" are satisfied with the little world they live in or not. Generally, the tone is strongly akin to that of a peevish, disappointed child whose past desires were nowhere near realized in the present, but who looks forward with the somewhat indefinite idea of "better luck next time."

It contains enough evidence, however, on which judgment can be passed regarding the level of mental development attained by the leading lights of this particular Christian sect. It is hardly surprising that this level is not of the highest, for one of the speakers declared that "the best brains were not now in the ministry." The remark was challenged, of course; but it is good to know that the truth will out in the most unexpected places.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that these Presbyterian beacons are at their wits' end what to do to stem the tide of spiritual apathy now permeating not only their own ranks, but those of all other religious bodies. They lament that "there was no clear sign of religious revival," and perhaps it is for this reason that they have at last overcome their religious fanaticism and confessed that they will "never make England Presbyterian." They consider, however, that they stand a fairly good chance with China; though the Almighty has done them a very "unkind cut" in that he has allowed one of his noble earthquakes in that region to smite them sorely in various unpleasant ways—but mostly diabolical. They will, or ought, to find comfort in the text that "God is no respecter of persons"; and, it may be added, of religious sects either. Anyhow they badly want £10,000 to rebuild his vineyard, which he himself has so wantonly destroyed. Yet, for some inscrutable reason (which, no doubt, deep students of psychology will be able to understand), after rehearsing the sickening facts of the catastrophe, they "appealed for a worthy response to the call, which by this 'Act of God' was addressed to us. A worthy response would be the prelude to fuller blessing."

> Then as God's presence shook the earth
> *Then drops from heaven fell.*

The italics are in the original. One would have imagined that the object of this earthquake address was plain enough; *i.e.*, to clear out of China altogether. But "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to per-

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form"; so perhaps the "fuller blessing" alluded to is the utter extermination of them all "by drops (brick-drops) from heaven falling."

Amen; and amen again.

Presbyterians have also their own interpretation of "spiritual" values. They do not agree that other Churches have exactly the right brand, for they contend that "man was naturally Presbyterian." To be sure! Moreover, "in the Presbyterian conception of worship the preaching of the word occupies a central place"; which, being translated, means *their* particular interpretation of the Grand Old Book of myths. Anyway, some few of them seem to consider that they might get along passably well with other sects. Others, on the other hand, don't think so. So the position is that "the house was somewhat sharply divided"; and whilst they may be more or less willing to federate, they strongly demand that no outsiders shall interfere wtih their particular methods of propagating the Gospel of Christian love and unity. For instance, they insisted that "the object in view was federation, not union," and that they do not intend to "give away the principle of ordination, or anything else that Presbyterians hold dear." Note the decisiveness of "or anything else": the contents of the collection plate—or bag—for instance. Anyway, the finale was that "All reference to 'the principle of Federation' was dropped." They are going to wait another year. In the meantime, Christ's vineyard may be growing thistles; simultaneously, the ravages of the wireworm will require the most earnest week-end attention of an ever-increasing number of Presbyterian allotment holders.

That their spiritual troubles are keen is evident, for they "could not allow the influence of these happy days to hide from us that all was not well with the Church in our land: statistics showed that Christianity in this country was not in possession." No wonder the Moderator "asked all the brethren for their forbearance, sympathy, and prayers during his year of office." He will need it all, every scrap; especially as, like everything else, the output will be somewhat restricted owing to exigencies of the War.

"Z."

(*To be concluded.*)

Correspondence.

RELIGION OF SOLDIERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—An incident that occurred at a large convalescent depot in France last August in reading the correspondence on "Religion of Soldiers" I thought may form a criticism of how the average soldier regards it all. At the Y.M.C.A. at this depot a debate was held on "Is Religion Essential to the Welfare of Nations?" The affirmative position was upheld by an ex-journalist, the negative by an ex-London postman, a clergyman being the chairman. What was said on both sides will not concern you, but this was the result of the voting taken from an audience of between two to three hundred soldiers of the British Empire. Only about twenty voted for it, and about half-a-dozen against it, the rest remaining indifferent. From my own experience out here the voting represented just about the average religion of Tommy. Other examples that I have first hand knowledge of is, at the Church of England compulsory parades, both in England and France, while these parades usually mean 50 per cent. of the unit, at voluntary Holy Communion immediately after not 1 per cent. is the usual attendance, and in the voluntary services held in the evening about five per cent. is the average. As for soldiers praying at bed-side and prayers in the trenches, under the most terrible of bombardment, well, it has never been my lot to see, so I am forced to come to this conclusion that religion in the army is what we call "A Wash Out."

GEORGE H. HOBBS (France).

SIR,—*Re* Mr. Comley's letter (*Freethinker*, June 23), I also feel constrained to give a direct denial to his claims. I've a fair experience of Army life, at home, in France, Belgium, Dardanelles, and Egypt; in the line hospital, back areas, and convalescent camps. Nowhere have I met any great desire for religion in any shape. To the contrary, these services are so popular that everywhere I have found efforts to avoid them.

On several occasions it has been my duty to warn men to attend voluntary service, to make up *a* number.

The Vicar of Ampthill refused to have compulsory Church Parade in his church (all honour to him). Volunteers were few. As a result, we had a compulsory parade, and attended at the church hut in an infantry camp near.

At Haynes Park Camp, the chaplain held voluntary services only. His were the strongest I've seen, although a count showed less than an eighth of the camp strength attending. And this was in January, 1916, when the huts were unwarmed, and there was nowhere to go. The Soldiers' Home in Alexandria was crowded any evening. The lady helper personally touted for her Bible class with little luck. A class of a dozen made her beam.

I left hospital a few weeks ago, and am now in a convalescent camp. While at hospital, the leader of the Y.M.C.A. hut publicly denounced the practice of men leaving the hut when he announced ten minutes' prayer. "I cannot understand how men who have just recovered by the help of God (no mention of the medical services) will not spare a few minutes to ask help for their less fortunate comrades still lying on a bed of pain and sickness. Perhaps this is only thoughtlessness," etc. It wasn't, as his words had no apparent effect.

At this camp we are well catered for by the Y.M.C.A., Church Army, Salvation Army, Scottish Churches, Catholic, and Christian Soldiers' Association huts. The bait (library, paper, games, and bar) is freely taken, but few appear to be trapped.

The Y.M.C.A. cinema has its crowd waiting every night; its prayer-room caters for an average congregation of twenty. The Christian Soldiers average forty an evening service; the Salvation Army about the same number. As several of these congregations go from one to another, the average is even lower. I have counted them myself, evening after evening. As these are in a camp of several thousand beds, even Mr. Comley can hardly claim them as a large average Sunday services are better attended—but then pay-day is Monday.

ANOTHER CORP. (B.E.F., France).

ATHEISM, ANARCHISM, AND ACCURACY.

SIR,—In his able letter to the *Freethinker* of July 28, Mr J. Effel takes me to task for making the statement in my conversations with "Uncle Joe" "that the doctrine of non-resistance, carried to its logical conclusion, would mean not only the abolition of our Army and Navy, of our law courts and police courts, our judges and our magistrates, but our police constables also, and this would inevitably lead to the villain riding roughshod over the virtuous, and to the masses being left a prey to revolution and anarchy."

Mr. Effel makes a protest against what he says is a "too common misrepresentation of Anarchism," and against the inference that armies, judges, policemen, etc., exist to prevent roughshod villainy. Well, with regard to the use of the word *anarchy*, it is quite possible I might have used a more appropriate expression if I had said that the people would have been left "a prey to lawlessness and disorder." But Mr. Effel should remember that I merely represent "Uncle Joe" as a conventional sort of Christian, who uses and understands only the ordinary language of everyday life. And a reference to a standard dictionary like Webster gives the definition of anarchy as "a want of government in society, lawlessness and confusion"; and that really conveys roughly what I had in my mind at the time of writing. I am well aware that a Philosophical Anarchist may be a highly cultivated person, with a scientific order of mind, as I know from having heard Prince Kropotkin lecture on the subject. But I was not dealing with Philosophical Anarchism, nor with the fine theory that a man can, by the proper cultivation of his intellectual and moral qualities, become "a law unto

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himself," and need neither government, nor law, nor judges, nor police, to guide or regulate him in his conduct in daily life. In fact, I was merely talking as a man who lives in the world as we know it to-day, with the masses of people still very badly educated, despite the operation of a compulsory Education Act for over forty years; with thousands of children ill-treated by their parents, as the appalling figures of the Annual Report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Women and Children reveals; our county courts still glutted with business, in which defendants attempt to evade the payment of their legal debts; our police courts occupied with thousands of cases of drunkenness, larceny, and felony; our law courts still occupied with cases of divorce and cruelty; and our criminal courts engaged in the trial of cases of more serious offences, such as robbery with violence, fraud and forgery, manslaughter and murder. All this takes place in a country where tens of thousands of officials of various kinds are employed for the purpose of discovering the offenders and bringing them to justice. Was I not right, then, when I said that if Christians followed out the doctrine of non-resistance to its logical conclusion, it would lead to the villain having the upper hand; for all restraints upon villainy would be removed, and the masses, being without the protection of the police and the magistrate, the judge, and the Army and the Navy, would be left a prey to every form of lawlessness and disorder?

But I used the word "Anarchy," and that, in Mr. Effel's mind, is the "head and front of my offending." Mr. Effel will not deny that I was right in the use of the word according to the ordinary English dictionary meaning of the term, either Webster, Walker, Nuttall, or any other. But his contention, I take it, is that as the ordinary dictionary definition of "Atheist," as "one who denies the existence of God," is wrong, so also is the definition of "Anarchy," "as a want of government in society, or lawlessness and confusion." If that is so, we must have fresh definitions of important words as they undergo transitions in their meanings in the minds of thinkers; and the dictionaries of the future must be compiled by philosophers who understand all the varying phases of thought of every class of thinker. With regard to Mr. Effel's statement that—

> Mr. Moss, I feel sure, would think that we were more highly civilized, if we were completely without priests, Churches, and all their socially wasteful and useless ceremonies, ye he has not outgrown reverence for the judge with his wig and his wisdom, and for the policeman (guardian of virtue, and professional enemy of villainy), the justice of courts, and the belief that society could not exist without these repressive institutions.

At present I am only dealing with life as I know it, and I can say this confidently, that the masses of the people have more completely outgrown the superstition of the priests and the ceremonies of the Church than they have a belief in the wisdom of our judges in the interpretation of the law or the efficacy, of the police in safeguarding their liberties, the soldier and the sailor in upholding the stability of the State as an organized human institution.

Arthur B. Moss.

MODERN CLERGY.

Crabbe, descanting "on the so-called Christian *Clerus*," has this wild passage: "Legions of them, in their black or other gowns, I still meet in every country; masquerading in strange costume of body, and still stranger of soul; mumming, primming, grimacing—poor devils, shamming, and endeavouring not to sham: that is the sad fact. Brave men many of them, after their sort; and in a position which we may admit to be wonderful and dreadful! On the outside of their heads some singular headgear, tulip, mitre, felt coalscuttle, purple hat; and in the inside,—I must say, such a Theory of God Almighty's Universe as I, for my share, am right thankful to have no concern with at all! I think, on the whole, as broken-winged, self-strangled, monstrous a mass of incoherent incredibilities, as ever dwelt in the human brain before. O God, giver of Light, hater of darkness, of Hypocrisy and Cowardice, how long, how long!"—*Carlyle*, "*Latter-Day Pamphlets*."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Christianity and Cleanliness.—The Editor	433
"Our Holy Mother Church."—J. T. Lloyd	434
The Whitman Centenary.—Mimnermus	435
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	436
A Strange Vision.—Arthur B. Moss	440
The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer	441
Presbyterian Piffle.—"Z."	442

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Christianity and Cleanliness.

No one can be more averse than ourselves to the paying of mere compliments, but it would be ungracious not to acknowledge the altogether admirable tone and form of Dr. Lyttelton's Rejoinder in last week's *Freethinker*. We may from that take it for granted that neither of us are out to score mere debating points, but are both desirous of discussing broad issues that are merely illustrated by the particular points on which the discussion may turn. But it is necessary, we find, to add one more word concerning the topic of "Christianity and Dirt." Dr. Lyttelton is quite right in saying that, in our view, the neglect of cleanliness for some centuries among Christians was a direct consequence of Christian teaching; but we did not say, nor are we aware that we implied, that there was a "necessary connection between Christianity and Dirt." Had we contended for this, it would have been necessary for us to prove that this connection existed wherever Christianity did; and that is clearly not the case. Therefore, we questioned the relevancy of Dr. Lyttelton citing the conduct of the last 150 years, and suggested that the altered conduct of Christians within recent centuries might well be attributed to the influence of those forces that have brought a modification of Christian teaching in other directions. That does really bring us to a vital issue. And this issue is, if we may put it in a sentence: In a society in which Christianity is only one of many factors, what part has it played in social life and teaching?

* * *

Asceticism.

Dr. Lyttelton's contention that asceticism was not peculiar to Christianity may be admitted—we believe we said as much in our original article. We can also accept the statement that asceticism meant—under certain conditions—no more than voluntary hardship endured for the sake of securing efficiency. That meaning still remains embedded in the word. But, as Captain Cuttle remarked, the value of the word lies in the application thereof. The modern athlete endures voluntary hardship and abstains from certain pleasures in order to secure physical efficiency. Or we have the training of the student to secure mental efficiency. And, yet again, the rigorous self-denial of the Indian Fakir to secure what he conceives to be spiritual efficiency. Asceticism, in the sense in which Dr. Lyttelton and myself may agree to use the word, may not be a bad thing in itself; but it is clear that whether we pronounce it good or bad must be determined by the end sought and the relevancy of the means adopted. The contention of the Freethinker here is that Christian asceticism was bad because Christianity both misconceived the nature of the human problem and adopted means that were certain to lead to gross evils.

* * *

The Flesh and the Spirit.

What, now, was the directing motive of asceticism as understood by the very earliest body of Christians? It was clearly not physical efficiency; no one has ever proclaimed the Gospel Jesus, or any other Christian leader, as visibly concerned with that. It was certainly not mental efficiency; orthodox and historic Christianity have always been sadly deficient in lending encouragement to that. Nor was it social efficiency; for the corporate social life is substantially ignored in the New Testament, although at a later period the Church was driven to pay some attention to it. The Christian was striving after "spiritual" efficiency, and that meant an efficiency which would secure salvation in another life. But it was also held that there was an irreconcilable opposition between the world and the flesh on the one side, and the claims of the "spirit" on the other. To attend to the claims of the one meant to neglect those of the other; nay, the more one was starved the greater chance of the other flourishing. And it was simply in accordance with the working out of this belief that there existed a preaching of celibacy as superior to marriage, an endorsement of fasting, and of maceration of the body as favouring the development of the "spirit." We do not claim that any one of these forms is *essential* to Christianity, or even to asceticism. Our claim is not that any one is essential, but that all are the logical consequences of principles taught by the Christian Church in the very earliest ages, and never absent from its history down to our own time. The principle of the thing was in the Christian Church, whether it expressed itself, and how it expressed itself, could only be determined by existing circumstances. If we may say so, Dr. Lyttelton seems to have given too much attention to these defining circumstances, and not enough to the tendencies and potentialities of early Christianity.

* * *

Christianity and Happiness.

Rather too much has, we think, been made of the relation of Christianity to dirt, owing to our having used that *apropos* of a police court incident which led to the writing of the original article. But this was, again, only an illustration; other things would have served as well to illustrate the principle above indicated. We might have taken celibacy or fasting—both practised by the Gospel Jesus; or, we might have taken the more modern example of Puritanism. In Puritanism, with its dislike to Sunday games, its hatred of the theatre, its creation and perpetuation of a day of rest from which all healthy human enjoyment was banished, there was another illustration of the same principle that led Christians to

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preach the mortification of the flesh, which placed Stylites in his column, and led also to the practices, a description of which started the present discussion. Macaulay expressed the same thing in a witticism when he said that the Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it hurt the bear, but because it pleased the spectators. And the cardinal principle running right through the Christian ages has been that mere human enjoyment is inimical to the life of the "spirit." This is not peculiar to Christianity, it is common to ascetic religious teachers all over the world. And that seems to us to make our case the more conclusive. For when we do find this conviction and these practices outside Christianity, is there any justifiable reason why we should interpret them differently when we find them within the Christian Church?

* * *

A Necessary Distinction.

Let us assure Dr. Lyttelton that we have no inclination, nor are we in the habit of condemning Christianity, "because an undefined number of its votaries have played the fool." The case for Freethought is too strong to need that kind of argument, although the number who do play the fool is certainly a reflection on the restraining influence of Christianity. But we hold Christianity responsible for the conduct of Christians precisely so far as it can be shown that there was a reasonable working out of the principles involved in Christian teaching. And that rule we apply in both directions. If it relieves Christianity of responsibility for all the harm done by its votaries, it divests it of praise for all the good they may have accomplished. If some of the folly and harm done by them may not be due to Christianity at all, it is at least equally probable that the good may be the product of non-Christian forces. This is a point that one can seldom get Christian controversialists to face, and it is a good omen that Dr. Lyttelton shows no inclination to evade this issue but every desire to come to close quarters with it. In this connection Dr. Lyttelton's illustration of a ship impeded by incrustations round the keel is a good one—from his point of view—but we should differ as to the nature of the incrustations. He believes the ship to be good, and its bad sailing due to the incrustations; we believe the vessel to be a bad one, and that these incrustations have somehow managed to plug the holes and so prevent its foundering. In other words, we believe the Christian ship to be socially unseaworthy, and if it is kept afloat it is only because of a number of additions that form no part of its orig1nal and essential structure. A discussion of that issue will, we think, cover the question with which Dr. Lyttelton concludes his article—"Why Christianity has been so often misunderstood and corrupted, and has done so little good."

Chapman Cohen.

"Our Holy Mother Church."

In the New Testament the Christian Church is invariably represented as an institution founded by Jesus himself, in which he promised to dwell to the end of time, and to which he undertook to send the Holy Ghost immediately after his death. There is here a curious inconsistency, not yet noticed by the divines. In St. John's Gospel, prior to the crucifixion, Jesus repeatedly refers to his approaching departure, saying: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." In St. Matthew's Gospel, however, after his alleged resurrection, he is made to say: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Was the dispensation of the Holy Ghost to endure only during the brief interval between the crucifixion and the resurrection, or are we to understand that we are living under a dual dispensation? At any rate, there is a grave discrepancy on this point between the Fourth Gospel and the First. In the Pauline Epistles the Church is described as "the body of Christ," which he loved, and for which he gave himself, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." There are many other statements of the same import, and from all of them the only rational inference is that the Church is a supernatural organization, indwelt by one, if not by two, supernatural beings. Well, thus founded, guided, and governed, the Church ought to be, not only of the most perfect moral character, but also all-powerful, absolutely irresistible, with the result that even "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is as such that its ministers usually speak of it, especially in the Catholic Church and in the Catholic section of the Anglican Communion. They characterize it as our Holy Mother Church, to which we owe docile submission and glad obedience. Now, as a matter of fact, there never has been a period in its history when the Church was either holy, or acted the part of a tender-hearted mother. At the commencement of the eleventh century, when Leo IX. was pope, the morals of the clergy were at their lowest ebb. This was true of the monks and the secular clergy throughout Christendom. Their vices were of the most depraved and disgusting order. There were women whose calling it was to minister to the sexual lusts of the men of God. Milman says:—

> But these were not the worst of the vices of the clergy. The stern ascetic, Peter Damiani, who now comes forward the absolute unswerving model of monkhood, presented a book to the Pope, the title of which expressed in the coarsest form the unnatural vices widely prevalent among the monks as well as the secular clergy, a book which would shock a more sensitive age, but was received by the Pope as an honest and bold exposition of the morals of the times (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. iii., p. 371).

Let us now concentrate our attention upon the state of the Church at the close of the fourteenth century. Pope Gregory XI. had just died. His pontificate had been replete with troubles and disasters. By no means a bad man by nature, his chief fault was weakness, which betrayed him into many pitfalls. Who succeeded him in Peter's chair? The conclave for the election was about to open in the palace close to St. Peter's. The hall was crowded to suffocation. The sixteen cardinals who formed the Conclave would not be allowed, it was evident, to permit the Holy Ghost to have any say in the election. The men who thronged the room looked fierce and dangerous, and were armed to the teeth, being determined to overawe the electors. "A Roman Pope! we will have a Roman Pope," they kept shouting. Both within the hall and outside the cry was to be heard, "A Roman Pope! if not a Roman, an Italian." The cardinals were threatened with assassination if they disregarded the demand of the Roman people. What were they to do? They made a show of heroic loyalty to the spiritual world, saying: "We are in your power; you may kill us, but we must act according to God's ordinance. To-morrow we celebrate the Mass for the descent of the Holy Ghost; as the Holy Ghost directs, so shall we do." The French wanted a French Pope, and were defiant; but the Roman populace were more defiant still and exclaimed:—

> If ye persist to do despite to Christ, we will hew these Cardinals and Frenchmen in pieces.

Eventually, the hall being cleared of all those unruly partizans, the Cardinals, instead of letting the Holy

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Ghost have his way, began to wrangle and intrigue among themselves. The following is Dean Milman's description of the scene:—

> All the sleepless night the Cardinals might hear the din at the gate, the yells of the people, the tolling of the Bells. There was constant passing and repassing from eachother's chambers, intrigues, altercations, manœuvres, proposals advanced and rejected. Many names were put up (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. viii., p. 37).

When they came to the nomination, they bickered and haggled over several names until, at last, by acclammation, Bartholomew Prignani, Archbishop of Bari, was elected. By now the rabble was furious, knocked madly at the gates, and vowed they would kill all the Cardinals unless a Roman Pontiff was at once elected. To save their lives, these men of God compelled the old Cardinal of St. Peter, to put on what seemed to be the papal stole and mitre, and present himself at the window; and the mob, beside itself with joy, thundered out: "We have a Roman Pope, the Cardinal of St. Peter's. Long live Rome! long live St. Peter!" It was some time before it leaked out that Bartholomew Prignani was the elected Pope. He assumed the name of Urban VI. He was of low origin, uncouth, coarse; and on his elevation, divested himself of his former humility, and became insulting in his manners and tyrannical in his rulings. In the end, the Cardinals who had elected him declared that it was a forced election, that they had acclaimed him Pope simply to save their lives, with the result that Robert of Geneva was elected Pope in the presence of all the Cardinals, with one exception, who had previously chosen Urban. This was the beginning of the notorious schism which cursed Western Christendom for thirty-eight years. For that length of time there were two rival Popes, who anathematized each other in the name of the Lord.

The effect of the schism was to discredit Christianity itself in the eyes of thoughtful people. Whilst the strife of Pope and Antipope went on with inconceivable violence, the New Learning was advancing with irresistible energy, and men everywhere were beginning to think for themselves, and the arguments and counter-arguments of the rival Popes fell on deaf ears. As Milman puts it:—

> Christendom heard these arguments and recriminations with mortifying indifference. That which some centuries ago would have arrayed kingdom against kingdom, and divided each kingdom within itself, the sovereigns against the hierarchy, or the hierarchy in civil feud, now hardly awoke curiosity. No omen so sure of the decline of the sacerdotal power; never again had it vital energy enough for a schism (*Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 411).

How utterly false, how wholly absurd, the Pauline conception of the Church has proved itself to be. How ludicrous, how entirely incredible, is the claim that it is the dwelling-place of the Prince of Peace, or the temple of the Holy Ghost. Even to-day the factions within it are a disgrace to humanity. Not only do the divines of one country disparage the Christianity of other countries, as those of Germany and Great Britain are doing just now, but we have the more amazing spectacle of religious leaders in our own land contradicting one another on almost every question, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dr. Horton, Dr. F. B. Meyer and Fathers Vaughan and Adderley, on the rightness or wrongness of work and play on Sunday.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Philosophy of Secularism.

By G. W. FOOTE.

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The Whitman Centenary.

> Have the elder races halted?
> Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
> We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
> Pioneers! O, Pioneers! —*Walt Whitman.*

Fifty years ago an obscure American writer was dismissed from a Government position because he had written a book of verse, entitled *Leaves of Grass*. What would Walt Whitman have said could he have foreseen that his little book would be treasured by posterity, and that, amid the distractions of a World-War, preparations would be made for the celebration of the centenary of his birth. For next year Whitman will be celebrated as the most notable among the men who laboured to lay the foundations of a national literature for America, and as the poet of Democracy.

Emerson's tribute to the value of *Leaves of Grass* is an historic utterance. "I find it," said the great Bostonian, "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I greet you at the beginning of a great career." Three generations later all the auspices seem in favour of Whitman's permanence in literature. It is the old, old story of the fate of pioneers. First, the neglect of his own countrymen, tempered by abuse, then the recognition by a few of the keener minds and brighter intelligences, and then the slow emergence into appreciation as the singer of Democracy. For not only were Whitman's ideas unconventional, but his work is unlike anything else in poetry. It was not the freak of a writer trying to be eccentric at all costs, but a new and extended criticism of life. If Whitman had merely re-arranged the old poetic materials, such a departure would in no sense be remarkable. He set himself the Herculean task of dealing with the nineteenth-century world without any regard to convention. His cultured contemporaries were content to carve cherry-stones, but this self-educated man elected to hew granite.

Possessed of a remarkable personality, Whitman expressed himself freely in *Leaves of Grass*, and he insists on the supreme value of individuality. Shakespeare had asked: "Which can say more, than this rich praise, that you alone are you." Shakespeare was addressing a beloved friend, but Whitman says the same thing to the whole world. Of mankind the great American poet has nothing to say. In his universe there were only individuals. The man who held such ideas could not help being audacious, for this superb egoism is the centre from which Whitman's morality radiates. Morality to Whitman is simply the normal activity of a healthy nature, not the product of tradition and conventionality:—

> I give nothing as duties
> What others give as duties I give as living impulses,
> Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?

It is this idea, that whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person is finally right, that underlies the most-abused poems of *Leaves of Grass*. It is the antipodes of the Christian ideal, and is, in some measure, a return to Nature. Whitman speaks of man's life in terms of Nature's life, and mingles them together. All the functions of human life are dear to him, because they bear about them a savour of the things that are sweet to him in the world:—

> Of the smell of apples, of lemons, of the pairing of birds,
> Of the wet of woods, of the lapping of waves.

From this exalted vantage-ground Whitman always wrote. His was a manly attempt to raise noble functions, for twenty centuries tainted with obscenity, to their true dignity and natural relation to the universe.

Emerson's praise was not overcharged when he commended Whitman's courage and his free and brave thought. The poet was no scientist, yet it is impossible to question that he had divined scientific truths of the utmost importance. Take his attitude towards sex and the body. For the lover there is nothing in the beloved impure and unclean. This conception of purity is but a poetic rendering of the purity and beauty of organic life. It is a lesson most sorely needed in our over-strained civilization. "Dismiss whatever insults your own soul" is Whitman's insistant cry.

Whitman was a true singer of democracy. He had the keenest sympathy with life, and all activity interested him. This world-wide love is the key to those poems of his in which he seems to catalogue human occupations, merely naming the singing of the stevedores, the raftmen sounding their bugles, the Arab turning to the East. He gave other men credit for a sympathy as tireless as his own. This intense sympathy, which was his natural gift, was reinforced with emotion, sometimes very startling, as in his significant words, addressed to a prostitute, "Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you." In all the poems on slavery and war he lost himself in the great moment, and the claims of humanity are eternal in his songs. There is no false rhetoric or brazen bravado in his beautiful lines, "Dirge for Two Veterans":—

> The moon gives you light,
> And the bugles and the drums give you music;
> And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
> My heart gives you love.

"You who celebrate bygones," Whitman says defiantly to the historians, "I project the history of the future." And it will be long ere the Great Republic of the West will be able to realize his gorgeous dreams of an emancipated race.

For thousands of years countless numbers of poets have sung and wept and echoed the old, hopeless, immortal song of death as the last enemy; but Whitman's is a far other strain. The contemplation of death as a deliverer, dissevered from any thoughts of future rewards or punishments, exalts him to ecstasy. He enforces the idea of death as of a dark, warm tide, silently rising and sweeping away the agonies of sentient existence. No poet or philosopher peers with such longing and audacity into "the superb vistas of death." The awful dreams that may come in that sleep of death have no terror for him. The dead are made one with Nature. Death is "lovely and soothing," and the body, weary of life, turns like a tired child nestling close to the bosom of its mother:—

> Dark mother, always gliding near with soft feet;
> Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
> Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all.

Truly, this "tan-faced Poet of the West" was a pioneer, and he has left the priests and their superstitions far behind. Beyond the fabled hells, the tiresome purgatories, and the tawdry paradises, the resplendent vision of the great poet floods the sky and pours its serene splendour over the world.

Mimnermus.

I have all my life been on my guard against the information by the sense of hearing; it being one of my earliest observations, the universal inclination of human kind is to be led by the ears; and I am sometimes apt to imagine, that they are given to men, as they are to pitchers, purposely that they may be carried about by them. This consideration should abate my wonder to see the most astonishing legends embraced as the most sacred truths, by those who have always heard them asserted, and never contradicted; they even place a merit in complying in direct opposition to the evidence of all their other senses.—*Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.*

A Search for the Soul.

VIII.

(Continued from p. 425.)

It is time now that we looked at the materialistic hypothesis of the relation of body to mind. That is, that the mind is only a function of the brain-cells. In his Address on "Scientific Materialism," delivered before a section of the British Association in 1868, Professor Tyndall, speaking of the correlation of the action of the brain and thought, said:—

> The relation of physics to consciousness being thus invariable, it follows that, given the state of the brain, the corresponding thought or feeling might be inferred; or, given the thought or feeling, the corresponding state of the brain might be inferred.

From this statement it would seem perfectly clear that thought and feeling arise as the result of the activities of the brain-cells; but in the next sentence our very conscientious professor modifies the meaning to be attached to "inferred." He says: "But how inferred? It would be at bottom not a case of logical inference at all, but of empirical association." That is to say, this very obvious conclusion rests only upon observation and experiment, and these methods are apparently deemed to be insufficient. In explanation, our professor says:—

> The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is inconceivable as a result of mechanics. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our mind and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated, as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling; we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem "How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?" The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable. Let the consciousness of Love, for example, be associated with a right-handed spiral motion of the molecules of the brain, and the consciousness of Hate with a left-handed spiral motion. We should then know, when we love, that the motion is in one direction, and when we hate, that the motion is in another; but the "why?" would remain as unanswerable as before.

After reading these astonishing statements, it may perhaps appear that they voice unreasonable objections which tend to impede the progress of rational thinkers. But this, I think, is mainly due to the presentation of the problem in terms of dualism, which apparently assume or imply that the mind and the brain are related as objects in space. Our professor speaks of "the passage" from "the one to the other"; that there is a "chasm between the two classes of phenomena," and that the "physical processes" are "connected" with the "facts of consciousness." Two things appear to be spoken of as existing apart, yet also as "connected," though we know that there is really only one—which is looked at from two different points of view.

Assuming that thought is generated by the molecular action of the brain, in conjunction with the energy associated with that action, Professor Tyndall says that we do not possess an organ capable of *understanding* how such an action can produce the effect we experience; and then he speaks of passing by reasoning from one mode to the other. This is something like asking, How

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is gravitation "connected" with the earth? or, How are Love and Hate connected with the brain? Are we in reply to say that we do not possess the intellectual organ which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from "gravitation" to the "earth," or from "Love and Hate" to the "brain"? Would it not be more rational to ask, in each case, Has the earth power to attract external bodies towards it? Can the brain experience such sensations as Love and Hate? Setting aside the "why," the answer to each question is in the affirmative. Hence, the objection that we do not know why certain activities of the brain cells are "connected" with certain states of consciousness is futile. We do not know *why* oxygen unites with hydrogen to form water, or why the first-named gas unites with nitrogen to form the atmosphere; yet we know perfectly well that these are undoubted facts. What we want to know, in the first instance, is not *why* certain things are so, but simply is it a fact that they *are* so.

There are two bushes in my garden, one of which bears roses and the other black-berries; but the bush on which the roses bloom never bears black-berries, and that with the black-berries never bears roses. If I were to ask a gardener why this is so, he would tell me (after carefully looking at the leaves of each) that the reason is, because one is a rose bush and the other a black-berry bush: that is to say, he accepts the mysterious influence of heredity to be an undoubted fact, though he has not the smallest idea of the reason why. We thus get along very well without knowing the why or the wherefore.

In his address at Browning Hall, in 1914, Professor Bottomley said: "Science deals with the 'how,' and not the 'why' of things.....It does not tell us *why* the earth describes a certain course round the sun. The 'Why' is not the business of science." Just so; but the theory that the mind was a function of the brain was so generally denied in Tyndall's day that that Professor, though he firmly believed it to be true, could not bring himself to assert positively that such was the case until he was able also to give the why. The problem he set himself to solve was: "How are these physical processes *connected* with the facts of consciousness? The solution is that the "physical processes" referred to *do* actually give rise to consciousness, and that these processes are *felt* by us, not as molecular movements, but as consciousness and thought. In the few cases known, in which the brain has been closely observed while thought was taking place, nothing has been perceived apart from the molecular action of the cerebral organ itself. This action, then, or rather the energy associated with it acting upon the molecules, evidently *was* the thought; we know of nothing else.

Christians and Spiritists are, of course, at liberty to imagine an invisible, intangible nonentity, which they call the mind, soul, or spirit, and to fill it, like a bag, with all kinds of attributes which have no existence apart from matter, and even to declare these activities or qualities to collectively constitute an entity that will survive the destruction of the brain which temporarily created them. This, as a simple matter of fact, they have done in the past and still do, and they will, no doubt, continue to do so until all scientists worthy of the name unite and boldly tell the unthinking and credulous public the simple truth.

The molecular action of the brain when generating thought can, I think, be better understood if we look at the modern gramophone. In the latter we see a cylinder or disc in motion and a stationary needle which lightly touches the record. As a result we can hear a speech or a song by a well-known speaker or singer, loud and clear, exactly as delivered, even to the tones and inflections of the voice. And this is all produced by the needle passing smoothly over a multitude of microscopic inequalities on the surface of the record. The trumpet is of use only to magnify the sound, and the machine to keep the record in motion. We have thus only a needle gently touching matter in motion; or, what would amount to the same thing, the matter might be stationary, like the strings of an æolian harp, and some kind of energy might play upon it, as do the rising and falling currents of air upon the cords of the lyre. In the brain also, we have a multitude of microscopic molecules, which, in a certain sense, may be said to be in motion, and cerebral energy passing over them or working through them. In any case, the creation of thought is not so inconceivable as Professor Tyndall supposed. The gramophone certainly shows that there can be two aspects of the same thing.

(To be continued.) Abracadabra.

Acid Drops.

The *Church Times*, while welcoming the new Education Act, "cannot accept as final a Bill of which the most that can be said is that it makes the religious situation no worse than it was already." The various denominations, we are told, "are united in their anxiety to stem the drift towards Secularism," and they are clear "that another Bill embodying a solution should quickly follow.....Given an agreed scheme capable of incorporation, Mr. Fisher will be ready enough to introduce it." This, it will be noticed, follows exactly the plot we said some months ago was in operation. First, an Education Bill leaving religion alone; then a series of semi-private conferences to draw up an "agreed" plan of religious instruction; finally, a short Bill brought before the House of Commons as embodying that in which all parties are agreed, to be passed by a House unequalled in English history for its docility and obedience to Government orders.

Once again we urge upon all interested in education to be active and alert. At the moment when Christianity is losing its hold on the adult life of the nation, we have this carefully engineered plan for entrenching it still more solidly in the schools. There is only one fly in the ointment, as it appears to the *Church Times*. The teachers are averse to giving the clergy control over the schools. They know full well what that means. But, says the *C. T.*, "He needs to be sharply reminded that the teacher exists for the children and the schools, not the children and the schools for the teacher." To that we agree; and we are as firmly convinced that the schools and the children and the teachers do not exist for the Churches; and that is the end aimed at by the religious parties in the State.

The growth of the British Empire is sapping the insularity of Englishmen, and the dullest of orthodox folk must recognize the importance of other religions than the Christian. A sign of the times is the proposal to erect a mosque and a temple in France as memorials to the Indian soldiers who have fallen during the War. A good memorial would be one inscribed over the graves of the dead, "To the God who took no heed."

Mr. Silas K. Hocking, who was formerly a minister, says "the masses of the people do not look to the Christian Church for either light or leading. It has stood too often on the wrong side, or been silent when it should have spoken." What will Brother Hocking's former colleagues say to this?

A daily paper quotes a schoolboy's definition of "Piscatorial" as "The Established Church." Some grown-up folk regard the Church of England as a "fishy" institution.

The secularization of the Young Women's Christian Association has upset some of the women who worked for that organization before the War. In the old days the members

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were drawn almost exclusively from domestic servants and shopgirls: but that is all altered now, and the new members are carrying all before them. It looks as if, instead of the Christians converting the world, the world will convert the Christians.

Devotional services will soon be undistinguishable from Sunday League concerts, flavoured with a little piety. At the War Commemoration Services, held under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, the attractions included the London Opera House Orchestras, the Kingsway Quartette Party, and a lady soloist. A millionaire and a Colonial Prime Minister acted as chairmen. All this array of talent was paraded to remind people that there was a War on, and, incidentally, to advertise the Y.M.C.A.

Christians will find themselves once more in the Middle Ages if they permit themselves to be led by the dear clergy. War shrines are erected everywhere, prayers are offered for fair or wet weather, and the Bishop of London blesses flowers in Hyde Park and music is provided by a Salvation Army band.

When Charles Manser, of Wood Green, found his wife one night with a Walter Hills, Mrs. Manser said she loved Hills "with a Christian love." Evidently that kind of love was open to suspicion, for Mr. Manser instituted proceedings, and the judge granted a divorce.

We are discovered! But a long way off—Wisconsin, U.S.A., to be exact. Someone has been sending the Rev. T. W. Gales copies of the *Freethinker*, and in the *Appleton Crescent* that gentleman decides that we ought to go to a farm to spend a vacation. Really we should not mind, if we had the chance; and, curiously enough, our own doctor gave us the same advice quite recently. He, however, thought that rest was necessary, and would make us more fit for work. Mr. Gales thinks it might stop our writing altogether. But even about that he is doubtful, because we might, owing to our vitiated taste, prefer to grovel "where all the refuse of the stable was cast." All of which means that the *Freethinker* is not to the taste of Mr. Gales. And after reading his article, we are glad of it.

Mr. James Fenwick Beveridge, retired wine and spirit merchant, Burleigh, Beveridge Park, Dunfermline, has left £44,230. Of this, Mr. Beveridge has left £250 to Victoria Road U.F. Church, Kirkcaldy, for investment for Congregational purposes. It will be interesting to know whether the church will accept this bequest, especially when one considers the source from which this money has been obtained.

According to the *Evening News* a soldier stopped a service at the Lee United Methodist Church, S.E., because he thought forgiveness for Germans was being urged. He threatened to bring enough soldiers to wreck the place. This is, indeed, a novel departure. All the threats, hitherto, have come from the pulpits, not the pews.

The clergy in America are as careful of their skins as their brethren in Britain. The *Truthseeker* (New York) points out that the clergy have demanded and accepted exemption from military duty for themselves and for students in their colleges. While they have not proffered to the Government the financial support that could be given by submitting Church property to taxation, they have raised enormous sums from the public for sectarian effort. In short, they have put the Cross above their Country's flag. It will be noticed that the leopard does not change his spots.

The Poor Clergy Relief Corporation is appealing for funds "to enable the poor clergy to obtain a few weeks' rest and change." As ministers are exempted from Military Service, they are already relieved from much of the stress and strain to which their fellow-citizens are subjected. Yet they wish to have prolonged holidays at other peoples' expense. It is appropriate that the President of this Society should be the bachelor Bishop of London, who "takes up his cross and follows his Saviour" on a salary sufficient to keep fifty families in comfort.

The Pope is sending parcels containing food and chocolate to Italian prisoners of war in Germany. If there is a spark of truth in Christianity "God's viceregent on earth" should be able to do more than this for suffering humanity.

A speaker at the Wesleyan Conference referred to President Wilson as a "saint of God." It is always safer to reserve such compliments until a man has finished his career.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer has been writing to the press denouncing recreation for soldiers on Sundays, which will mean, he adds "a very serious and permanent change in our national life." "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" Does Mr. Meyer think the War is to last for ever?

Speaking in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury declared that the Church had always been solicitous for the education of the poor. Indeed! In 1818 it was found that more than half of the children were growing up without education. A few years later it was noticed that of all the persons who came to be married, one-third of the men and one half of the men could not sign the register.

The Vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth, is another gentleman who thinks God has a mighty purpose to fulfil in the War. Writing in the *Church Monthly*, he says that before the War "God was being forgotten; God was being ignored; God was being openly defied." So, we presume, God arranged this little rumpus to call our attention to his existence. Quite a pretty little plan. On the same lines, if a man is ignored by his neighbour, it would be justifiable to drop a bomb on his roof. And the numbers who have been killed? How are they to amend their ways? It looks as though God kills the soldier in order to teach the man at home to correct his ways.

Providence was too busy watching the fall of the sparrows to notice a fire at the Methodist Chapel, Bellenden Road, Peckham.

The new President of the Wesleyan Conference, the Rev. Samuel Chadwick, urges "an old-fashioned revival!" in order to stir up the faithful. It cannot be done. All the clergy of Europe cannot keep hell alight.

"Jesus Christ," says the Rev. R. W. Seaver, of St. John's, Malone, Belfast, "was the Prince of Freethinkers." Now, that used to be the title pious people gave to the Devil. If things go on at this rate, we may find heaven and hell amalgamating, and the whole concern turned into a joint stock company. The War, adds Mr. Seaver, has made men think. That is true, and the course of their thinking is not very favourable to the Churches. Mr. Seaver says the War has greatly upset the religious belief of those who never thought for themselves. Again, we agree and add, that a large number of those who did think for themselves had done with Christianity before the War commenced.

The British and Foreign Bible Society and many Church of England institutions benefit to the extent of nearly £150,000 by the will of the late Lady Pearce, who left £335,409. Pearce and plenty!

At Christie's Sale Rooms a single-row pearl necklace was sold for £47,500. For the jewels sold on the same day over £90,000 was paid. This happens in a country which professes to worship a carpenter-god.

The Rev. J. McNeill, who has returned from Palestine, tells a story of a soldier who said to him: "Is this the Promised Land? I don't know who they promised it to, but I don't want it."

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To Correspondents.

A. G. DALE.—We have sent on your letter to Mr. Farmer. Thanks for congratulations on the way the *Freethinker* has been kept going. It has not caused us sleepless nights—sleeplessness not being one of our complaints, but it has caused us many anxious days. The appreciation of our friend is stimulating.

WE have to acknowledge the sum of 4s. 6d, from Mr. R. Wilson, 10s. from Dr. R. T. Nichols, and 3s. 6d. from Mr. S. Pulman, received towards cost of literature sent to soldiers. We are constantly sending these parcels, and are always ready for the addresses of those to whom our literature is likely to prove useful.

J. A. REID.—We have no knowledge on the subject ourselves, but it is not difficult to get a thing boomed if there is money behind it.

S. ROBINSON.—Colonel Ingersoll wrote on and about Talmage several times. These writings are contained in the Dresden edition of Ingersoll's work, but have not been reprinted otherwise.

WRITING from a hospital ward, R. B. wonders what on earth the people who organized the Day of Prayer were praying for, and what they expected. He thinks that many on the "Day of Remembrance" will have remembered that this War has occurred in a world where Christianity is one of the dominating influences, and that kind reflection will not be very helpful to the Churches.

C. MARTIN.—The man who told you Mr. Cohen received ten guineas each time he lectures has a fine imagination. Mr. Cohen would not have any objection to its being true, but, as a matter of fact, he never stipulates for any lecturing fee whatever, and often enough none is forthcoming. The great thing is to get the work done. We should not refer to this subject here, but it is as well to kill these stories in public.

R. L.—Glad you found the form of letter we sent you so useful. Always bear in mind that all editors like brevity and point in letters that are sent for publication. Will write you on the other matter so soon as we can find time.

L. J. ROE.—The *Darwin's Life and Letters* is published by John Murray. The work can be ordered through any bookseller.

T. RAWLINSON.—Considering that Mr. Cohen has been writing regularly in the *Freethinker* for over twenty years, it is rather staggering to be asked whether we once made a certain statement therein. If you give us some idea of when the alleged article appeared. We will look the matter up.

H. E. (Exeter).—Certainly; as the documents are of importance, the safest plan will be to register the packet. The matter will be treated with the strictest confidence, and the papers returned so soon as read.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is neither virtue, utility, nor courage, in attacking prostrate opinions; nor generosity in disturbing the tranquil contented ignorance, which reposes in silence upon exploded dogmas. It is living, thriving, mischievous error which calls for refutation; it is corrupt, profitable, and intriguing misrepresentation which should be fearlessly attacked.

—*Sir T. C. Morgan.*

Sugar Plums.

Letters reach us every week concerning the position of the Freethinker in the Army, and although we have published the information several times, the last reply to these communications is to again state:—

(1) Soldiers have the same right as civilians to affirm where an oath is required. This right is conferred on them by the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888.

(2) By a War Office Order, No. 179 of January, 1916, men on joining the Army must have their answers concerning religion taken as given without question. They must be entered as Atheist, Agnostic, or any other title by which they describe themselves.

(3) Where a wrong description is entered, owing to misapprehension, application should be made to the recording officer, and failing redress to his superior. But we do not know how far this would apply to a wrong description given by the recruit himself. A deal would depend here upon the good will and courtesy of the officer.

We take this opportunity of thanking those who have forwarded parcels of used magazines, newspapers, etc., and assure them we deeply appreciate the help thus given. It is very important that as much waste paper as possible should be sent to us. We will forward labels or sacks on application, and full prices will be paid.

Mr. G. Rule, of 96 Ingelow Road, Battersea, has kindly undertaken to act as collector on our behalf for South London. If friends and sympathisers in the district who have waste-paper for disposal will communicate with Mr. Rule he will see to its collection and delivery at this office.

Mr. Horace Dawson writes to a Wood Green paper pointing out that the editor had omitted to note in his account of Lord Rhondda that the late Food Controller had little or no belief in Christianity. Unable to deny the truth of the statement, the editor retorts that "private religious belief" had nothing to do with improvement of the food supply. Now, had Lord Rhondda followed the example of Lloyd George, and preached occasionally in chapels, we should have been told that he owed his success to his profound faith in Christianity, etc. Heads I win, tails you lose.

The Manchester Branch takes another of its "Rambles" to-day (August 18). The Marple district has been selected, and the members and friends will meet at the Picadilly Corner for Reddish Car at 10.30. It will be advisable for each member of the party to carry his or her own provisions.

We are asked to announce that the *Freethinker* and all Pioneer Press publications are displayed for sale at The Reform Bookshop, 103 Kirkgate, Bradford. The manager is Mr. E. H. Driffill. Restricted space has prevented our publishing a full list of newsagents who supply this paper, but we shall return to the practice as early as is possible.

Among the recent resolutions in favour of Secular Education sent to Mr. Fisher is one from the Newcastle Branch, N.S.S., and another from the recent meeting of South Wales Freethinkers. Both have been formally acknowledged with the intimation that they would receive attention. Many other resolutions have been sent to the Minister of Education, although we have not been informed concerning all of them.

In the long run, genius and wit side with the right cause. And the man fighting against wrong to-day is assisted, in a greater degree than perhaps he is himself aware, by the sarcasm of this writer, the metaphor of that, the song of the other, although the writers themselves professed indifference, or were even counted as belonging to the enemy.

—*Alexander Smith.*

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A Strange Vision.

PERIODICALLY I pay a visit to the West End of London when bent on recreation. I like to watch the people in these stirring times as they go about in the performance of their daily work or pleasure, and, especially, to take notice of the vast number of men in khaki of various ranks and nationalities, representatives of our Allies from over the seas. These things interest me amazingly, and supply me with constant food for thought. Sometimes in these short excursions I go for a journey on the Tube, and come out of a station on the revolving staircase. To me it is a perfectly delightful experience, and, as such, I enjoy it, just as I used to enjoy a ride on the switch-back railway years ago at the Crystal Palace. A few evenings ago I had a journey on the Tube, and came out at Oxford Circus on the revolving staircase. A few nights later I had an attack of the new complaint—"the Spanish 'Flu"—and when I retired to bed I was very restless and feverish. My rest was disturbed by dreams—not always unpleasant—but in most of them I found myself on the revolving staircase, sometimes running up the stairs, sometimes standing still, and being carried to the top by the perpetual movement of the stairs.

And in one of these dreams I saw myself stepping off the stairs with the wrong foot. I don't know how I came to do it, but I did, and falling on the back of my head at the landing-stage. I saw numerous stars, and for a very few moments I seemed to lose consciousness, but after a while I beheld a vision. And in this vision I saw the strange figure of a man with a long-flowing beard. He was clothed in a white raiment, and wore a shining helmet upon his head. I have said that he had the figure of a man, and yet he was not a man, for he said, in answer to my questions, that he was "the ghost of an old Pagan god," and was doomed to pass his time upon the everlasting moving staircase that took him higher and higher into the heavens; but, apparently, supplied him with no landing-place upon which to plant his unsubstantial and shadowy feet. His figure was most majestic, and he carried a wand in his hand; and as I watched him I could not help thinking that he looked somewhat like my old friend, the late Tom Mead, the famous actor of the old Lyceum Theatre, in the good old days of Sir Henry Irving, in the part of the "Ghost of Hamlet's Father"; but he did not possess such a fine, deep, sonorous voice as the old tragedian. Sometimes, indeed, his voice was rather weak, and whistled and piped like that of one of the characters in *The Seven Ages of Man*, in *As You Like It*. There was a sadness in the expression of his face, "a pale cast of thought," as though he was conscious that there was something wrong in the affairs of the world that he would fain put right if he had his way. When I first began to interrogate him he was mute; he looked upon me with a piteous eye, but answered not a word. At length, however, he gave heed to my questions and answered most cheerfully. At first he appeared to be speaking in blank-verse, but after a while he dropped into ordinary prose and became much more at ease. When I wanted to take down what he said I could neither find my note-book nor my pencil, though I searched for them most diligently, and, therefore, I cannot pretend to furnish a full report of the conversation; but, so far as I remember, I will give the substance of his narration. He told me that he was a very old god, and that he had quite forgotten his name—a failing to which old persons are very subject, and from which old gods are, apparently, not exempt; but he remembered quite distinctly that he played a most important *role* among the gods of his day. And he wished it to be understood that though all the gods had their own separate department to attend, none of them tried to usurp the position of the other, and except that, at times, they had some little differences among themselves, there was a general agreement among them as a rule.

All of them had large powers; some could perform stupendous miracles, such as commanding the sun or moon to stand still, and they would obey. Others could only perform smaller wonders, such as healing the sick, making the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. But most of them lost their powers so soon as they got out of the environment most suited for their existence. And after all, the priests and parsons were their greatest enemies. They declared that the gods had unlimited powers—that they were all-powerful as well as all-good. Well, as a matter of fact, they were neither; and when the people began to discover this fact, their belief in them began to weaken, and gradually to die out altogether. That was the way, in fact, that his godhead lost its power, and that he died the death of all the other Pagan gods. Since he had been merely the ghost of a god, he had wandered about over the earth, and had witnessed most of the sights in the world's happenings that were worth seeing; but now he had got right out of his environment, and things seemed to have lost most of their interest. Before he got on to this perpetually moving staircase, he had wandered about Regent Street and Oxford Street, but he could neither admire the costumes of the ladies nor the deportment of the gentlemen. He preferred the picturesque attire of the ladies of ancient Greece and Rome, and the fine manly bearing of the philosophers and citizens of those ancient cities. The theatres and music-halls, as a rule, were no attraction to him, though he confessed that he laughed heartily over the eccentricities of Little Tich, who was a very quaint and genuine comedian, and was the "star" turn at the Palladium on the occasion of his visit. In fact, he never saw a funnier little man. He did not, however, care to go to a theatre or music-hall. Everybody looked at him, and thought he was one of the characters from *When Knights were Bold*. But he was a great lover of opera, and he had witnessed some excellent performances of the Beecham Opera Company at Drury Lane. He had no prejudices against German music—he could enjoy Wagner as well as Verdi or Puccini, and Mozart as well as Bizet and Thomas. What interested him most, however, since he had been in London, was the large number of soldiers—many of them wounded—that were constantly walking about the streets; and he grieved to think of the poor fellows who had lost a limb. These were sights that were never to be seen in Greece and Rome two thousand years ago. Of course, he had heard of the great War; but as he had not paid a visit to France or Flanders, he had no personal knowledge of the great tragedies that were being enacted on the field of battle in those two countries.

Several people had asked him what the modern gods were doing, and why they had not interfered to stop the War. There was only one answer—they really had not the power. They might desire to put an end to the whole brutal and bloody business—he made no apology for the use of the sanguinary adjective, which, he understood, was not only a favourite expression of Shakespeare, but also of another distinguished dramatist named Bernard Shaw—but the gods of all nations were really powerless in the matter. Some of the gods were very good indeed—others were merely "goody-goody"; but as they were, for the most part, merely the creatures of the priestly imagination, it was left to the priests to explain and justify their actions according to their own sophistical methods. And it was really strange that these methods satisfied the masses of their credulous

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followers. Indeed, he was only reading in the *Freethinker* the other day ——

. . . . . .

At the mention of this journal I had a violent fit of sneezing, which broke the spell—and I awoke.

I looked about the bedroom. Although everything had a greenish appearance, the ghost of the strange vision had vanished, and on the drawers on my right stood the miniature statue of Charles Bradlaugh. And I found upon reflection that, in my delirium, I had been supplying arguments and narratives for an ancient god who had no existence apart from my poor troubled brain. And so the vision vanished, as all such visions do, when the reason resumed its normal condition ; and once more the ghost departed into oblivion.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

To the Titan Prometheus, the classic Greeks attributed the theft from the sullen gods of their jealously guarded secret of kindling flame, in order that humanity might use it for their own benefit. Modern science, however, assures us that the discovery of the value of fire, and the acquisition of the power to generate light and heat, possess an entirely different history. Primitive man probably secured his first fire from volcanoes and flaming vegetation. Then he learnt the art of producing flame from the friction of sticks and stones. Dried leaves and dead branches were constantly at his service for use as fuel for his fires, and even in Europe, right down to recent centuries, wood and peat were the chief materials employed for purposes of combustion.

How, or when, coal first came to be utilized as fuel, no one can tell. In Britain, mining on a small scale appears to have been conducted during the Roman occupation of the island. As early as A.D. 852 the Anglo-Saxons fed their house-fires with coal, and there are sound reasons for thinking that England was the first European country to burn coal to any material extent. In the reign of Richard I., coal was raised in Durham. In the thirteenth century, in Scotland, charters were granted for the digging of coal. The fuel was well known in the periods of the Yorkist and Tudor monarchs, and, according to Anderson's *History of Commerce*, was sent by sea from the North to London at the opening of the fourteenth century. It was then known as sea-coal, and is mentioned as such by Shakespeare in his *Merry Wives of Windsor* over two centuries later.

When coal entered into common use in the Metropolis, it was adversely regarded by the more conservative. In the days of Edward I., the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled petitioned the King to prohibit the use of coal; but as wood was scarce and dear, the consumption of coal increased. Long after coal fires had become common in London, a Crown proclamation was published by Elizabeth, forbidding the burning of coal in London during the Parliamentary session, as its fumes were thought dangerous to the health of the members. Doubtless, the smoke and stench ascending from the rude hearths, and emerging from the sooty and draughty chimneys of that age, were markedly malodorous. Even at the date of Charles the First's execution, in 1649, Parliament was again petitioned by London citizens, both of credit and renown, to prohibit the use of coal on account of its abominable odour ; but in that and in succeeding centuries the consumption of coal assumed ever-increasing proportions.

The modern exploitation of our coal measures has resulted in a social, industrial, and commercial revolution probably without parallel in the world's history Steamships, railways, factories, and workshops ; all our immense electrical undertakings, are based on energy supplied by coal; while the vast cotton, woollen, and other textile industries repose on a basis furnished by the same fuel. Also, our gas and electric light, and cooking appliances, as well as all our heating arrangements, are derived from the combustion of coal.

In the grey dim past, in ages immeasurably remote, when the floral and faunal kingdoms were vastly different from those of to-day, our planet's coal deposits were formed. Immense stretches of our earth's surface were tropical bogs and swamps. In deltas and lagoons in the vicinity of river systems sluggishly wandering towards the sea, plants of a luxurious and rapidly growing character abounded, which season after season cast down their dead materials to constantly accumulate as a consolidated medley of vegetable remains. These floral forms were of primitive pattern, for the vast majority were members of the Cryptogamic order, and their leading representatives were club-mosses, horse-tails, sedges, noble ferns, and magnificent tree ferns of majestic proportions.

As time rolled on, these deposits of departed plant life were subjected to great compression. The lake, the stream, and the ocean covered them in turn, and mantled them with mud, sand, clay, and other sediment, until they became once more raised above water-level, when another mass of plants arose and flourished, but destined, as time sped on, to share the fate of their predecessors, and to lie long submerged by the encroaching waves. Many alternations of this character occurred until with the lapse of geological ages, changes in climate and modifications in the distribution of sea and land led to pronounced departures in the animal and vegetable realms.

Continent and ocean triumphed in succession in the regions where the coal forests had for protracted periods enjoyed their intermittent reign. Hundreds, or even thousands, of feet of sedimentary substances were subsequently deposited over the now deeply buried plant remains, and their intervening layers of sandstone, limestone, and clay.

The earth's leading coal measures were formed in the Carboniferous Age, and since that ancient period, the immense mechanical pressure of the superincumbent rocks, assisted by chemical decomposition, has served to transform these antique plant remains into that hard opaque substance which we classify as coal. It is frequently assumed that coal is no longer in process of formation, and that this fuel was first produced in carboniferous times. The Carboniferous epoch was, undoubtedly, distinguished beyond all others by a combination of events which culminated in the deposition of the most opulent and extensive coal-fields. But, as the late Professor Meldola reminds us :—

> In the very oldest rocks in Canada and the Northern States of America in strata which take us back to the dawn of geological history, there is found abundance of the mineral graphite, the substance from which black-lead pencils are made, which is almost pure carbon. Now, most geologists admit that graphite represents the carbon which formed part of the woody tissue of plants that lived during these remote times, so that this mineral represents coal in the ultimate stage of carbonization. In some few instances true coal has been found converted into graphite *in situ* by the intrusion of veins of volcanic rock (basalt), so that the connection between the two minerals is more than a mere matter of surmise.

In Scotland coal occurs in beds of old red sandstone which are of earlier date than the carboniferous deposits, while coal formed subsequently to the Carboniferous era exists in Bavaria, Yorkshire, and other

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districts. So geologically recent as the Eocene Age coal was formed in the Northern Tyrol, and still later brown coal was evolved in Belgium and Austria, while in quite modern geological times—in the Mid-Tertiary—the mineral was fashioned from vegetable remains in the now Arctic area of Greenland. Moreover, peat is being formed to-day in Ireland and elsewhere, and in various territories the first stages of coal production are in ceaseless operation where delta jungles and mangrove morasses abound.

Those British coal-fields that have proved a source of wealth so vast to our country are entirely of carboniferous origin. The coal reposes in the mines in layers separated by beds of shale, sandstone, and other sedimentary substances that were deposited over the plant materials at periods when neptune rolled or the rivers ran over the depressed forests. The seams of coal invariably rest on a couch of clay which is all that remains of the soil in which the prehistoric vegetation once rooted. In this layer of underclay the fossilized roots and lower trunks of ancient trees sometimes stand erect in the position where they once flourished.

In the course of millions of years most of the original features of the plants since transformed into coal have vanished. Yet, one has only to note the layers in a burning lump of coal to observe a striking resemblance to those of a heated wood-block. Fragments of desiccated foliage, ligneous fibre, and the outlines of fern fronds may occasionally be seen, while in some coal the spore cases of extinct club mosses are so numerous that the coal appears almost entirely composed of them.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

Presbyterian Piffle.

II.

(Concluded from p. 430).

AGAIN, "the fathers of the Church" are "still struggling with the spiritual difficulties that beset younger men." They fear that "the impression (is) widely spread of the Church's insincerity in proclaiming her message." That is natural; for a large body of young men would be a fine business asset to the Presbyterian concern. Still, business has its jealousies. God is a jealous God, and Presbyterians are, presumably, jealous also; at any rate, it would appear so, for they are striving "to supply the definite denominational teaching for lack of which our young people are largely going over to the Church of England." And, as usual, it all needs the backing of a Sustentation Fund—one, of course, that needs a substantial backing itself at a sound British bank. Credits drawn against the Bank of Heaven are useless. Hard, crisp "Bradbury's" is "the only way" of getting over the difficulty. They ought to try prayer, and remember that everything comes to those who wait. Some of them, though, seem to be very dubious about it, for when—

> A very tender and impressive Service of Intercession and Commemoration followed. It was a disappointment that so many left before this began. The hour was late. But the question could not help rising in some hearts: Do we really believe, do we *all* believe, that prayer is worth while?

Yes, *that* is the question; and there are thousands who have answered it "in the negative," not the least of these being "somewhere in France." Prayer is nothing more than the modern prototype of the medicine-man's weird incantations and mystic exorcisms. Still, some of the sharp words uttered regarding the collapse of the £300 in the collections ought to hurry along the laggards. It is not stated whether all and sundry were reminded that trouser buttons were of no use as a War bonus, though they may certainly be more useful than prayer—for breakdown jobs especially. Besides, even the mentioning of such a matter ought to perform wonders, for "a sense of humour is a great help to holiness." It is. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow: trousers buttons and hard-baked dough."

It is good to hear that "there was no clear sign of a religious revival." No doubt they would dearly like a business boom throughout the country. This would enable them to make quick profits. The Sunday school business is too slow and utterly disappointing, for—

> Twenty years ago a large percentage of non-church-going parents wanted their children to come to Sunday-school; ten years ago they were indifferent; to-day they are largely hostile, mainly for selfish reasons because the Sunday-school hours do not fit in with meal hours and household tasks.

It is to be presumed that this is *not* to be taken as an insult to the parents, nor yet to the intelligence of the "elder" that uttered it. *Verb sap!* These parents will surely be damned if they don't send their children to Sunday-school, though one can hear the parents retorting, with Ingersoll, that they'll be damned-if they will.

What can these Church dignitaries expect when they treat 50 per cent. of parents as having no rights of equality with the other 50 per cent.? Everywhere it is "Fathers and Brethren." Have they not yet learned that the fairer sex have now earned their right to equal liberty and freedom with their brothers, and that a long overdue reward has at last been partially granted them? Not a word about mothers and sisters! But what can be expected of them when they have only just decided to include women members in their Foreign Missions Committee? "Woman what have we to do with thee?" Very little. Still, they are concentrating their attention on the Report of the Divorce Commission. So one may look out for a "star" programme at the next annual chin-wag.

Another point which is troubling them is the Military Service Act. A report on this question "dealing with the relation of ministers to the man power of the nation received anxious and careful discussion at considerable length." One might have been quite sure of *that*, though they could find no time to deal with "such a 'live' subject as Education" which "had to be passed with little more than a glance." No wonder intelligent people are forsaking the pews! However, the topic of military service led to a discussion over the phrasing of the statement that "the Synod *does not approve* the exemption of ministers of religion from military service" (italics in the original). The resulting vote decided by a majority of one only, to delete the words italicized! Verily a concession to the public opinion of those parents whom they have taken to task for minding their own business in their own ways. But there is still a ray of hope for some of them, for "the Y.M.C.A. were anxious at present for twenty-five men who would sign for a year or till the duration of the War." It is to be hoped that there wasn't a crush, and that the queue didn't cause any public annoyance—or hilarity.

A correspondent in the same issue throws an interesting side-light on the peculiar patriotic conscience of some ministers and their employers. He says:—

> The Synod has adopted the policy of putting moral pressure upon the younger ministers of the Church in order that they may join the Army. At the same time, the Synod has adopted the policy of welcoming ministers of military age coming from other denominations, and placing them in positions left vacant by the absence of our own patriotic men on National Service.

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What a fine example of contemptible Christian tactics? One might make allowances for a cute layman on the same dodge—but parsons! When will sensible people, with Shakespeare, insist and demand that these black-coated fraternity shall "Avaunt and quit our sights"?

Presbyterians have not yet risen above the level of savages in their conception of Deity. He is still the Big Man of the Universe—with back parts in proportion. He has a personality as distinctive as any Tom, Dick, or Harry. He must exist only some five miles off, for "clouds and darkness are round about Him." This, however, may only be figurative, though to suggest that that he, also, is imaginary would be profane. He revels in blood just like a tiger or a spider, so it is not likely that he is going to make any attempt to stop the slaughter here below. He is a spectator on high, and, doubtless, enjoys the carnage. Still, the boys, "Somewhere in France," may be comforted to know that theirs is a—

> Sacrifice fulfilling what God saith
> Of need of blood to cancel human guilt.

In case there may be another interpretation the poem is appended herewith:—

> The Red Thread of Worship.
>
> Abel received it in the hand of Faith,
> And Heaven's Fire confirmed his offering:
> And, through the four millenniums following,
> The Chosen Race held fast the Scarlet Thread,
> In Sacrifice fulfilling what God saith
> Of need of blood to cancel human guilt,
> So the red life of Offerings was spilt.
> Until God's Lamb hung on the Cross-tree dead,
> Still the Red Sign fills our Faith's hand to-day,
> Christ's precious Blood our plea whene'er we prey.

Just exactly what it all means God only knows. One may hazard a guess based on some not too pleasant reminiscences of childhood, but that is all, though one perceives a belief in the Adam and Eve myth together with the absurd Biblical chronology of a six-thousand year old earth. It is a typical specimen of prehistoric numbo-jumbo couched in a weird rigmarole of modern clerical jargon.

Enough. There is plenty of room for reconstruction *now* without waiting until the end of the War. When it does come these pious hussies will have to give a very convincing account of their stewardship, and answer for that of their Heavenly Father also.

"Z."

Wrapped up in gray cloud-garments,
The great Gods sleep together;
I hear their thunder-snoring,
And to-night we've dreadful weather.

Dreadful weather! what a tempest
Around the weak ship raves!
Ah, who will check the storm-wind,
Or curb the lordless wave?

Can't be helped though, if all nature
A mad holiday *is* keeping;
So I'll wrap me up and slumber
As the Gods above are sleeping.

—*Heine* (Leland's translation).

Obituary.

On August 1 Mr. Henry Harrison, age sixty-six, gilder and bootmaker, for thirty years resident in Marylebone, passed away after a long and painful illness, which was softened by the constant and tender care of a loving wife and family—all Freethinkers. He was a zealous supporter of the late Messrs. Bradlaugh and Foote, and the present Editor of the *Freethinker*. Deceased was interred at Willesden Cemetery on August 6. A Secular Burial Service was read. He was respected and beloved by all who knew him.—E. D.

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 Branch N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mrs. Rosetti, A Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 6, Mr. H. B. Doughty, "Good—but Ungodly."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A Lecture; 6.30, A Lecture.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Rule, "The God Idea."

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Beale, Kells, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

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Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, Mr. S. Copley, "Theoretic and Practical Atheism."

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Manchester Branch N. S. S. Ramble.—Marple District. Meet Piccadilly Corner (for Reddish Car) at 10.30. Advisable to bring own refreshments.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Atheism.—The Editor	445
"Our Holy Mother Church."—J. T. Lloyd	446
The Wittiest Book in the World.—Mimnermus	447
Christianity and Cleanliness.—E. Lyttelton	448
On Cessnock Banks.—A. Millar	449
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	452
Religious Instruction in Scotland.—Freethinker	453
The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer	453

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Atheism.

It is a safe game to misrepresent Atheism. Comparatively speaking, it has few friends, and it is blessed with a large number of active enemies. Hardly one in a hundred of its enemies are scrupulous in finding out what Atheism really is, and the remaining ninety-nine are only too anxious to discover occasions for misrepresentations. And these are not easily removed. There is seldom opportunity given to correct them in the places where they occur; a paper such as the *Freethinker* is the only channel of correction open, and this reaches but few of those who read the original misrepresentation. It is, thus, a safe game. It is also a cowardly game. To misstate an opinion that enjoys popular favour is wrong; but the wrong is soon righted, and one runs the risk of exposure. But there is no risk in misstating Atheism. You may deny it every decent quality, endow it with the capacity for producing every conceivable vice, and make it as mentally stupid as it is made morally obnoxious. The overwhelming majority of those who read will either agree with it as a statement of fact, or feel that Atheism deserves all that has been said. That is why it is a cowardly game. A sense of chivalry might lead one to refrain from throwing a brick at an unpopular opinion A nice sense of honour would insist upon careful examination before attack. But where religion is concerned honour and chivalry rarely count.

* * *

The Myth of a Religious "Faculty."

This is not an appeal *ad misericordiam*. We are not asking that people should not attack Atheism, or suggesting that it cannot survive misrepresentation. Atheism has always been subject to both, and has survived them. It has more than survived; it has grown. Its position to-day is not reminescent of past greatness; it is pregnant with the possibilities of assured growth. We are writing solely in view of the common religious plea that the Atheist is what he is, because he is lacking in some religious "faculty," or deficient in a religious "sentiment" possessed by the pious. And that is pure myth. There is no such thing as a religious "faculty." There is no such thing as a religious sentiment, or even religious feelings. Wonder and awe and veneration and faith and belief are not religious qualities, they never were religious qualities, and they can never become so. They may be exercised in connection with religion, but so may love and hatred and cruelty and kindness and cleverness and stupidity. Human qualities are human qualities, and their nature is quite unaffected by the object in connection with which they find expression. A sunrise on the Alps, or a storm at sea, may awaken all the veneration and awe that a mystically drunken godite feels in the contemplation of the character of his incomprehensible deity. Religion does not initiate a single feeling, it does not absolutely control a single feeling. It only utilizes feelings developed apart altogether from religion.

* * *

The Nature of Religion.

There is no religious sentiment, there is only a religious idea. And even that has not become an "element of our nature." There is a religious idea because, as one writer remarks, "Surrounded by the forces of nature which he could neither comprehend nor control," natural forces "became for uncritical man superior animate beings whom he endowed with qualities like his own, whose favour was to be courted and whose wrath appeased." It is this idea, born of primitive ignorance, that is perpetuated by primitive fear and subsequent cunning. It has persisted through the ages, but even as an idea it has not become an element of our nature—ideas never do become that. What has happened is that it has become a permanent factor—up to the present—in the social environment. It is there when each newcomer arrives, and each newcomer is taught to express his feelings in a form consonant with the religious idea. The perpetuation of religion is a phenomenon of social heredity. So is the phenomenon of loyalty to a king. And one might, with just as much scientific warranty, when he sees a crowd cheering the passage of the king, say that loyalty to the king has become an element of human nature, and that cosmic evolution had as one of its supreme objects the creation of a feeling of devotion to George the Fifth. It is the social environment that perpetuates the religious idea, and it is the gradual weakening of the religious idea that is steadily bringing about such a modification of the environment as makes Atheism practically inevitable.

* * *

"Hath Not a Jew Eyes?"

The difference between the Atheist and the Christian is, so to speak, not one of matter, but of form. They both get pleased or angry, they both laugh or cry, they both have faith—of a kind—belief, reverence for greatness in human nature, and a feeling of awe in face of natural phenomena. The Atheist differs from the Theist in no quality of mind or body; the difference lies in the way in which the nature of each is expressed. Belief is not a consequence of inability of the intellect to find natural causes; it is rather a degree of knowledge that falls short of absolute certitude. And it is common to both Theist and Atheist. The difference, again, lies in the object of belief. The Theist posits a God as the cause of natural happenings. The Atheist declines to use such a synonym for ignorance, and prefers to believe

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that, as natural causes have explained all the phenomena, the conditions of which we know, the same will be found true of phenomena whose conditions are unknown. Of course, it is flattering to the vanity of the believer in God to assume that the Atheist is one whose finer qualities and perceptions are either undeveloped or atrophied. It enables any Bible-banging, microcephalous local preacher to feel exalted without undergoing the toil and discipline of becoming genuinely so. In moments of compassion they will pity the poor Atheist, and, when specially sympathetic, will condole with him on his spiritual blindness. But there is really nothing in it. The Atheist laughs at both the pity and the condolence. It is not worth while being angry. He knows that the belief in God is not a frame of mind that people grow toward; it is a frame of mind they outgrow. The Atheist knows this, because he has been there. He sees in a believer a picture of himself in an earlier and less complete state of development. The sympathy of the believer with the Atheist is that of the blind man for the one who is put to the trouble of wearing spectacles. The Atheist has lost nothing of his human qualities in growing out of them. He has merely learned to look at things with a clearer and truer gaze, and face facts with a courage born of undimmed vision.

* * *

Who are the Materialists?

Of course, there is the cant about the Atheist's neglect of "spiritual" matters. But unless "spiritual" is used as a synonym for "supernatural," it is pure camouflage. If we may use the word without being misunderstood, the Atheist is more concerned with spiritual matters than is the Theist. His whole life is devoted to an idea. He cannot hope to gain the material for "animal pleasures" by professing Atheism. If he thought that, he would be too stupid to ever leave church or chapel. He is daily made aware of paying some price for the rejection of religion, and if Atheism were of no other value to the world than this, the possession of a body of men who place devotion to an idea first, without any possibility of material gain, is a social asset of the greatest possible value. And what the Christian means by "spiritual" matters—that is, supernatural matters—has always tended to the encouragement of a decided, ethical Materialism. It has taught men to estimate the value of truth in terms of material loss and gain. If the personal gain was not here, it was hereafter. And when, as was inevitable, faith in the hereafter began to waver, the same standard was applied to the present life. This is one reason why the most "materialistic" people in the civilized world are Christian. It is one reason why we in this country are so given to measure our greatness in terms of fighting strength or trading returns. A nation is great because it sells or slaughters, or sells *and* slaughters, not because it thinks and lives. And, as a consequence, we see the millionaire idealized and the thinker ignored; the dead plutocrat loaded with columns of an admiring obituary, and the dead philosopher dismissed with a contemptuous sneer. It is also why so many shallow-pated pietists are able to write disparagingly of a frame of mind of which Samuel Taylor Coleridge said not one man in ten thousand had either the strength of mind or goodness of character to possess.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

I remember in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave. How ignorant are plough-boys!—Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a ——!
—*Robert Burns.*

"Our Holy Mother Church."

II.

CHRISTIAN apologists assure us that the fourteenth century was noted for its exceptional advance in learning, culture, and art. The Rev. J. K. Mozley, in his *Achievements of Christianity* (p. 48), asserts that "discoveries and advances in mathematics and mechanical science were made in it which were to be the forerunners of modern teaching." That is true; but Mr. Mozley does not inform us that those discoveries and advances were made in spite of the stubborn opposition of the Church. His statement that "very wide latitude was allowed to thinkers like Duns Scotus and William of Ockham" is utterly false concerning the latter, and not true of the former, who was profoundly orthodox in theology. William of Ockham was a Revolutionist, whose teaching was anathematized by the Pope. He was arraigned at Avignon, and in close custody, for his audacious opinions. He stood in imminent danger of being burned at the stake, a fate that had befallen so many of his brethren. He fled to the court of Louis of Bavaria. Is not Mr. Mozley aware that he was denounced as a heretic and schismatic, and sentenced to deprivation of all privileges and to perpetual imprisonment? But at the Bavarian Court, William could afford to laugh to scorn and defy such idle terrors. It is true, however, that during the fourteenth century, a strong wave of anti-clericalism was moving over Christendom, and that its last decade was darkened by the great Papal Schism. There was a well-nigh universal disposition to ridicule ecclesiastical claims. Even in England the clergy no longer enjoyed their ancient privileges. Their immunity from the civil courts was largely a thing of the past. Archbishop Langham "complained in Parliament that the civil authorities had not scrupled to arrest, indict, even to condemn to public execution clerics and regulars in holy orders." The immunity so ardently believed in and advocated at such terrible cost by Becket in the twelfth century, had thus been surrendered with reluctance, not because the Church's belief in it was weakened, but because it could no longer enforce it. This is how Wilkins puts it:—

> The king and the magistrates, on the other hand, complained that when such persons, so found guilty of the most flagitious crimes (such cases seem to have been very common), were given up on demand to their Bishops, they were negligently guarded, and so pampered in prison, that it was a place of comfort and enjoyment rather than of penance. Some were allowed to escape, some discharged on slight evidence. They returned to their old courses, and were of bad example to unoffending clergymen.

In Scotland the anti-papal feeling was stronger still. Pope John XXII. undertook the task of mediating between the two countries; but Robert Bruce would not even receive his letters except on condition that he was addressed by the title of king. It is even stated that Bruce simply laughed at the Pope's excommunication, and that his partisans waylaid and plundered the papal nuncios near Durham.

It is well known that Edward II. was morally worthless, and a deplorably feeble monarch. But he was a loyal son of the Church, and the Pope treated him as if he were a child. Being poor he could not afford to pay the tribute of 1,000 marks to the Vatican, but John told him that not to pay it was an offence against God, for which he would be cast into hell-fire when he died. Milman says that the Pope was on the king's side

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simply "in order to secure the tribute of the land, the Peter's Pence, and other convenient emoluments of the See of Rome." Under Edward III. and Richard II. there was a popular reaction against the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury was charged with high treason. He fled from Lambeth to Canterbury, and at the latter place he had the courage to excommunicate his accusers with bell, book, and candle. On his return to London he sought refuge, cross in hand, in the House of Lords. Here was the Primate of England, the highest dignitary of the English Church, in the hands of the civil power; and when the quarrel was settled he had to accept pardon from, rather than condescendingly to grant it to, the King. Thus the tables were being slowly turned with a vengeance.

Of course, in spirit the Church was as tyrannical and intolerant as ever. John Wycliffe was born, of humble parents, in the year 1327. His ambition was to become a scholar, for which purpose he was admitted into Queen's College, and later removed to Merton. Merton was already famous as the scene of the marvellous logic-grinding displays of Duns Scotus, the celebrated Realist, and chief opponent of Thomas Aquinas, of the remarkable mathematical and scientific studies of Roger Bacon, known on the Continent as the "Wonderful Doctor," and also, probably, of William of Ockham, the great Rationalist of his century; and one is not surprised to find that, educated at an institution with such a history, Wycliffe, too, turned out to be a heretic of the first magnitude. On the retirement of Bradwardine, he was appointed Master of Balliol College. Ere long he published a tract, entitled *The Last Age of the Church*, in which he violently attacked the clergy, the simoniacs, and the holders of rich benefices. Then followed his merciless denunciation of the Mendicant Friars, who swarmed over the whole land. These attacks won popular favour, and even the lower clergy enthusiastically approved of them. But it was the treatise known as *The Kingdom of God*, in which he maintained that the King was as truly God's Vicar as the Pope, and that every man had the right of free and direct access to God, that kindled the Church's ire against Wycliffe. This became the most famous of all his works, because it contained his exposition of the nature and functions of society, his theory of Church and State as two distinct institutions, the one dealing exclusively with spiritualities, the other with temporalities, and his scathing exposure of a mediating priesthood which was the foundation upon which the mediæval Church rested. In fact, his conception of the Church was essentially heretical, and his passionate condemnation of the extortion and tyranny exercised by Rome galled the ecclesiastical authorities to the quick. As a matter of fact, the taxes levied by the Pope were five times higher than those levied by the King. Wycliffe's crime consisted in holding up to ridicule the wicked rapacity of the Church, and he was summoned to answer for it before Bishop Courtenay, of London. He appeared before the tribunal, and by his side stood John of Gaunt and the Earl Marshal. There was an enormous concourse of people, but the heretic's trial did not come off. The Bishop and the two noblemen had a quarrel, in which the crowd took part. A fierce riot ensued, in which a priest was killed. A papal bull was issued against Wycliffe, directing the University to condemn and arrest him. He vigorously defended himself, and succeeded in winning the support both of the people and of the Crown. A few months later he appeared at Lambeth Chapel, in answer to the Archbishop's summons; but here, again, no trial took place. An angry throng overawed the prelates in session, and a message from the Court put a stop to the proceedings. Walsingham, the historian, indignantly denounced the cowardice of the frightened judges, saying:—

> They were as reeds shaken by the wind, became soft as oil in their speech, to the discredit of their own dignity and the degradation of the Church. Panic-stricken they were, as men that hear not, as those in whose mouth is no reproof.

Yes, in spirit the Church of the fourteenth century was as intolerant and believed as firmly in persecution as ever; but in England it lacked the requisite courage to be true to itself because the trend of thought and feeling was antagonistic to it. As time went on, Wycliffe's heresies multiplied until they embraced most of the doctrines of the Church as well as its interference in Secular affairs. Strangely enough, even now the Church was afraid to bring him to trial. When Convocation met at Oxford, Wycliffe was called to answer on but one of all the dogmas he so uncompromisingly rejected, and though on the Eucharist his condemnation was a matter of course, yet no punishment was meted out to him. He was allowed to go quietly into retirement at Lutterworth, where he continued his onslaughts upon the Papacy and all its works. England was on his side because it had lost faith in Mother Church. Mother Church hated him with perfect hatred, but was too timid even to insist upon his imprisonment, well knowing that its supremacy in England was nearing its end.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Wittiest Book in the World.

> Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire.
> —*Macaulay.*

THE name of Voltaire has ever been a terror to Christians, and, with the exception of Thomas Paine, none has been more hated, none more reviled. The reason is simple. A very great writer, a master of words, Voltaire attacked Christianity, not in the dry-as-dust fashion of professors writing for a dozen superior folk scattered throughout the world, but with wit and pleasantry which survive the winnowing-fan of time. He made bigots and tyrants appear ridiculous as well as odious, and those who felt the lash of his deadly satire denounced him as a literary Mephistopholes, whose writings all the faithful should avoid as they would a plague.

It is only dull people who associate brilliancy with superficiality, and imagine that, because a man is witty, he must therefore be shallow. "Without it is based on seriousness, said Henri Heine, wit is only a sneeze of the reason. The soundness of Voltaire's judgment was only equalled by his felicity of expression. A book might be written on his anticipation of modern thought. He accepted the view of man's savage origin. He derived the belief in ghosts from dreams, and discerned the magical nature of early religion. He anticipated many of the social and political problems of our time. A pioneer among pioneers, he stated the population question before Malthus, and he cleared the way for modern science.

Voltaire was thoroughly equipped for his work. A perfect artist in 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 genius as historian, poet, essayist, thinker, humourist, tale-teller, letter-writer, and critic. So strong is his appeal to literary men that Macaulay, one of the

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most Catholic of readers and a most acute critic, selected Voltaire's works for his reading on his lengthy sea-voyage to India. A glance at Voltaire's life work proves his unparalleled and untiring industry. Writing *Œdipus* at seventeen, *Irene* at eighty-three, he crowded between these two masterpieces the accomplishment of a Titan.

Among Voltaire's works, *Candide* is the most characteristic. Nowhere has he displayed to such advantage the happiest features of his extraordinary genius. It is not only his masterpiece, but the wittiest book in the world. Frankly, the English translations cannot be said to add to Voltaire's charm for anyone who reads French with ease. In the journey from one language to another, so much of the master's sprightliness and piquancy are lost. For, remember, such translations were often entrusted to publishers' hacks, although those astute tradesmen professed to employ "eminent hands."

In this little masterpiece Voltaire brought out all his batteries at once. He faced the foe with that terrible mockery, that bantering jest, and that deadly levity which few could meet and live. It was occasioned by the news of the awful horrors of the dreadful earthquake at Lisbon, in which the greater part of the city was destroyed, and 40,000 of the inhabitants killed. The news roused Voltaire like the blare of many trumpets. Moved as he always was to reproduce his strongest feelings in his writings he wrote *Candide*. This time Voltaire did not argue; he merely exposed. In the searching fire of his irony the comfortable dogmas of the optimists blackened and died, and the "Sunny Jims" were shown forth the laughing-stock of the nations.

Candide's wit is as facetious to-day as when it was written. It still trips and dances on untiring feet. It reads like the fresh and unflagging work of superabundant youth. Yet Voltaire was actually sixty-four when he wrote it—an age when most men are thinking 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 bad bargain, but one can make the most of it. That is the moral of *Candide*. "What I know," says the hero, "is that we must cultivate our garden." In the last resort be it noted, Voltaire's philosophy was Secularistic. The book is a mass of seeming extravagance with a deep vein of gold beneath. All flows so smoothly, the reader fancies it was lightly written. Yet when he notices how every stroke of wit adds to the effect, how every light touch tells, he sees that only a most consummate genius could thus dissect a philosophy and amuse men in the process.

Of Voltaire's irony, here is a specimen. When Candide was to be punished as a deserter from the Army, we read:—

> He was asked which he would like the best, to be whipped six-and-thirty times through all the regiment, or to receive at once twelve bullets in the brain. He vainly said that human will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other. He was forced to make a choice; he determined, in virtue of that gift of God called liberty, to run the gauntlet six-and-thirty times.

Voltaire has been dead nearly a century and a half, and still his name is a symbol of liberty. Englishmen owe him more than compliments, for he built himself largely on British Freethought, and wrote good English to the last whenever he would. Protestants never forgive him for exposing the myth of the Pentateuch a century before Colenso forced them to recognize it; and Catholics never forgive him for branding their Church with the infamies recorded under the martyr-names of Calas and Sirven. Thomas Carlyle well says: "He gave the death-stab to modern superstition." That horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, shunning the light, is passing away, with all its racks and poison chalices, and foul sleeping-draughts, is passing away without return. It was a most weighty service.

Mimnermus.

Christianity and Cleanliness.

Sir,—Gratefully to acknowledge the benefit which, selfishly I fear, I sought for when I offered to start this discussion, it seemed plain that if we could concentrate on discovering points of agreement under apparent disagreement, we should clear away from the brain some of that fog which Lowell aptly described in speaking of the Germans long before the War. He said the Germans were people "who looked upon fog as an illuminating medium," indicating their habits of cloudy thinking. Your comments, I find, are a help in the arduous and lengthy task of "packing" the clouds away of which we all have a wisp or two in our craniums.

Before passing on from the subject with which we started, and which, of course, we must not try to exhaust, I will just note the points where I fancy some mistiness broods. You question the relevancy of my bringing in the last 150 years on the ground that you never implied there was a *necessary* connection between Christianity and dirt. Of course, I am very glad to be told this; but let us note carefully whither your admission leads us. Granting that a great revival of Christianity was coincident with a revival of cleanliness, you suggest that the change in the habits of Christians may "well be attributed to the influence of those forces that have brought a modification of Christian teaching in other directions," that is to say, external forces, so that no credit for the result is due to Christianity or to Christian teaching. (I should agree that the forces alluded to are generally thought of as external to Christianity, and, perhaps, antagonistic to it; but if they produced so fair a result as a revival of cleanliness, I should say they were the action or message of God himself, whether Christian or not. But this is neither here nor there for the present). Well, ought we not to apply the same principle to the introduction of dirt? Is it fair to attribute a great cleansing of Christian teaching to the power of external forces, so as to debar Christians from all credit or share in the same, and, in the same breath, to assume that the defilement of Christian teaching in earlier centuries *was* due, not to external forces, but to the perversity of Christians themselves. Is this not to fix a responsibility upon them for their wrongheadedness, but to deny it them in respect of their sound thinking? I think we should hold them equally responsible, or irresponsible, for the degraded asceticism of Stylites, or the lofty teaching about the human body given by Wesley, Pusey, Church, or a thousand others. Notice, too, it is especially difficult to acquiesce in your diagnosis when we reflect that if external forces were strong enough to do the healing they were surely strong enough to accomplish the degrading of the Christians. Or, conversely, if Christianity was so receptive to outside influences that it worked its own cleansing—a most difficult and painful process always—how can we suppose that the same receptivity did not account for the introduction of the poison? That, in other words, the poison was alien—not home-grown.

But, if we don't take care, we shall plunge our four feet into the noose which Clio loves to spread about her beguiling pastures. We could dispute eternally about what happened long ago. I come, then, to the question you put in these words: "In a society in which Christianity is only one of many factors, what part has it

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played in social life and teaching?" Because this question rests upon a certain assumption to the discussion of which we have been more than once drawing near. The assumption is that if you can prove that certain doctrines seem to have been so preached as to cause mischief you may safely conclude the doctrines are false. (I put in the word "seem" because we must be content with a balance of probabilities. The subject is too great to admit of mathematical evidence).

Perhaps you would demur to the words "safely conclude" and "false," and would prefer "there must be a strong presumption that there is a poisonous or erroneous mixture in those doctrines." That will do equally well. You mean, obviously, that Christianity is to be condemned, and that the above is a main and important reason.

I grant at once that it is exceedingly difficult for any one of us not to condemn a religion if its votaries preach in its name doctrines which subsequently seem to spread discomfort about the earth's surface. So difficult, indeed, that we all of us cease to struggle against the tendency. But if we are right in this, we shall be equally right in applying the same test to other great doctrines not specifically religious. I have already given Radicalism as an instance. Take Patriotism too. When purely taught and faithfully practised, what more beautiful? But lo! along with its loftiest manifestations there is the hideous counterfeit. I don't mean the rascally profiteer, but the man who goes about saying we are fighting for international honour and brotherhood and unselfishness, and so forth, and yet will not even discuss the project of a League of Nations for fear Great Britain will find herself called upon to renounce her exclusive hold on some choice piece of territory. That is his one article of political faith, and all his professions are rank humbug. But that makes no difference to our belief in true Patriotism. Why, then, do we apply a much severer test to religion?

I think I know the reason. It is contained in the old maxim, *Corruptio optimi pessima*. That is to say, as true religion is a higher thing than even pure Patriotism, or disinterested Radicalism, so its degraded counterfeit is the most baneful and abominable thing that can anywhere be hit upon by any pilgrim between the cradle and the grave; and when one of us does hit upon it, he naturally says, "Away with it! Away with everything that helped to give this monstrous thing birth!" That, I take it, is your attitude towards religion generally; and I feel a cordial sympathy with it because I have spent years of my life in acting upon this very principle: in believing in denunciation and abolition and purging, and the like. That belief it was that attracted me to your newspaper in the first instance.

But now I see reason to pause and reflect. Our attitude towards Patriotism and Radicalism is surely sound and sensible. If we justify ourselves for taking a wholly different attitude towards religion by saying—as I suppose we must say—that religion, however pure, is such a mean thing that it must be put out of court in comparison with the others, we are certainly begging the question. We are fairly embarked on a discussion which now comes to this: What is Religion; and, in particular, Christianity? Does it merit more halfpence than kicks, or *vice versa?*

Let me say in passing that technically I beg the question above; but I am sure that it does not vitiate the argument, being only on a side issue, and that we are fairly brought to the point indicated. But before going further I must wait to see if you agree with my statement of our inconsistency of mind, and whether you can produce any better defence of it than I have suggested.

E. Lyttelton.

On Cessnock Banks.

July, 1918.

The Cessnock is one of Ayrshires' classic streams, and characteristic of them all. It was the scene, as per above title, of one of the less known songs of Burns, and concerning, of course, a maid, and one who had

.....twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

The spirit of Burns breathes in those sylvan river valleys, for is it not the spirit of Nature itself? This spirit is perhaps not so evident in the men of Ayrshire—least of all, perhaps in those pillars of its county State, Church, and Society; the backbone, indeed, but not the *soul*, of Ayr. Oh, no; not yet. Some extreme specimens of this ruling class are quite transcendently, pompously, and piously materialistic; full of satisfied superiority, invulnerable stupidity, and tranquil, imbecile egotism. The writer has sketched them from life, and on the spot and elsewhere, and knows the genus is not peculiar to the Land of Burns. Behold, is it not all written in the (still unread) chronicles of heredity and environment, and resulting psychology!

On that other 22nd of July (1796), when "the sufferings of this great but ill-fated genius were terminated, and a life was closed in which virtue and passion had been at perpetual variance," it would seem as though the departing poet had wrapped the mournful mantle of his muse about him, leaving no shred or tassel for succeeding shoulders, but giving his soul to Nature only, which, in the requiem of the wind in the woods and the lullaby of the streams, repeats the eternal music of his name.

Some such thought occurred to the writer as he rested lately on "Cessnock Banks," which he had made a turning-point in what was to have been a more extended pilgrimage. But it was enough. There was the usual overhanging sandstone cliff festooned with tree and tendril, grass and flower, and fern, and ivy, all creeping things, and cunningly ensconced and clinging there, little nameless tufts and weeds, the "hanging gardens" of Fairyland! The trees met overhead and canopied the dappled amber pool and whispering pebbled strand.

The roadway (Kilmarnock-Mauchline) intersects the glen, and crosses on one single lofty arch embowered in clustering sprays. From the vantage ground of the bridge a striking view is obtained of the nearer grove, where rising among some more plebeian timber there towers a noble sycamore, and, beyond that, as in some inner sacred precinct, are seen the columnar tops of two rival chestnuts, each stirring gently in a stately way, or grandly, solemnly, augustly, still—the very majesty of the woods, the aristocracy of the arboreal world, a rich and regal, soothing, satisfying scene.

Much water has flowed under the bridge in that hundred years or so. The "youthful ash" will be an "aged tree." It is a pleasing reverie and a worshipful Mecca. It empties the pew and fills the mind. Here one forgets heaven, and remembers only this dear, delightful, beautiful, old earth. One bestrides the wheel again, and moves reluctantly away, and casts a longing lingering look behind!

A. Millar.

Acid Drops.

Some people are evidently under the impression that if a thing is said often enough it will come true. Or, perhaps, it is evidence of the conviction that repetition will lead many to believe it is true. At any rate, here is Dr. Clifford still talking about the "great religious revolution" that is taking place. We believe it to be true that little short of a revolution is taking place in connection with religion, but we are certain that there is a wide difference in what we and Dr. Clifford mean by the phrase. He means that people are getting more religious, and we are quite certain that they are markedly less so. During the past four years we have had hundreds of letters from men who have become definitely non-religious since the outbreak of War. How many could be shown to have changed the other way about since August, 1914?

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Dr. Clifford says: "The conviction is deepening in mens' minds that the ultimate victory in this War will come to the nation or nations that have the highest and truest moral, and are lifted to a higher phase of being." But this is mere words. What connection has it with religion, as Dr. Clifford understands it? All he *says* is that character will tell in the long run. And that is the message of Secularism. What he implies is that the nation will win which believes most fervently in God and a future life, and the numerous fables that go to make up Christianity. And people have not lost sight of the fact that it is nations saturated with these beliefs which have created conditions that have brought about the present catastrophe.

Priests may coo like doves, but they often display the wisdom of serpents. Father Bernard Vaughan, in a recent sermon, declared that "the root-principle of Christianity is the worth and dignity of man." Indeed! Priests like nothing better than to see men on their knees, confessing themselves miserable sinners.

Oh, those journalists! Referring to "Remembrance Day," a London daily paper declared that "the whole British Army in France has to-day joined in prayer and thanksgiving..... these services were attended by enormous congregations." Hush! Not a word about compulsory Church Parades.

The pious Town Council of Southend-on-Sea has introduced hymns in the Sunday concerts given by the military bands. The public still have to pay the *Amusement* tax.

A verdict of "felo-de-se" was returned at Manchester on the Rev. Bramwell Brown, a Wesleyan minister, of Workington, who cut his throat. According to the clergy, only Athelsts take their own lives.

The President of the Wesleyan Conference declares that "Grip in the pulpit and glow in the Church were the best preparations for the future." In the past Wesleyans laid more stress on the "grip" of Satan and the "glow" of Hades.

The other Sunday evening a lecture was delivered on "The Angels: their Past, Present, and Future." Their mission in each of those three periods was also most minutely and graphically described. And, strange to say, the lecturer was not an angel, but a mere man who had never seen an angel.

The English Government's neglect of scientific education is notorious, and the *Christian World* puts its fingers on one of the causes of this when it says that our "sectarianized education" has been "a costly luxury." It is also the truth that "a large proportion of our rate-supported schools have been conducted in the interests of Churches rather than in the interests of national education." The *Christian World* might have added "chapels" to Churches, for when it comes to education they are all vitally concerned with the same thing. It was the Nonconformists who "sold the pass" in 1870, and they have shown small tendency since to better their record. The surprising thing is that the *C. W.* does not see that the only way to end this "costly luxury" is for the State to confine itself to the business of Secular Education and leave religion to those who want it.

A bold (and expensive) advertisement in a daily paper asks for 20,000 musical instruments which are needed by 2,000 Young Men's Christian Association huts as a means of entertainment. In earlier days Christians were concerned with the question of harps—in the next world.

The ancients had a wise saying that when two augurs met they could not avoid smiling. Present-day parsons do not often smile, but they understand one another. Speaking on the Sunday recreation question, Father Adderley said that many Christians objected to anything other than going to Church or Chapel. A palpable hit!

The much-trumpeted revival of religion is still conspicuous by its absence. Perhaps the following information may comfort the faithful in their distress. "For the first time," says the *Daily Chronicle*, "there was at noon a period of silent meditation and prayer for the victories of the Allies by members of the Stock Exchange."

Why cannot the divines leave the War alone? Preaching at St. Paul's recently, Canon Newbolt admitted that "if war is in itself immoral and wrong, God could never have ordered it, as he did in the Old Testament." Consequently, war is not in itself immoral and wrong, and it is certain that God has ordered the present War in order to punish the rapacity of Germany. It is a judicial catastrophy, "and God is obliged to allow it." Curiously enough, however, God is not *directly* in it, but stands on one side and lets his "outraged laws avenge themselves." What ineffable piffle!

If Canon Newbolt's teaching is true, the Germans were justified in entering upon this War, as fully justified as the Israelites were in their war of extermination against the Canaanites. Jehovah acted as Israel's avowed Ally in wars of sheer aggression, and the Kaiser claims him as his avowed Ally to-day. The German Emperor is as firm a believer in the inspiration of the Old Testament as the Canon; and judging by analogies, the Lord is even more likely to be on the German side than on ours. Thus, on the reverend gentleman's own showing, his teaching on God's relation to the War, lands him in an awkward quandary, from which there is absolutely no escape except by way of Atheism.

At the meeting of the Commission of the U.F. Church of Scotland in Edinburgh last week, exception was taken to the provision in the Education Bill whereby religious bodies were to have power to call upon the Education Authority to put down new schools when they had a certain number of children belonging to their Church. The Rev. Geo. Smart, Dundee, said they should move for the deletion of this obnoxious clause, which would put a most dangerous weapon into the hands of any religious denomination. The Rev. Dr. Jordan, Greenock, said the way out of all this was that the State should take charge of secular teaching, letting the Churches manage the religious teaching. The other members agreed that this was the proper solution. This has been the contention of Freethinkers for years and years. Only another instance of the old saying, "When rogues fall out, honest men get their due."

The Churchman's Union sends out a four-page leaflet, which contains a curious illustration of the mentality of the modern Christian. Defining the attitude of the Union in relation to Christian beliefs, it says: "We labour to secure such modifications as may save them from openly contradicting the knowledge of our time; and meanwhile we ask for such liberty of interpretation as may save a large part of the educated laity from being alienated from the Church." In plain English, the Churchman's Union is willing to surrender anything that cannot be retained, and to favour any kind of interpretation of Christianity that will keep people within the Church. The undisguised opportunism of the confession is delightful.

A new book bears the alluring title, *God and Tommy Atkins*. We wonder if the author blushed to make the association.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been preaching on "Patience," basing his remarks on the text, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Unfortunately, the clergy themselves are non-starters in this race.

Even the clergy are beginning to have doubts as to the robust "Atheism" of the Germans. The Rev. R. F. Horton, writing in the *Daily News*, declares: "We know that there are German Christians (the manfesto of the Lutheran pastors shows it) who long, as we do, to set the kingdom of God, with its mercy and love and righteousness, above merely national claims."

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To Correspondents.

P. HOWELL.—Sorry we have not space to spare for what we are sure would prove a long discussion on the social and philosophical aspects of Anarchism.

DOZO.—Thanks for suggestion. We are already trying to organize something on the lines you suggest; so you will see we consider your plan a good one.

GLENDALOUGH.—We cannot say how many readers we have in Ireland. All do not order direct from the office. Have noted your suggestions. Thanks.

"SAPPER."—Pleased you found the parcel of literature so useful. If we could only establish a few literature depots in France, we should "see things."

T. MORLEY.—We are not surprised that the two new subscribers you gained recently feel you have done them a service. Most of our new readers feel that way.

J. E. WITHIFORD.—Sorry you did not receive the parcel of literature sent. It must have been lost—perhaps owing to enemy playfulness. We are sending on another parcel.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: H. Reeve, 4s.

E. WYATT (Glasgow).—Being attached to other movements is no disqualification for joining the N. S. S. If too busy for active work, membership encourages those already engaged in propaganda. Glad to know that yourself and wife enjoy the *Freethinker* so much.

C. W. MARSHALL.—Pleased to know that your friend, to whom you are sending the *Freethinker*, finds it "so refreshing after the tosh of the newspapers," and that he has made quite a lot of converts "among his comrades." Thanks for your help.

L. ANSELL.—We think you will be quite safe in selling the literature in the way indicated.

A. WILDMAN.—Very pleased to learn of the largely-increased circulation of the *Freethinker* you have secured in Southampton.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We do not think that a paper ever had more loyal supporters than has the *Freethinker*. When the Government issued its "no return" order we wondered how it would affect our circulation. We are glad to say we are actually printing and selling more copies of the *Freethinker* without taking back unsold copies, than we printed while they were sent out on sale or return. For this result we have to thank our friends all over the country, and we do thank them most heartily. The fight to keep our head above water grows increasingly hard, but it is made the easier by such splendid support as we are getting. We are doing our best to deserve it, and *when* the War is over we hope the cause will benefit by the efforts that are now being made.

We have several times commented on the good results springing from our free parcels of literature sent out to the troops. Here is the latest to hand. A parcel was sent to a soldier in France who was evidently unacquainted with our publications. The next we heard of this parcel was a letter from the soldier's father ordering a selection of pamphlets which his son had read with so much interest, and had duly recommended for home consumption. A case of casting one's bread upon the waters.

Common Sense is one of the most useful of present-day weekly papers, but that does not protect it against the pressure of present-day price of paper. Hitherto it has received the blow by reducing its size to one-half, while retaining its original price of one penny. It now announces that from August 31 it is to be twopence. What things will be like if the War continues for another two or three years it is fearsome to contemplate. Perhaps we shall be last again at the stage of the four-page sixpenny paper.

The London County Council is not playing quite fair over the literature permits. The permit for selling the *Freethinker* was framed very ambiguously, and now Mr. F. Wood and Miss E. M. Vance have been summoned for selling the *Freethinker* contrary to the regulations. The matter is under discussion, and we trust that the action of the L. C. C. will be found to be based upon a misunderstanding that admits of being easily removed.

The Committee elected at the recent Bridgend meeting of Freethinkers to organize the work in South Wales has arranged for a meeting at the Wyndham Hotel, Bridgend, on Saturday, August 24, at 6 o'clock. We trust there will be a good attendance, and that the meeting will bear good results.

Pontypridd Freethinkers are trying to arrange a visit from Mr. Cohen at an early date, and a meeting of supporters is to be held at the Washington Hotel to-day (August 25), at 6 p.m. We hope that all interested will not fail to attend. The district is a promising one, and it is regrettable to see good soil lying waste for want of a little attention.

We are asked to announce that the *Freethinker* is regularly on sale, with our other publications, at the Herald League, 94 George Street, Glasgow. Local friends will please note.

Upton Sinclair's Magazine is a "live" production, and from the August issue we take the following description of the religious condition of America:—

> We have a continent, with a hundred million half-educated people, materially prosperous, but spiritually starving; so any man who possesses personality, who looks in any way strange and impressive, or has hunted up old books in a library, and can pronounce mysterious words in a thrilling voice—such a man can find followers. Anybody can do it with any doctrines from anywhere, Persia or Patagonia, Pekin or Pompei. I would be willing to wager that if I cared to come out and announce that I had had a visit from God last night, and to devote such literary and emotional power as I possess to communicating a new revelation, I could have a temple, a university, and a million dollars within five years at the outside. And if at the end of the five years I were to announce that I had played a joke on the world, some one of my followers would convince the faithful that I had been an agent of God without knowing it, and that the leadership had now been turned over to him.

Unfortunately, this description applies to places other than America—Great Britain, for instance.

The Secular Society, Limited, will be issuing shortly a pamphlet by Mr. T. F. Palmer on *The Story of the Evolution of Life*. Our readers will, we are sure, be glad to have something of Mr. Palmer's in a more permanent form than a *Freethinker* article.

An examination of the actual facts at once destroys in the most merciless manner all belief in a preordained harmony of the inner and external world.—*Helmholtz.*

There is not a more singular character in the world than that of a thinking man.—*Fitzosborne.*

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A Search for the Soul.

IX.

(*Continued from p. 437.*)

IN his essay on *Science and Man*, Professor Tyndall presents us with a little problem having to do with what some people call the Soul. This reads as follows:—

> A merchant sits complacently in his easy chair, not knowing whether he is sleeping or waking.....A servant enters the room with a telegram, bearing the words, "Antwerp,—Jonas and Co. have failed." Up starts the merchant, wide awake. "Tell James to harness the horses." The servant flies. The merchant descends to the counting-house, dictates letters, and forwards dispatches. He jumps into his carriage, the horses snort, and the driver is soon at the Bank, on the Bourse, and among his commercial friends. Before an hour has elapsed he is again at home, where he throws himself once more into his easy chair with a deep-drawn sigh: "Thank God, I am protected against the worst!"
>
> This complex mass of action, emotional, intellectual, and mechanical, is evoked by the impact upon the retina of the waves of light coming from a few pencil marks on a bit of paper. We have terror, hope, sensation, calculation, possible ruin, and victory compressed into a moment. What caused the merchant to spring out of his chair? The contraction of his muscles. What made his muscles contract? An impulse of the nerves, which lifted the proper latch, and liberated the muscular power. Whence this impulse? From the centre of the nervous system. *But how did it originate there?* This is the critical question, to which some will reply that it had its origin in the human soul.....To this question some may ask: "Do not the phenomena point to the existence of a self within the self, which acts through the body as through a skilfully constructed instrument?"

To this last question the answer is, "No; the phenomena do *not* point to the existence of a self within the self as the originator of the action here described." When we come to consider that we see with the brain and hear with the brain, and that when we are hurt, it is the brain that feels it, there is no need to assume the existence of an immaterial soul to account for the phenomena, more especially as this supposed soul, having no organs or substance, could not see, hear, or feel anything. Hence, since only the cerebral organ sees, feels, and thinks, it is that organ, and no other, which produced all the phenomena. It was the merchant's brain itself (in the part called the "visual sensorium") that read the telegram, and caused (through the motor nerves) his muscles to contract as he sprang to his feet. It was his instantaneous reflection of his pecuniary position (in a higher brain centre) that caused him to give the order "harnass the horses"; and it was further reflection (in that centre) which caused him to rapidly take the necessary steps to render his position less disastrous. There was thus no need, nor even any place, for an immaterial soul.

Professor Tyndall's solution of this problem cannot be called wholly satisfactory. He admits, as we have already seen, that he does not know *why* the molecular activities of the brain should give rise to thought, and apparently for that reason he will not say that such is undoubtedly the case. In summing up, he says:—

> From the side of science all that we are warranted in stating is that the terror, hope, sensation, and calculation of the merchant are physical phenomena produced by, or *associated with*, the molecular processes set up by waves of light in a previously prepared brain.

As will be perceived, the words I have italicized considerably modify the statement. Again, in his *Belfast Address* that professor says:—

> We can trace the development of a nervous system, and correlate with it the *parallel phenomena* of sensation and thought. But we try to soar in a vacuum the moment we seek to comprehend the connection between them.

Thus, though he knew perfectly well that it is the brain (and the energy associated with it) which generate thought, he did not wish to admit the fact until he had discovered the "why." When, however, he comes to the suggestion that the thinker in this problem *may* be the soul, he says, further on: "Try to mentally visualize this soul as *an entity distinct from the body*, and the difficulty immediately appears." Just so; but he should have said "difficulties," for they are many. As a matter of fact, any one who tries to "mentally visualize" this supposed soul—that is, who endeavours to conceive it as an immaterial something in the human organism that exists apart from the brain, and possesses the power to think—will find all kinds of difficulties appear. But believers in immortality never do this; they accept the idea without thinking—like a number of baa-lambs. We thus arrive once more at the rational question: "What is the soul?" A dualistic answer to this query is the following which I take from Sir Oliver Lodge's *Man and the Universe*:—

> By the soul, then, we must mean that part of man which is dissociated from the body at death; that part which distinguishes a living man from a corpse (p. 72).

Whether this statement be correct or not, it is at least something definite. Five minutes before death the body possessed a soul; five minutes after that event the body was soul-less, though none of the relatives present at the death saw anything leave the body. Assuming, then, the existence of a "soul," that so-called "entity" must be invisible. Next, I have to ask: What is it which distinguishes a living man from a corpse? Well, there are many things. All the organs after death are still in the body, but they have ceased to function; the blood which maintained the body in life is still in the arteries, veins, and capillaries, but it has ceased to circulate, and is stagnant; the animal heat, produced by the combustion of food and exercise of the limbs, is now gone; all feeling is likewise gone; finally, all the energy that formerly animated the body and moved the muscles has departed, and has probably been transformed into some other force. In the first stem-cell, and all the other cells from which the body was formed, there was energy as well as matter; and it was this energy, associated with an hereditary influence, which put all the cells or particles of matter in their proper places in the body; it was this energy which caused the various organs of the body to carry on their respective functions, and it was the highest development of this energy, in association with the molecules of the brain, which produced thought. What, now, could a supposed "soul" take from the body? In the first place, it could take away nothing material; it can, therefore, possess no material organ of any kind. We have no evidence whatever of the existence of "spiritual bodies." Paul's idea was that the corpse would be raised from the dead and be given a new body; but this will never take place. There can be no such "spiritual body." It is quite certain that the supposed invisible and immaterial entity called the soul can take nothing from the body—not even energy—for the latter force works through matter and is found only in association with matter; it could not unite with a nonentity. A discarnate soul is a purely imaginary being, and, notwithstanding what Dualists say to the contrary, it can have neither form, substance, nor even existence.

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The modern idea of a disembodied spirit would seem to have originated by comparing the living man with the corpse. Those acquainted with the former could remember his kindly disposition, his elevation of mind, his animated conversation, his intellect, good temper, ardour, enterprise, and high spirits. All these attributes are gone. Assuming that man is of a dual nature, as taught by the Church, then all those qualities are said to survive and be vested in, or exercised by, his soul or spirit to the end of time. But, as a simple matter of fact, all these activities or attributes were dependent solely upon his material body when all the organs were exercising their functions, more especially those of the brain and nerves. Without a human organism there could be none of the manifestations here named; hence, an immaterial and invisible soul could carry away from the organism, whether alive or dead, nothing whatever. Of this fact there cannot be the smallest shadow of a doubt.

(To be continued.) Abracadabra.

Religious Instruction in Scotland.

The subject of Religious Instruction in the Public Schools of Scotland is again being forced on the people. Taking advantage of the preoccupation of the community in more serious matters, the two principal Churches have combined in getting the subject brought forward, and have been successful in getting the support of several of the Parliamentary representatives.

In the debate on the Scottish Education Bill in Grand Committee, an amendment was moved by Mr. Gulland, making it obligatory to provide religious instruction in all public schools, and to appoint committees to supervise the teaching of the same. The amendment was defeated by a large majority; but not content with this decision, it is now announced that on the Report Stage of the Bill, which is to be taken on October 16, Mr. Whyte and Mr. Gulland suggest the following new clause:—

> Subject to the provisions of Section 68 (Conscience Clause) of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, it shall be the duty of every Education Authority to provide religious instruction in all public schools, primary, intermediate, and secondary, and every Education Authority shall decide as to the time to be given either at the beginning or end of school hours.

When moving the amendment, Mr. Gulland said it was the desire of the Scottish people that religious instruction should be given in school, and, as proof of this contention, said that out of 100,000 parents in Glasgow, only about 100 took advantage of the Conscience Clause. Does Mr. Gulland think this is a fair conclusion? How many more would take advantage of the Clause were it not for the fact that the parents do not wish their children to be victimized? Would Mr. Gulland and his supporters accept the alternative method of learning the desire of the parents, whereby religious instruction would only be given to the children of those parents who expressly stated in writing that religious instruction should be given? This, I think, would be the sure way of knowing the wish of the parents.

Mr. McLeod, Glasgow Central, in supporting the amendment, said "It was absolutely true that there was now an intense religious feeling, he might say religious fervour, throughout Scotland." I wonder if Mr. McLeod could produce any evidence in proof of such a statement. Only the other day a correspondent to a large daily newspaper, signing himself "A Retired Minister," was lamenting the fact that the cleavage between the Church and the working-classes has greatly increased, though all have now got a much better education. He dates this cleavage back to 1872, when Scottish education was taken out of the hands of the Church and placed under the control of the publicly elected School Boards. His contention is that the Protestants made a great mistake in not following the example of the Roman Catholics, who have kept a firm hold of the children; and, as a result, have kept a hold on the parents. At nearly every Presbytery meeting comments are made on the decreased attendance at Sunday-school, and also on the decreased number of baptisms. It would be interesting if Mr. McLeod could let us have the statistics of divorce cases and bigamous marriages, say, for the last ten years, so that we could know whether there has been an increase or decline. Does the religious fervour only exist in the imagination of Mr. McLeod? If the Churches desire to impart religious instruction to their children, why cannot their ministers do so on Saturdays, or any other days, in their own churches, outside day-school hours? Are they afraid the attendances would not be up to the mark? Of late we have heard a great deal about the "hidden hand." This hand seems to have absolute control over the daily press. How many newspapers in the country will publish letters of an anti-religious nature? I know several have been sent by Freethinkers to the leading dailies in Scotland, giving their views on Secular Education in connection with the Scottish Education Bill, but none have appeared; and yet it is our boast that we have a free press.

Now is the time for Freethinkers to let their Parliamentary representatives know their desires regarding religious instruction, and it behoves all Secular Societies and others interested in the matter, to let their voices be heard between now and the middle of October, when no doubt the Churches will do their utmost to get the amendment in question added to the Bill. Freethinker.

The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

II.

(Continued from p. 442.)

The enormous quantity of energy potentially present in coal is chiefly derived from its carbon constituents. Carbon forms the most abundant element in plants, and this invaluable substance was supplied to the vegetation in Carboniferous Times by the carbon-dioxide contained in the atmosphere in that remote age. Carbon-dioxide, commonly called carbonic acid gas, is a combination of oxygen and carbon, and plants possess the power, by means of their chlorophyll, or green colouring matter, when acted upon by the sun's energy, of separating the oxygen from the carbon. The first of these elements they restore to the atmosphere, while they store the carbon in their tissues. All the light and heat we evolve from the combustion of coal is, in truth, transformed sunlight that has lain imprisoned in our planet's coal deposits for prolonged periods of time.

Naturally, the chemical constituents of coal and wood differ. Wood fibre consists of cellulose, a substance containing fifty per cent. carbon, while the bulk of the remaining half of the compound is composed of hydrogen and oxygen. In coal, the proportion of carbon is much greater, because in the progress of the fossilization of the vegetation, hydrogen and oxygen extensively escaped, thus leading to the increased percentage of carbon.

The evolutionary stages of coal were:—First, solid vegetable matter; then peat, then lignite or brown coal, onwards through the ascending varieties of black coal, until we reach the furthest development of carbonization in graphite. For, while woody fibre contains fifty per cent. of carbon and forty-four per cent. of oxygen, there is a gradual increase in the proportion of carbon and

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decrease in that of oxygen as we ascend the series from wood, through peat and lignite, upwards to Staffordshire, Newcastle, Wigan, and Welsh steam-coal (anthracite), which latter contains 90.1 per cent. of carbon and 2.5 only of oxygen, until we crown the series with graphite, which is practically pure carbon (94 to 99.5 per cent.). The residue is made up of ash, so that graphite is quite destitute of oxygen.

It is estimated that from one ton of Newcastle coal there is obtained—

> about 10,000 cubic feet of gas, 110 to 120 lbs. of tar, 20 to 25 gallons of watery liquor, and about 1,500 lbs. of coke. It has been estimated also (1905) that we are now distilling coal at the rate of about 10 million tons per annum, so that there is annually produced 100,000 million cubic feet of gas, and about 500,000 tons of tar, besides proportionate quantities of the other products. The great metropolitan companies alone are consuming nearly 3 million tons annually for the production of gas, a consumption corresponding to about 6,000 cubic feet per head of population (*Coal; and What We Get from It*, pp. 45, 46).

In addition to this, vast quantities of coal are consumed for household and manufacturing purposes in the Metropolis. Yet a little more than a century ago the total annual consumption in London was well under one million tons.

An important bye-product of the gas industry is coal tar. This constitutes the raw material of colouring substances, various oils, perfumes, and other commodities. The history of the far-reaching coal tar colour industry, built up as it was out of the refuse of the gas-works, has been aptly described as "a romance of dirt." In Germany, the manufacture of aniline dyes had attained titanic proportions prior to the War. Although the able English chemist, Sir William Perkin, furnished the firm foundations of this thriving industry, it was contemptuously treated in the land of its birth, despite the significant circumstance that in England coal was first distilled on a commercial scale for gas-making, and that our country introduced the earliest coal tar colouring materials into the industrial world. England is still the premier coal tar centre, and appears to produce larger supplies than all other European States combined. Yet the leadership, nay, almost the monopoly, in colour manufacture has long since departed from us.

Immense supplies of coke are produced by the gas companies, and this residue is of vast industrial importance. Although the combustion of coke evolves powerful fumes, this carbonaceous substance has long been in request where an inexpensive smokeless fuel is required. It is largely employed in the furnaces of engines, and is extensively utilized in the smelting of iron.

When coal was converted into coke for industrial and domestic purposes, the tar and other derivatives produced were permitted in Britain, until quite recently, to run to waste. Some idea of this economic loss may be gathered from the fact that more than twelve million tons of coal are annually converted into this form of fuel.

The majority of people suppose that the several derivatives of coal are already present in the substance itself and merely await chemical separation. Certainly a small amount of moisture and a little gas reside in raw coal, but these constituents are practically inappreciable in comparison with the evolution of gas and water during the manufacture of gas. Again, a minute amount of tar is present in some few forms of coal; but, as a rule, tar is entirely absent in coal utilized at the gas works. Usually, tar is no more a constituent of coal than coke is. As a leading chemist states:—

> All these products are formed *by the chemical decomposition of the coal* under the influence of heat, and their nature and quantity can be made to vary within certain limits by modifying the temperature of distillation.

Among the numerous compounds distilled from coal some may be immediately applied to industrial use, but the majority of these isolated substances form merely the crude materials for the elaboration of various other utilities which include medicines and pigmentary preparations. Obviously these and other completed commodities cannot be regarded as tar constituents any more than tar can be considered as an ingredient of the coal. As a matter of fact these products are evolved from the tar constituents by chemical agency. Meldola justly contends that these finished products—

> bear much about the same relationship to their parent substances that a steam engine bears to the iron ore out of which its metallic parts are primarily constructed. Just as the mechanical skill of the engineer enables him to construct an engine out of the raw material iron which is extracted from its ore and converted into steel by chemical processes, so the skill of the chemist enables him to build up complex colouring matters out of the raw materials furnished by tar, which is obtained from coal by chemical decomposition.

Coal is now known to exist in Kent, and the seams may prove far more valuable than is at present supposed. Probably other hitherto unsuspected coal deposits lie beneath our feet. The coal measures of the British Isles comprise about one-tenth of their land surfaces. The richest coal regions are those of South Wales, and our Northern and Midland counties. The available coal reserves reposing in deposits of Carboniferous Age and extending to a depth of 4,000 feet have been estimated to amount to ninety thousand million tons, while, in addition to these, we possess a considerable supply of coal at workable distances in the later Permian deposits of the northern and central districts of England. If these beds are added to those of Carboniferous date the entire available reserves of the United Kingdom have been figured at the prodigious total of about 146,454 million tons. We raise over two hundred million tons per year from the pits. Before the War about 15 per cent. was exported, while nearly one-third was used for iron smelting, and a mere modicum of the huge total for gas production. The remainder is utilized by the railways, shipping, our many manufactures, the domestic hearth, and our minor industries.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Notes From Ireland.

When the Reformers began their partial weeding of dogmatism they threw open the portals of existence and aggression to the most brainy, gifted, and marvellous men the world has ever seen—they opened the door to *us*. We immediately commenced to spray everything with Reason whose inquisitional eyes soon completed the work of the pruning knife. The majority of the countries, however, that then remained untouched by Reform still remain untouched by any kind of sanity or moderation. In such countries the religious authorities "go the whole hog"; they fully realize that a man without reason is no man at all—a nonentity. Accordingly, in order to make people believe what they say, they choke the discerning faculty. To secure this they give out as true the most absurd and useless happenings. And they succeed. The happenings are invariably believed provided they are quite incredible. The latest pamphlet of the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland is the *Venerable Oliver Plunket*. In contains twenty-four pages in a good cover, price one penny. Call that nothing for War time! Well, Plunket was a Primate of Ireland who died in the year 1681 as a result of an axe having fallen on his neck,

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and so having severed his body from his head. Now, mark you well, Plunket was a wonder when he was alive, but, now when he is dead, he is a living miracle. His martyrdom occurred well over two centuries ago, yet the hair has not yet disappeared from his pate, while his countenance is still illuminated with a look of extreme peace. But the most wonderful thing about the dead Primate's skull is, and we have a Cardinal's word for it, that, in September, 1893, it gave forth—no, no, not a stink—a fragrant odour.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will soon cease to figure as an undivided third of the Holy Trinity; he is being fast ousted from the right-hand side of the heavenly bench, and being relegated to the golden dust of the celestial pavement, where he is already serving as a scarlet footrest to his holy mother, of immaculate virginity, whose five-toed feet are victoriously marking time upon the nape of his neck as the palpitating harmony, "Ave Maria," salutes her auricular sense. In fact, this woman seems in a good way to usurp the sceptre of Good God Almighty himself, and betrays an inclination to brandish that regal insignia with a grace and gentleness not even exceeded by her son's most illustrious vicar, Pope Innocent III. She is drawing the mantle of majesty about her frail shoulders, and stifles the expostulations of the deposed with the millions of prayers addressed *to her*, which prayers must e'er this have attained to the regularity of a trade wind and the ferocity of a cyclone in the vaults of heaven. The current issue of the *Little Flower*, for instance, contains the following from a man's pen:—

O Rose! O Lily! O Lady full of grace!
O Mary, Mother! O Mary, Maid! hear thou,
Glory of Angels! Pity and turn thy face,
Praying thy Son, even as we pray thee now,
For thy dear sake thine Ireland free:
Pray thou, thy little child!
Ah! who can help her but in mercy He?
Pray thou, pray thou, for Ireland, Mother mild!
O Heart of Mary! pray the Sacred Heart:
His at Whose word depart
Sorrows and Hates, home to Hell's waste and wild.

Talk about the unintelligibility and mysticism of Mallarme, Verlaine, Maeterlinck, and the rest of the French school! their most nonsensical utterance is wisdom in comparison with this sturdy piece of nothingness. Even the most unbridled poetic license, however, is subject to some kind of influential criticism—a scepticism that remembers the long hairs and limited mentality of genius; a poet's effusion is always without consequential tragedy. Can as much be said of this thousand-times-worse piffle? Alas, no! And here we have the horrible tragedy of authority. Many and many a poor aching soul will offer up this prayer poem; for is it not recommended by the One True Church? But no one will wonder at the signlessness of the Supreme. The Catholic Church can publish what it likes in this poor little isle; and it publishes what it likes with a vengeance. It is without critic, censor, judge—a law unto itself. All our literature is saturated with superstitious rot, yet no local voice is heard in protest. It is high time the standard of rebellion was raised against this galling yoke, and we Freethinkers are the only ones to do it. But—but how many are we? A thousand, outside Ulster? Fifty in Dublin? Alas, not more! We are voiceless. What can we do? What—oh, what?

The Catholic Church is still sweating drops of blood lest its young men be forced to join what Bernard Shaw calls "that vulgar pageant of incompetent schoolboy gladiators," the Army. The *Irish Catholic*, in particular, is very hot on the subject, and is inconsistently pessimistic in its exhortation to the Irish people to use a shield far more powerful than England's bombs or rifles—the Rosary. It appeals, therefore, for a million of Rosaries. "Wanted: A Million of Rosaries."

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Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. James Marshall, A Lecture.

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 6, Mr. H. B. Doughty, "Learn to Live"; Mr. R. Norman, "The Squeaking Pulpiteers."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. J. B. Johnson, A Lecture.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Spence, B.Sc., "Hell."

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Swasey, Kells, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Important Business.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S. (12a Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Is Religion of Use?—The Editor	457
"Our Holy Mother Church."—J. T. Lloyd	458
Forty Years of Freethought.—Mimnermus	459
W. K. Clifford.—Robert Arch	460
A "Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—Chapman Cohen	463
The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer	464
"Carillon."—Handel Lancaster	466

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Is Religion of Use?

We take it that at this point in the discussion between ourselves and Dr. Lyttelton we are agreed that we may profitably descend from the bath-room to the ground floor. In other words, the illustrative and historical association of Christian teaching with lack of cleanliness which led to this discussion has served its purpose in bringing us to a more fundamental issue. There are really more issues than one, but it will be well to take one at a time. And, in view of Dr. Lyttelton's article in last week's *Freethinker*, this issue may be set forth as follows. Looking at the whole subject of human development, it appears that Dr. Lyttelton regards religion as an essentially beneficent force, expressing itself as clearly as may be through the now helpful and now distorting media of social forces. We, on the other hand, look upon religion, as such, as an essentially irrational and progressively harmful thing, owing all its apparent goodness to an association with forces that are not religious at all, and only stayed from producing greater evil by the curbing influence of non-religious agencies and conditions. We think this places the issue fairly and squarely. It will, at all events, leave readers in no doubt as to the question in dispute.

* * *

Religion and Primitive Life.

To keep distinct things separate is for the ordinary person the most difficult of tasks; and this gives the religionist an initial advantage over the Freethinker. For hitherto religion has been more or less connected—more closely as we go backward—with all phases of social life. And because of this association, in spite of a separation that is actually taking place, there are still large numbers who cannot conceive social life, without deterioration, apart from religion. In primitive life this conviction is easily understandable. For there religion is everywhere. Religious beliefs dominate, so far as man consciously adjusts conduct to circumstances, the whole of life. Man's first interpretation of nature is a volitional one. The gods are responsible for everything; and all that man does, from the cradle to the grave, is done more or less under the impulse of the desire to gain their favour or to avert their anger. One consequence of this is the creation of an intense and unreasoning conservatism. Another—really the reverse of the first—is a fear of criticism of old methods and a hatred of new ones. The proof of this is that all over the world, as well in civilized as in savage society, religion is hostile to change. The conservatism it stands for is not of a reasoned kind; it stands for the established order merely because it is established. It conserves without regard to the social value of the conservation. Thus, in uncivilized and semi-civilized societies, we find the most barbarous practices resting upon a religious basis, and safeguarded by the religious sanction. Human sacrifice, Suttee, the killing of old people, the hundred and one barbarities of savage life are nearly all, if we search deeply enough, found to rest upon a religious basis, and their removal prevented because of religious fears and threatened religious penalties. Within modern times we have with ourselves such instances as punishment for witchcraft, Sabbatarian laws, and imprisonment for "blasphemy" and heresy. So far as we can trace the undiluted influence of the religious idea, we can see it acting as a retarding and retrogressive force in human society.

* * *

Social Selection and Religion.

We hope the qualifying expression that in early society "religious beliefs dominate, *so far as man consciously adjusts conduct to circumstances*" will be borne in mind, because much turns upon that. For behind the force, or forces, of which man is conscious, lies those of the operation of which he is conscious. And these include all, or nearly all, that enlightenment has classified as moral, social, physical, etc. The laws of life and of social health are substantially the same all along, what changes is man's knowledge concerning them. But they are always active, and they subject religious beliefs and practices to an inevitable form of selection. A religious belief that threatens the existence of a tribe or a people must be discarded or modified to a point of comparative harmlessness or the tribe itself will disappear. From our point of view, the analogy of a disease germ will serve. If a germ is so deadly as to kill all its hosts, it kills itself. What happens, one may suppose, is that while on the one hand an immune type of human being is preserved, on the other hand, the more virulent, really suicidal, type of germ is destroyed, leaving a less virulent form in possession of the field. So it is that social influences are all the time at work modifying and changing religious beliefs and practices to a point at which they do not too seriously imperil social efficiency. In a word, religion is to us a disease of the body politic. A society may exist, it may even develop, with this germ active in its midst, but it can no more act as a source of strength than the germ of influenza can serve as a source of increased health.

* * *

Separating Distinct Things.

Added to this, we must bear in mind that progress is largely a question of enlightenment. We learn more of the real nature of things; we learn to divorce essentials from non-essentials; we strive to keep distinct things separate. In the physical world we have most of us learned to discard the prayers and propitiations with which mankind once sought to get their ends served as

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so much waste of energy. And what has occurred there with so much completeness is surely a forerunner of what will one day occur elsewhere. In the case of disease, it is plain that the religious idea can give nothing of real value to those striving to reduce its ravages. It is entirely a question of knowledge of the conditions that favour disease, and of their removal. In morals, we can see the beginnings in the associative life of the animal world, and of the more highly elaborated and complex life of mankind. And when the conditions of these classes of phenomena are perceived, there inevitably takes place a separation of the non-essential (the religious idea) from the essential—the play of normal social forces. That the real things of life, including human ideals and aspirations, have been hitherto largely expressed through religion, is proof only that mankind had not yet learned to separate what was essential from what was non-essential. That we outgrow the savage but slowly is illustrated in many departments of life; religion offers but one of the clearest and strongest examples. * * *

Trading Under False Pretences.

What has been said will, we think, be enough to show why, while believing that favourable modifications in Christian teaching are due to the pressure of social forces, we do not admit that "the defilement of Christian teaching" and "the degrading of Christians" was also due to external forces. Let us note, in passing, that if this were admitted, it would rob Christianity of all real value. It would make it no more than a social barometer, reflecting here the good and there the bad of contemporary social life. But our reason for writing as we have is that, first, we do not admit the existence of a socially and ethically admirable Christianity which became corrupted through the wickedness of human nature. To us this is a dream of a much later and more humanized period, striving to find a basis for its greater humanitarianism in Christianity itself. And, secondly, we distinguish with Christianity—as all other religions—between what belongs to it as a religion and what became associated with it from its existence in a human society. No religion can ignore moral and social forces and ideals. If it did, it would soon cease to exist. It must reckon with them; it is even forced partly to endorse them. And all history is a witness to the fact that it is not religion that modifies the moral and social ideals, but the other way about. God does not civilize man; it is man that civilizes his gods. And the sum of the process is, that by the time we have separated the religious idea from the moral and social facts and forces with which it has been associated, some of us—we are pleased to say a growing number—realize that the religious idea is in the nature of a useless hypothesis. It no longer explains anything; it no longer serves a useful purpose; the functions once thought peculiar to it are plainly discharged by organs which have nothing religious about them. Human experience slowly but surely separates the essential from the non-essential.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

For He who has denied to the most devoted psalm-makers and moral poets all beautiful thoughts and all literary reputation, lest they should be praised too much by their earthly fellow-creatures, and thereby forget heaven, where the angels have already engaged board for them in advance;—He, I say, provides us other profane, sinful, heretical authors, for whom heaven is as good as nailed up, all the more with admirable ideas of earthly fame, and this indeed from divine grace and mercy, so that the poor souls, since they are really here, be not altogether wanting, and that they may at least enjoy upon earth some of that joy which is denied to them in heaven.—*Heine.*

"Our Holy Mother Church."

III.

THE more we study history the more undeniable it becomes that the Church has never deserved to be called either "mother" or "holy." In every age and country its rule has been arbitrary, cruel, and anti-social. The wantonness of its despotism has often known no bounds. And, generally speaking, its tyranny was only equalled by its corruption. During the Middle Ages the Church's power was supreme. Heresy was ruthlessly suppressed, and every act of disloyalty punished by imprisonment, torture, or death. And yet, in almost every age, a few brave men arose who dared to challenge ecclesiastical authority, to defy Papal bulls and excommunications, and to condemn in no measured terms the vices and frauds unblushingly practised by the hierarchy. With the revival of learning, which began almost imperceptibly, opposition to the Church grew in boldness and extent, resulting in the gradual secularization of the State and the consequent decline of priestly power. In the fourteenth century the Church itself, though as despotic as ever, showed unmistakable signs of spiritual apostacy and loss of dignity. With the spread of knowledge there sprang up among the people a bitter resentment against the selfish greed and plunder of which Rome was increasingly guilty. Consequently, when the illustrious schoolman, William of Ockham, ventured to deny Papal authority, and to denounce his own Franciscan Order, as well as the wealthy dignitaries of the Church, for their notorious avarice, he found that thousands of people loudly approved of his action. Ockham is a small village in Surrey, so that William, who is said to have shaken the pillars of the hierarchical polity, was a true Briton; and he was soon followed by another erudite Englishman, of whom we read that he was "the first teacher who shook with any lasting effect the dominion of the hierarchy." William was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, but he found protection in a Court where the Church was powerless to touch him; while Wycliffe was condemned, but not punished, though he lived in the heart of Catholic England. In the thirteenth century another celebrated Briton, Roger Bacon, though in no sense a heretic, yet because he preferred the study of mathematics and experimental science to that of theology, was doomed to fourteen years' imprisonment; but by the latter half of the fourteenth century the English detestation of Rome had become so strong that the Church lacked the courage to punish Wycliffe, who was a thoroughgoing uncompromising heretic. Wycliffe was merely condemned; and yet, as a result of its consent to such condemnation, Oxford University fell upon intellectual sleep, which lasted upwards of a hundred years, and out of which it has not wholly risen to this day. Green admits, in his *Short History of the English People* (p. 243), that the century which followed the triumphs of Archbishop Courtenay, in Wycliffe's case, "is the most barren in its annals."

Wycliffe died in 1384, six years after the election of two rival popes, Urban VI. and Clement VII., both of whom the great heretic nicknamed Anti-Christs. For thirty-eight years Europe witnessed the humiliating spectacle of "a war of pope against pope, the Pontiff of Rome promulgating a crusade against the Pontiff of Avignon." Now, whilst pope thus cursed pope in the name of the God of Love, whose sole vicegerent on earth each claimed to be, heresy flourished amazingly in the wake of the New Learning. In England, "they complained that the followers of Wycliffe abounded everywhere and in all classes; among the baronage, in the

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cities, among the peasantry of the country-side, even in the monastic cell itself." Writing at Leicester, Knighton bitterly deplored the fact that "every second man one meets is a Wycliffite." Indeed, by the name of Lollards Wycliffites were soon a powerful, as well as numerous, party, and the one object of their attack was the Church of the day. It is difficult to ascertain what their creed was; though we are in no doubt as to what it was not. They were but humble disciples of the great reformer, whose work was more destructive than constructive. This is how Milman describes Wycliffe's work:—

> He had swept away one by one almost all the peculiar tenets of the mediæval Latin Christianity, pardons, indulgences, excommunications, absolutions, pilgrimages; he had condemned images, at least of the Persons of the Trinity; he had rejected Transubstantiation (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. viii., p. 202).

Mr. J. M. Robertson is fully justified in the statement that the heresy of the fourteenth century reached its high-water mark in English Lollardism (*Short History of Christianity*, p. 255). Peter Patishull was one of their most fiery preachers, whose favourite subject was the vices of the clergy. It is more than probable that he indulged in considerable exaggeration, as such men always do; but it is incontestable that priestly morals were notoriously bad. Peter had once occupied the lucrative and honourable position of one of the Pope's chaplains; but his conscience compelled him to relinquish it. While he was preaching on one occasion at St. Christopher's in London, the Augustinians forced their way into the building and managed to serve an interdict upon him as an unlicensed teacher. They were driven out by the Lollards. Then Patishull nailed a document on the doors of St. Paul's to the effect "that he had escaped from the companionship of the worst of men to the most perfect and holy life of the Lollards." It is doubtless true that, on the whole, Wycliffism was morally much superior to the Church it so violently assailed; but it is also indisputable that many Lollards lacked the courage of their convictions. For example, when Archbishop Courtenay went down to Leicester and took his seat, with great pomp, on the trials of certain heretics of note, whose prosecutors were the clergy of the town, we infer that when they were anathematized with solemn ceremony they read their recantation. William Sautree, the first Wycliffian martyr, was an extremely weak-kneed member of the party. He had been a priest of St. Margaret's in King's Lynn. He had also been tried and convicted before the Bishop of Norwich prior to the passing of the Statute for the burning of heretics. When arrested under this new Statute he was a preacher at St. Osyth in London. When his trial came on he played the coward, vehemently recanting, then withdrawing his recantation, and angrily denying that he had ever been tried before. In the writ for the execution of Sautree it was "distinctly stated that the burning of heretics is enjoined by the laws of God as well as of man, and by the Canons of the Church." It was certainly the combined act of the Crown and the Church, but grave doubts exist as to its having had the spontaneous support of the Lords and Commons. Be that as it may, certain it is that such were the corruptions of the Church that petitions were presented to the king for the expulsion from the country of all French-born monks, the seizure of all priories held by foreigners, the compulsory residence of vicars in their own parishes, and the exercise by them of hospitality, and the prohibition of entrance into any of the Mendicant Orders under the age of twenty-four.

The story of the persecution of the Lollards is too well known to be told here in any detail, but several points need to be emphasized. One is that Dean Milman is clearly mistaken when he asserts that the insurrection of the peasants under Wat Tyler and others, 1381, "had no connection with religion." The truth is that it was part and parcel of the general revolt against the tyranny and rapacity of both Church and State. As long as it aimed only at the abuses in the Church many noblemen were more or less enthusiastic supporters of it, hoping eventually to gain by it; but no sooner did it begin to embrace the abuses of a feudal government than they not only withdrew from it but became its active opponents, selfishness being their motive in each case. Through the direct and indirect influence of Queen Anne the movement spread into Bohemia, where, early in the fifteenth century, the trials of our Holy Mother Church were particularly severe. John Huss was the leader of the Bohemian Lollards as John Wycliffe had been of the English. Poor Huss had to appear at the Council of Constance, in 1416, which sentenced him to be burned. He did not recant, though repeatedly besought to do so, but died like a hero. He was subjected to every conceivable species of degradation. A dispute arose as to the mode of effacing the tonsure. In the end it was done with scissors, the hair being cut in the form of a cross. Then a paper crown, daubed all over with devils, was placed on his head, to the accompaniment of the eminently Christian commital: "We devote thy soul to the devils in hell."

The execution of Huss led to a Bohemian war which lasted a long time. Meanwhile, our Holy Mother Church was in extremely deep waters, in which neither its holiness nor its motherliness was destined to shine. But the strange scenes witnessed at the most extraordinary Council of Constance require another article.

J. T. LLOYD.

Forty Years for Freethought.

> You can do nothing much worth doing, in this world, without trouble; you can get nothing much worth having, without expense.—*John Ruskin.*
>
> Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, in this earth.
> —*Thomas Carlyle.*

"HATS off to the veterans," said George William Foote on a memorable occasion, and few will fail to assent to the rare praise of the "Old Guard" as voiced by the famous leader of British Freethought. The veterans are the link between the present and the past; that past of storm and peril, when the soldiers of Liberty arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. To be one of the "Old Guard" is in itself an honour; for the "Old Guard" never knew defeat or surrender. A few of them still remain amongst us; to shame our weakness, and to stimulate our courage. Of these veterans, few names are better known than that of our old friend, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, whose entertaining pen has so often written for these columns, and whose voice has been so familiar on the lecture-platform for two generations.

Born in London sixty-three years ago, Mr. Moss joined the Freethought Movement in the "stormy 'seventies" of the last century. When quite a young man, he saw that in Freethought alone was there any hope for Democracy. No man in the Movement ever set to work more vigorously to qualify himself for acting as a teacher of his fellows, and few have waged the good fight with more ability and tenacity. Starting life as a clerk, he afterwards became a journalist, and educated himself not only in the world of books, but also in the book of the world. His knowledge of Freethought literature is as remarkable as his power of debate; while his keen sense of humour saves him from any tendency

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to dullness, and his plain common sense enables him to meet with ease the platitudes of clerical triflers who imagine a mere lecturer could be put aside without trouble. As a writer, his output of books and pamphlets is remarkable; "thick as leaves in Valambrossa." Nor has he stopped at purely propagandist effort, for in several plays he has displayed literary capacity, which, under happier conditions, would have secured for him general recognition from the theatrical world.

Mr. Moss's journalistic career has brought him into close contact with the life of a great city, and the mysteries of Modern Babylon are no more secrets to him than they were to Dickens. Years ago he accompanied George R. Sims and Fred Barnard, the artist, in their memorable travels through London's under-world, and helped to prepare the material out of which Mr. Sims wrote his famous work, *How the Poor Live*, a book which startled quiet folk in sheltered homes, and paved the way for legislative effort. Indeed, there are few phases of metropolitan life with which Mr. Moss is unacquainted, for his duties as an official under the old London School Board gave him unique opportunities for seeing the homes of the people.

The outstanding features of Mr. Moss's busy career are his tenacity and courage. A tireless worker, he has delivered thousands of lectures, and taken part in scores of debates. And these, be it remembered, have been undertaken in the scant leisure of a busy life. Nor has it been "roses all the way." More than once he has come into conflict with the authorities on account of his Freethought opinions. In exercise of his right as an elector, he asked a Member of Parliament to support Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill. The member, a Christian, promptly replied by requesting the School Board authorities to dismiss Mr. Moss, and the result was that he was prohibited from lecturing and advertising his books. Mr. Moss won that battle after delivering a powerful speech before the Board, which led to the rescinding of the resolution. Nor is this all, for the tireless Free thought advocate carried the war into the enemy's camp by entering municipal life, and as a Councillor defending the principles he loved, to which he had devoted his life.

It will be noted that Mr. Moss's courage is not noisy. There is nothing of Donnybrook Fair about it. Physical courage, especially in crowds, is cheap and common enough. Millions of men will fight and die for almost anything or nothing. But moral courage is rare. Few men are able to stand against a mob; fewer still are able to stand, animated solely by principles, against an enraged community. Mr. Arthur Moss is one of the few. When he stands for what he sees to be truth, he is as steadfast as a hill, and nearly as quiet in his resistance. He never asks what he will lose by so doing. The satisfaction of his conscience is his sole reward. For forty years of manhood he has never wavered in holding aloft the banner of Freethought. And for this, if for nothing else, let this brave veteran be honoured:—

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark, how loud and clear I hear it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army! swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!

If Freethinkers need any example to stir them on to give themselves in their great cause they will find it here—in the harvest of a laborious life. There may be men and women among us to-day who are asking, perhaps with a note of complaint, whether they have not done their share, and whether the time has not come for others to take a turn. Such questions are never asked by the men and women who count in the history of the movement. They go on giving themselves because the spirit of duty and of loyalty is within them. The unnumbered laggards remain behind, dawdling through their lives, and passing unhonoured without monument of fame, or record of achievement. The real men, the men who help to make the movement a live one, work on and on, ever in harness to fulfil their lives. Preeminently, such is he whom we mention to-day—Mr. Arthur B. Moss, who has given forty years for Freethought. Although he has passed his sixtieth year, "age cannot wither nor custom stale his infinite variety." In age men's minds are apt to get indurated against new ideas. Not so with Mr. Moss. His gaze is ever towards the future. A Freethinker from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and a practical Humanitarian, he favours reforms in the social order, and his heart overflows with love for the poor and humble. In that respect he is a public benefactor. That is really the secret of his influence and of his popularity. "Hats off to the veteran!"

MIMNERMUS.

W. K. Clifford.

I WONDER how many readers of the *Freethinker* are acquainted with Mr. W. H. Mallock's *New Republic?* That book, Mr. Mallock's earliest and, in my opinion, his best, will probably be remembered as a brilliant satire on mid-Victorian literature and philosophy, long after his burlesque assaults on Socialism and Freethought have been decently forgotten. Readers of the *New Republic* will recall the life-like parodies of Jowett, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Pater, Huxley, and Tyndall which distinguish its pages, and may recall, along with these, the one really unfair and unkindly portrait of the lot—that of a militant young Atheist who appears under the name "Saunders," and who is made alternately to outrage and to amuse the company by his complete absence of courtesy and tact. It is generally understood that this caricature was intended for William Kingdon Clifford, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Professor of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics at London University. I cannot help feeling that Mr. Mallock's travesty of Clifford—who, on the testimony of his friends, Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Frederick Pollock, in their introduction to his collected remains, was personally amiable and sympathetic, as well as a thinker of genius—sprang from a feeling that Clifford was, in truth, a more dangerous assailant of orthodoxy than either Huxley or Tyndall. Probably only his early death, before he was thirty-four, prevented the public from coming to the same conclusion.

Clifford, unlike Huxley or Tyndall, was not only a brilliant man of science, but an all-round subverter of established wrong—a Humanist in the best sense of the word. Tyndall, apart from science, had no particular interest except Alpine climbing; Huxley, when he ventured upon social or political controversy, was quite incapable of rising above the smuggest suburban conservatism of the period. Huxley, moreover, did a great disservice to Freethought by inventing the awful word "Agnostic"—a label designed expressly to be used by people who were really Atheists but did not like to say so, though they would have been called so without demur in any country not dominated by Anglo-Saxon respectability and moral cowardice. Very different from this was the attitude of Clifford. Politically, he was as advanced a Radical as practically any Englishman in those stodgy 'seventies. Intellectually, he would give no quarter to, and admit no compromise with superstition.

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"It is not right to be proper," he declares in the last sentence of his *Conditions of Mental Development*, in face of the tyranny of convention in action and thought. In other lectures and essays, notably in *The Unseen Universe* (a review of a quasi-scientific apology for Christianity which appeared under that title in 1875), *Body and Mind*, *Right and Wrong*, *The Ethics of Religion*, and one or two besides, he again and again emphasizes the duty of preaching Freethought in the market-place, and not only in the study, and driving supernatural religion from its last ditch :—

> Only for another half-century let us keep our hells and heavens and gods. It is a piteous plea; and it has soiled the heart of these prophets, great ones and blessed, giving light to their generation, and dear in particular to our mind and heart. These sickly dreams of hysterical women and half-starved men, what have they to do with the sturdy strength of a wide-eyed hero who fears no foe with pen or club? This sleepless vengeance of fire upon them that have not seen and have not believed, what has it to do with the gentle patience of the investigator that shines through every page of this book [*The Unseen Universe*, which he is criticizing], that will ask only consideration and not belief for anything that has not with infinite pains been solidly established? That which you keep in your hearts, my brothers, is the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history, and still lives to threaten mankind. The grotesque forms of its intellectual belief have survived the discredit of its moral teaching. Of this what the kings could bear with, the nations have cut down; and what the nations left, the right heart of man by man revolts against day by day. You have stretched out your hands to save the dregs of the sifted sediment of a residuum. Take heed lest you have given soil and shelter to the seed of that awful plague which has destroyed two civilizations, and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men.

Severe as he was upon Protestant and Latitudinarian attempts at compromise, Clifford did not forget that the strongest and deadliest embodiment of Christianity in world-politics is, and has always been, the Catholic Church. The following extract from *The Ethics of Religion* is an apt reply in anticipation to sophists like Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who try to persuade us that Catholicism has stood for liberty and equality :—

> "In the Middle Ages the priests and monks were the sole depositories of learning." Quite so; a man burns your house to the ground, builds a wretched hovel on the ruins, and then takes credit for whatever shelter there is about the place. In the Middle Ages nearly all learned men were obliged to become priests and monks. "Then again, the bishops have sometimes acted as tribunes of the people, to protect them against the tyranny of kings." No doubt, when Pope and Cæsar fall out, honest men may come by their own. If two men rob you in a dark lane, and then quarrel over the plunder, so that you get a chance to escape with your life, you will of course be very grateful to each of them for having prevented the other from killing you; but you would be much more grateful to a policeman who locked them both up.

His favourite poet, to judge by his quotations, was Swinburne. Over and over again, in the middle of powerful and suggestive sociological or other arguments, we come upon a phrase of word-music from "Songs Before Sunrise" or "Poems and Ballads," reminding us that the great scientific movement of Darwinism and the poetic revolt of Swinburne were parts of one and the same war of human liberation.

Philosophically, Clifford was a stronger thinker than Huxley, or even Herbert Spencer, though the system which he developed was left by him in a condition of rather unstable equilibrium. He was a Pluralist, with noticeable leanings to what would now be called Pragmatism. An elementary feeling was, for him, a thing in itself, independent of any consciousness of which it might form part, and more real than matter, which was merely the mental picture we form of elementary feelings or "mind-stuff." This is very ingeniously worked out in his essays on "Body and Mind" and "The Nature of Things-in-Themselves." Its weakness is that it seems to do away with any unity in things, and, "feeling" being ultimate, to render impossible any such thing as real knowledge. Clifford would probably have revised it had he foreseen how, in the hands of William James and his disciples, this Pluralist philosophy would become a reactionary instrument of the "Will to Believe," and be used to shepherd the unwary back into the fold of supernaturalism. Only on the lines of Monism can Freethought render its results impregnable.

The best part, however, of Clifford's philosophy is its invigorating Humanism. He adopts, practically, the Positivism of Comte, without Comte's crotchety pseudo-Catholicism :—

> Conscience is the voice of man ingrained into our hearts, commanding us to work for man.
>
> When men respect human life for the sake of man, tranquillity, order, and progress go hand in hand; but those who only respected human life because God had forbidden murder have set their mark upon Europe in fifteen centuries of blood and fire.

And, addressing those who adduce the probably finite duration of life on the earth as a reason against Humanism, he tellingly says :—

> Our interest lies with so much of the past as may serve to guide our actions in the present, and to intensify our pious allegiance to the fathers who have gone before us and the brethren who are with us; and our interest lies with so much of the future as we may hope will be appreciably affected by our good actions now. Beyond that, as it seems to me, we do not know, and we ought not to care. Do I seem to say: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?" On the contrary I say: "Let us take hands and help, for this day we are alive together."

ROBERT ARCH.

Acid Drops.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw writes to the *Manchester Guardian* commenting on the case of a conscientious objector who is being sentenced to recurring terms of imprisonment. One need not agree with the conscientious objector to assert that the treatment of these people is revengeful, panicky, and quite opposed to all legal and constitutional traditions. But Mr. Shaw falls into a curious error. He says that a soldier not belonging to any officially recognized denomination becomes, as such, a member of the Church of England. This is not so. A soldier is, religiously or non-religiously, exactly what he says he is. If he says nothing he may be put down as belonging to any recognized denomination. But that entirely depends upon the recording officer. The soldier can be entered as "no religion" if he so chooses.

Rev. A. J. Waldron is lecturing at the Palladium, Manchester, on "The Girl Who Doesn't Know." The lecture is in connection with a film of that title. Trust some of our parsons for getting on to a subject that is sexually suggestive.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity! A service of intercession was held recently in London for the "persecuted" Russian Church. This looks as if the Greek Church officials were desirous of "raising the wind."

The War-shrine mania is spreading, and it is proposed to erect a permanent shrine in Hyde Park, London. It is

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enough to make the bronze statue of Byron walk out of the park in disgust.

Religion is fast becoming an amusement. Prebendary Carlile advertises his place of worship as "the Cinema Monument Church." A further innovation at this pious place of entertainment is a ladies' orchestra.

The London *Daily Chronicle* recently stated that detective stories were prime favourites with the troops. Presumably, they are preferred to the copies of "God's Word" showered on them by the various Bible Societies.

Providence is said to count the hairs of our heads and to take particular interest in the gymnastics of sparrows, but it was too preoccupied to prevent the death of a two-year-old child at Rhyl, who played with a box of matches and set light to his clothing.

Dr. Clifford says "a great religious revolution is taking place," and "the revival is equally emphatic in France as in Britain." We fear the wish is father to the thought. Almost every denomination is bemoaning empty pews, decreasing congregations, and low incomes. As for France, the Roman Catholic Church, which is the only religious body worth troubling about in that country, is in an equally bad way. If Dr. Clifford means that there is a religious revival among the soldiers in France, he should listen to the troops, and not the chaplains.

The Christian religion, in the hands of the Young Men's Christian Association, promises to become a "Divine Comedy." This egregious organization has just started a Hut Theatrical Scheme, and the first Y.M.C.A. Theatrical Company has been enrolled. Presently it will be difficult to realize whether the Y.M.C.A. worships *Charley's Aunt* or Jesus Christ.

The Rev. J. A. Clark was found in a field near Liberton, Midlothian, with his throat cut and a razor by his side. He expired shortly after being found. Yet Revivalists tell us that only poor benighted Atheists ever commit suicide.

A City of London's "Men's Prayer Meeting" was announced to take place at the "Egyptian Hall." It seems appropriate, for the whole thing has a flavour of ancient Egypt.

President Wilson said he would not forget Russia, and the Churches are doing their best to help in their own peculiar way. The Missionary *Review of the World* says:—

> The revolution in Russia has resulted in throwing open to the Gospel the largest country, with its largest population of white people, in the world. There are 182,000,000 people in Russia, and yet there are not as many evangelical workers there as in the city of Chicago alone. Any adequate evangelization plan must embrace not only the hundred million native Russians, but also the seven million Jews, the twenty million Poles, the thirty million Ukrainians, millions of Mohammedans (Tartars, Kurds, Kirghiz, etc.), Armenians, Roumanians, and Greeks, and besides these the Bulgarians, Servians, Croatians, Montenegrins, and other related Slavonic peoples.
>
> The propaganda of atheism and materialism is already assuming awful proportions. There is no time to lose. The Greek Orthodox Church is rapidly losing its grip upon the hearts of the people, and before long large masses of simple religiously inclined Russians may be led astray into complete infidelity. Millions of the people are looking for something different.

It is suggested sending one million copies of the Russian Bible, and thirteen million copies of the New Testament. Some people may, however, remember that it was the very religious Russia—the Russia eulogized by the Bishop of London as being profoundly and inevitably "spiritual," which presented the picture of the worst Government in the whole of the civilized world. And these may conclude that Russia's chief need is education along rational lines rather than a return to the rule of the Church—and the other things that will come with it.

"Will the Coal Go Round?" was the headline in a religious contemporary. It referred to the new Rationing Order, but it might have had references to a place so often mentioned by preachers.

Dr. Clifford is an old hand at theology, but he sometimes forgets. Speaking on the coming "religious revolution," he says events are driving people to a recognition of "one God and one destiny." Dear, Dear! And Christians believe in a Triune God, and in Heaven and Hell.

At a Buckinghamshire Church laymen have been allowed to speak to the congregation, and the clergy sit in the body of the church. Those clergymen ought to learn a few necessary truths.

Wolverhampton is threatened by a great danger, but fortunately a Mr. Arthur Colbourn is on the alert. This gentleman writes to the *Express and Star* pointing out that ice-cream vendors parading the streets on Sunday are "a grave menace to children just leaving Sunday-school," and calls for their suppression. "A grave menace"! We are impressed. Perhaps it is an enemy move to demoralize the youth of the country, and the Italians are German agents in disguise. In that case D.O.R.A. should be invoked.

What pathos there is in the announcement that the Bishop of Wakefield, in consequence of heavy taxation and War-prices, has been compelled to leave his episcopal palace and take a smaller house. The faithful need not fear that his lordship will reach the workhouse, for the income of the bishopric is £60 weekly, which should ensure that his lordship's bread is well margarined.

Senator Meyers, of Montana, recently brought forward a resolution in Congress asking President Wilson to call on the nation to pray one minute each day for victory. One, two, or three, members supported the resolution. Most of the speakers were of opinion that it was work—not prayer that was needed.

The living of Liff in the Presbytery of Dundee is vacant. Thanks to the rise in price of corn the living is worth about £1,000 a year, and there is over seventy applicants for the vacancy. We have no doubt that every one of the seventy has been moved by the Lord to make application, and the selected one will duly regard his appointment as a "call to service."

In a contribution in the *Times* to one of the significantly frequent discussions on the need of closer union of the Churches, a clergyman writes: "It is really time that the organized religious forces of this country, as represented by its churches and chapels, got into line against the common enemy." But even if they do get into line against the Freethinkers, their numbers will continue to diminish rapidly under the steadily increasing fire of Atheist criticism. The idea, however, of the churches and chapels getting into line to oppose the spreading of facts is amusing, but not unusual.

Great Britain has contributed to the War a force of soldiers which represents in men alone nearly a quarter of the total population. The clergy, of whom there are 50,000, are exempted from military service.

The Emperor of Austria has just lately asked for an increased allowance because he cannot pay his way. Up to now he has been allowed £904,000 a year. He asks for £320,000 more as a War-bonus. The "King of Kings" was "sold up" for thirty shillings.

Politicians like to flavour their speeches with a little piety. Even Mr. Balfour is not exempt from this weakness. Speaking recently on the War, he said that the two groups of opponents were fighting for two deals, "one from heaven, the other from hell." As Mr. Balfour is seventy years of age, it is high time he disdained the language of a spring curate.

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A "Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

IT is with a feeling akin to disappointment, and with much reluctance that I am compelled to re-open this Fund.

I had hoped that by this time peace would have been declared, and a Sustentation Fund unnecessary. But the War drags on, the cost of production increases month by month, and the burden, instead of becoming lighter, grows heavier. Paper, which could be bought a year ago at 30s. per ream—as against a pre-War cost of 10s.—is now in the neighbourhood of 50s. per ream; there has also been another rise in wages and in the cost of production generally. When it is pointed out that a sixteen-page *Freethinker* would now cost more for paper alone than was formerly paid for the whole cost of production (including wages, rent, contributors, etc.), some idea may be formed of the burden that has to be faced. And, in addition, there is every probability that there will be a still further rise in wages in the near future.

Since March, the *Freethinker* has been printed on twelve pages; but even with this economy, the cost of production is over £6 per week more than was the case last year. Despite this progressive increase in expenses, it is so far pleasant to be able to state that the deficit to date, thanks to the prompt and generous response to last year's appeal, is only just over £250. It is this deficit which I am seeking to make good by means of a special Fund, and I feel assured that this will be done as promptly as before.

As on previous occasions, the deficit represents a debt owing to me. There are no outstanding debts against the *Freethinker;* all claims, in every direction, have been promptly met. This, I judge, is the better course; although in turn I have had to borrow the necessary funds to keep things going. I have also had to borrow on my personal responsibility a considerable sum of money to purchase a stock of paper, and for use as capital for the publication of pamphlets, etc. This will, I believe, right itself in time. Since last November, the resources of the Pioneer Press have not permitted my drawing any payment as Editor, contributor, or Manager. I make these statements only to prove that if I am reluctantly compelled to appeal for help, I have not shrunk from facing hardship or incurring responsibility on my own account. The great thing is to keep the flag flying. Others may have been able to do better than I have done, but I am certain none could have worked harder. And these efforts have been loyally supported by all concerned in the *Freethinker* office, and by a large number of readers all over the country. They have made the work a pleasure, and encouraged a cheerful front when the outlook was blackest. More is owing to these cheerful helpers than can be easily put into words.

When all is said, the situation presents many encouraging features. When it is borne in mind that the Sustentation Fund required, after four years of War, is not so large as was needed to keep the *Freethinker* alive in peace times, there seems every reason for a feeling of satisfaction. That the deficit is not larger is due to the most careful economy, to a largely increased circulation of the paper, and to a larger business in books and pamphlets. Despite the loss of readers consequent on enlistment in the Army, the circulation of the *Freethinker* is now 1,300 copies per week more than when I assumed editorship. Therefore, were we living under normal conditions, it is fair to assume that the paper would now be self-supporting. Our Sustentation Fund is, strictly speaking, a War Fund. It owes its existence to the War, and, with the return of peace, it will, I hope, disappear.

Altogether, and thanks largely to the loyalty and devotion of *Freethinker* readers, the prospects of the paper are to-day brighter than ever. It possesses a larger number of readers than before the War, it retains the loyalty of its old friends, and is constantly making new ones; it is more readily taken up by the "trade," while newsagents show a greater readiness to exhibit it for sale. All these things are full of promise for the time when the War shall have run its course. And when peace does arrive, we hope to then put into operation other plans we have in mind for making the *Freethinker* a still greater power for good. The struggle is hard, but we are gaining ground all the time. And when so many papers have ceased to exist, this is something of which we may all feel proud.

Above all, the *Freethinker* has never lost sight of the fact that it exists as an agent for a great cause, and the business side has not been allowed to overcome the propagandist mission of the paper. It has served during the War as a rallying-point for Freethinkers, it has kept going a special agitation concerning the rights of Freethinkers in the Army and Navy, and it has sent a very large number of free parcels of literature for distribution amongst the troops. The War has been a disaster to mankind, but we have tried to pluck some good from even so great a catastrophe. And when the War is over, we shall expect to see a great strengthening of the ranks of Freethought, to which end we are vain enough to feel we have made our contribution.

Meanwhile, the War continues, and we are obliged to rely, however reluctantly, upon the *Freethinker's* friends. Experience has shown that this reliance is not misplaced, and that knowledge has eased a situation bristling with unprecedented difficulties.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to me, and addressed Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Full acknowledgment will be made in the *Freethinker*, the accounts of which are under the supervision of a registered accountant. We feel confident that our first list of acknowledgments will be such as to give encouragement to all interested in the cause of Freethought.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christians Awake!

FIGHT, for the Night is coming,
Fight through the bloody hours;
Fight, while the 'Planes are roaming,
Fight midst Shrapnel showers;
Fight when the Guns grow louder,
Fight in the stifling sun;
Fight for the Night is coming
When War Work is done.

Fight, for the Night is coming,
Fight through the thundering noon;
Fill Hellish hours with Bombing,
Death comes sures and soon;
Give every enemy Airman,
Something to keep in store;
Fight for the Night is coming,
When man flies no more.

Fight, for the Night is coming,
Under the dreadful skies;
While Poison-Gas is blowing,
Fight till the whole Race dies;
Fight till the last man falleth,
Falleth to rise no more;
Fight while the world is darkening,
When Man's fight is o'er.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 8, Aberdare; September 15, Maesteg; September 22, Birmingham; September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

A. M.—Will include *Tables of Stone* as requested.

J. COOPER (France).—Very pleased to hear from you. If you are home at any time shall be pleased to see you in connection with the matter mentioned in your letter. There is a very modern note about Montaigne, as is the case with all the great essayists. William Smith will well repay reading. His *Gravenhurst* will also be to your taste.

A. P. BROOMFIELD.—Regret we have not room for all your questions, which are quite pertinent. With regard to the first on your list, we do not suppose that young children in school when repeating the Ten Commandments, are thinking of anything. It is a mere mechanical repetition of words.

F. C. HOLDEN (Utah).—Much obliged for papers.

T. C.—Are you not confusing a knowledge of scientific facts with an appreciation of scientific methods? The first may easily, and often does, exist without the second, and without the second is not of great value. Anyone with industry and memory may acquire a knowledge of a whole host of facts, but it is the scientific mind and temper that alone can make their acquisition of real importance.

A. STEGGALL.—We are sending one of our parcels of literature to your son. Glad to find he is so interested in the *Freethinker*.

E. A.—Thanks for "Traveller's Tale." Will use as soon as possible.

F. G. LAWES.—Hope to see you again one day. Literature is being sent to address given. Hope it will prove useful.

T. H. LANGRIDGE.—"Mutation" is the name given to the theory that a new species may arise by a sudden and marked change in the offspring of a normal parent. This theory gives natural selection the function of keeping a species true to type once it has been formed. As a descriptive term natural selection is wanting in accuracy. The active and valuable principle here is not selection but elimination. To lose sight of this is to pave the way for endless blundering in one's inferences.

J. BREESE.—Thanks. Shall look forward to reply if any is received.

J. M. FLANAGAN.—There is wisdom in the Scotch saying that it takes all sorts to make a world. Ridicule has its place, like most other things. Of course, ridicule alone would be useless, but that seldom is the case with men of sense.

J. TROTMAN.—You acted as we expected you would. One seldom loses by generosity; and if there is a loss, it is often of the kind that matters little.

JOHN HADDON.—We have read your letter with much interest. The views expressed are shared by a great number of Freethinkers. We do not think anyone feels the giving up of Christianity a loss, although the social and domestic ties may be sometimes strained; and that, of course, is painful. There is a very large amount of freethinking among Jews.

J. W. HULTON.—It is, of course, a general Christian assumption that the Bible is true. Hope you will be successful in your endeavours. The lines enclosed are clever, but hardly up to standard.

S. HOLMAN.—See "Sugar Plums."

A. RADLEY.—Quite a common form of religious insanity.

J. A. REID.—Thanks. We are sending on literature.

F. T.—Your Australian friend's opinion that with the majority of the Australian troops religion is "gone by the board, or entirely discredited," quite agrees with what we hear from other quarters. Pleased to learn that your newsagent sells the copies of the *Freethinker* left for display.

"SATAN."—Putting the kind of religious literature you enclose through the letter-box is, probably, the only way to secure a circulation for it.

A. G. ROYSTON.—There has been no delay in despatching the paper, and no complaint has been received here. Perhaps the complaint was from the local agent to his headquarters. Let us know the missing numbers and we will send. Parcel of literature is being sent to address given.

S. CLOWES.—Waste paper came safely to hand. Many thanks.

A. LANE.—The books are out of print, but if we can get copies will let you know. Thanks for sending waste paper. We can do with all we can get. The need is likely to become more urgent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen commences his lecturing this season with two meetings at Aberdare on Sunday next. Next week we will publish full information as to time and place.

Another meeting of Freethinkers of the Pontypridd district is to be held on Saturday, August 31, at the Washington Hotel, Porth, at 6 o'clock. Owing to inadvertence "Porth" was omitted from the notice in our last issue. We hope that a good number of friends will be present, as their attendance will determine the work to be attempted.

A meeting of the Glasgow Branch N. S. S. was held in the Ingram Street Halls on Sunday. Secretary Lonsdale gave in his report on the revision of rules of the N. S. S. It was agreed to get into touch with the civic authorities in order to get the *Freethinker* placed in the Public Libraries. It was also agreed to petition the Secretary for Scotland regarding the new Education Bill. Quite a number of new members have joined the Branch since the appearance of the "Sugar Plum" giving Mr. Lonsdale's address. Mr. Lonsdale's address is 256 Calder Street, Govanhill. Unattached Freethinkers will please note that he is anxious to enrol them.

The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

III.

(Continued from p. 454.)

THE British Isles are richly dowered with fossil-fuel treasures, and the coal basin of South Wales is the most valuable, although not the largest we possess. This last is that of the Clyde basin, but the Welsh coal-field is one of the thickest in the world, for the vertical extension of the strata exceeds 10,000 feet. This important formation is divided by Carmarthen Bay into two equal areas. The major portion lies to the east of the Bay, and reaches to Pontypool, in Monmouth county, a journey of fifty-six miles. The minor division runs to St. Bride's Bay, seventeen miles distant, and is washed by the waters of the Atlantic. The superficial area of this great coal basin approaches 1,000 square miles.

Professor Hull, in his standard volume, *The Coal Fields of Great Britain*, sums up the conclusions of Sir W. T. Lewis, who, with the assistance of several qualified surveyors, prepared the official returns relating to the coal resources of the South Wales and Monmouthshire basin, 1903. From the preceding estimates, states Hull:—

> It will be seen that the available quantity of coal within a depth of 4,000 feet amounts to over

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> 26,470 millions of tons, of which over 13,301 millions of tons belong to the valuable class of 'steam coal' suitable for naval purposes.

Oil is now extensively utilized in the Navy, but the demand for steam coal is constantly increasing. The output of coal from the South Wales seams was more than doubled between 1880 and 1903, a period of twenty-three years. "This coal," Hull tells us,—

> is chiefly raised from collieries situated in the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth, and is shipped from Cardiff, Llanelly, Barry, Newport, and Swansea, while large quantities are consumed for iron smelting, tin-plate manufacture, railway fuel, and household purposes.

Several of these collieries are worked at enormous depths. At Pontypridd the Albion mine is 545 yards (1,635 feet) deep, while the Lady Windsor, in the same district, descends to 593 yards. But the pride of place must be awarded to the Deep Navigation Colliery at Treharris which runs downwards for 718 yards. Deeper mining than this is already in operation, and some of the mines descend 100 yards below their stated depths where surface conditions prove favourable.

The Bristol, Somersetshire, and Forest of Dean coal measures are all of considerable importance. A larger formation, the South Staffordshire coalfield, has yielded immense supplies of mineral fuel and iron, and its proximity to the great industrial Midland towns, Birmingham, Dudley, and Wolverhampton, has given a powerful stimulus to these manufacturing centres. Indeed, it has been said that the entire region encircling these busy cities forms one titanic workshop, and that on a clear night—

> the spectacle from the walls of Dudley Castle, which rises from the centre of the coal field is one which has scarcely a parallel. The whole country within a radius of five or six miles is seen to be overspread by collieries, iron foundries, blast furnaces, factories, and the dwellings of a dense population; and, from amidst the thick smoky atmosphere, the tongues of fire from the furnaces shoot up an intermittent light which illuminates the whole heavens.

But even this Vulcanian scene discloses part only of the vast sum of human activity engaged in the production of wealth. Each array of workers toiling in forge and factory is represented by another multitude of men only less numerous than itself, steadily hewing the coal in the mines to provide the motive power for the immense manufacturing operations of the surrounding districts.

The coal deposits of North Staffordshire comprise a smaller area than those of the South, but their seams are much richer. These strata possess four times the thickness, and the coal available in the northern formation is twice as great as that of the southern field; while excellent facilities are afforded for future exploitation. These beds have yielded many fossil remains, notably those of molluscs and fish. Again, few indeed are the British coalfields that, in proportion to their size, prove so opulently stored with minerals, or whose beds promise such prodigious productiveness in coming years. According to Elliot's estimate, the reserves of the North Staffordshire seams will provide 3,680 millions of tons for future consumption. Deep mining is now in progress in this region, and at the Florence Colliery at Mossfield, coal is drawn to the surface from a depth of nearly 3,000 feet.

The South Lancashire coalfield has played an important part in the industrial history of England. All the renowned manufacturing centres of Lancashire derive their fame from their foundation of coal, apart from which even the intelligent and enterprising spirit of the people, their mild and moist climate, and other eminent Lancastrian qualities, might have proved abortive. It is said that from "Chorley to Staleybridge, by Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, and Oldham," the elevated moorlands pass northwards. From this high region the land surface slowly declines in the direction of the Mersey Valley, and the coal reposes under strata of later origin which form the depressed country of Newton and Ashton in Makerfield, Leigh, Manchester, and Stockport, in the vicinity of which the coal measures traverse the Mersey and invade Cheshire. This invaluable coalfield, with that of Burnley, has an area of 217 square miles. The total thickness of the coal-bearing strata was estimated by the Commissioners in 1901 at 6,000 feet. The number of workable seams two or more feet thick was shown to be sixty-two, while the quantity of coal lying to a depth of 4,000 feet which would well repay the cost of working was ascertained to amount to 4,238,507,000 tons.

Lancashire contains the deepest mines in Britain. One is at Wigan, and another at Dukinfield, on the Cheshire border; but the palm is held by Pendleton, where the shaft descends 515 yards, while coal is worked at a depth of 1,161 yards (3,483 feet). This, according to Professor Hull, is the deepest mine in our Isles. Mining operations are conducted on a grand scale in the Lancashire coalfield, and the most modern mechanical devices are employed.

A smaller, but still highly important, coalfield is that of Warwickshire. This coal formation lies nearest to that huge coal-consuming city, mighty London itself. To the S.S.E., the coal layers extend beyond Tamworth, along Atherstone and Nuneaton, and near Wyken, a ramble of some fifteen miles. The measures are fractured in places, and the New Red Sandstone juts out. The seams repose under Permian deposits over a wide area, including Coventry and Warwick. Substantial advances have been made in coal mining in this district. In the Report of the Royal Commission (1904), two "new colliery shafts, namely, that of Newdigate Colliery and that of the Tunnel Colliery (near Stockingford)," are mentioned as having been sunk below the Permian rocks down to the coalbeds with satisfactory results. Hull's expert opinion concerning these coal measures is interesting. "I cannot," he declares, "but regard as of peculiar value this vast reservoir of fuel lying at the borders of the south-eastern counties, and actually closer than any other coal-bearing district to the metropolis of Britain." Another scientist, Professor Lapworth, estimated the area of the Warwickshire seams at thirty square miles, and the tonnage remaining unworked at nearly 920 million tons.

Among others, the Leicestershire coalfield contains vast reserves of fossil fuel. The great Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Notts measures form physically one immense coal deposit. This is the largest coalfield in England itself, although it is 150 square miles smaller in area than the magnificent formation in South Wales. The noted Silkstone coal is mined in Yorkshire. This fine coal is really the same as that of the Arley mine in Lancashire. The remarkable seam that yields it rarely exceeds a thickness of five feet, and geologists assure us that it formerly spread over a region of not less than 10,000 square miles. Derby and Barnsley coals are celebrated for their quality, and are in keen demand.

Fossils are very numerous in these measures. Many species of fish and molluscs have been identified, and so abundant are fossil fish in the shale which roofs the coal seams at Middleton, that it is known locally as the "fish coal."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

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"Carillon."

POETS have often found a fruitful source of inspiration in the sound of a bell. And, undoubtedly, when heard under favourable conditions, the sound has a certain charm. I remember, many years ago, spending a quiet holiday at a pretty place in Westmoreland. One lovely summer evening, while strolling through the woods, I heard the sound of church bells carried softly by the breeze. Distance, in this case, lent enchantment to the *sound;* the music blended with my thoughts and made the wood seem Fairyland. But those were halcyon days, when Hope shed golden glory over youthful dreams. Now, all is changed, and the sound of a bell rouses very different feelings. I write these lines in a typical Lancashire manufacturing town. I arrived here some little while ago from a long and tiring journey, and, after some refreshment, settled down for "forty winks." I had hardly closed my eyes before I was rudely awakened by the chiming of a peal of bells, which was pouring forth a perfect Babel of sound from a neighbouring church steeple.

There are six bells in this particular peal, and a peal of six is my pet abomination. I would rather hear a single bell in spite of the deadly monotony. The pleasure caused by musical sounds of different pitch depends entirely upon the relation that the intervals between the notes bear to one another. With a peal of eight bells, this relation is fairly satisfactory. The presence of the eighth bell, or octave, defines the mode and key, and the other notes fall into their natural places in the scale. But a peal of six may be anything, and ends by being nothing. For instance, let us suppose that the six notes are C, D, E, F, G, and A. These may be the first six notes of the scale of C major (tonic to sub-mediant); the last four and two above the octave of the scale of F major (dominant to mediant); or the first six notes of the descending scale of A minor. To the ear of the musician other combinations will suggest themselves, only to cause a maddening indecision.

The idea of such a noise being a call to peaceful prayer reminds me of an incident I once witnessed at a country fair. On a platform outside a booth (one of the kind vulgarly called "a tupp'ny gaff") the "band" blared forth a clamorous invitation. In front, with an encouraging smile on his face, stood the spruce proprietor, who ever and anon took off his silk hat and made graceful sweeps with it towards the entrance, as if to charm the shy and gaping villagers in. On getting closer, however, I was greatly amused to find that he was quietly but fluently cursing the stolid rustics for (to use an Irishism) being so backward in coming forward.

In like manner, church bells have a sinister meaning behind their vociferous invitation. For when, exasperated by their maddening repetition of "Come to worship, come to worship," I mutter to myself "I'm d—d if I do," the bells, with ever-increasing intensity, return their exultant finale, "You'll be d—d if you don't!"

HANDEL LANCASTER.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

ATHEISM, ANARCHISM, AND ACCURACY.

SIR,—My only justification for encroaching further on your valuable space is that I have not succeeded in getting Mr. Moss to grasp my point of view. Before I endeavour to make myself clear I must clear myself. While quoting in full his paragraph, I only referred to an italicized portion and an innuendo contained in it. I neither implied acceptance of the doctrine of non-resistance, nor questioned his view that its universal practice would result in unbridled villainy. What I took exception to was (1) the tacit assumption that armies, navies, policemen, magistrates, courts, etc., exist for the best interests of the community, and (2) the commonplace, unthinking, and entirely misleading phrase about "the masses being left a prey to revolution and anarchy."

I do not make a fetish of words; it is only ideas that matter. The head and front of Mr. Moss's offending is not his use of the word "anarchy," but his complete misconception of the fraudulent bases of our force-propped society, and that being "a man who lives in the world as it is to-day," he boggles at the whole question of social welfare, and, fumbling with "restraints upon villainy" (why take away the fear of God, and the restraining influence of a belief in hell?) perturbed by the appalling record of the fact that "tens of thousands of officials are employed discovering offenders and bringing them to justice," he still wishes to perpetuate this regime, is a trifle puzzled over man's depravity (he hasn't outgrown "original" sin yet) but thinks what society really needs is a lot more policemen.

Now to recommence. Mr. Moss will be surprised when I say that I approve of the word lawlessness as a definition of anarchy; indeed, the whole point at issue is one of law and *confusion versus* lawlessness and *harmony*. Instinctively, because of the camouflage and conformity with which we were dosed in our youth, we confuge legal right with moral equity, but the fact that we are so used to error does not make a thing less wrong. Law and government connote tyranny and oppression, their absence, freedom and progress, and men are "criminal" to the degree that Mr. Moss deplores largely because of their inhuman social conditions. About 90 per cent. of "crime" is that against property, and of the remaining 10 per cent. much would disappear with economic re-adjustment.

What is wrong with society is that the *real* villains are not known as such, not even by Mr. Moss, whose apprehension lest a hypothetical set of circumstances "*would lead to* the villain having the upper hand" clearly shows his innocent mind. The ruffian who extorted rent from me for a vile cellar in which I was compelled to live with my family was decidedly an offender (against humanity) but the tens of thousands of officials did not discover him and bring him to justice, for were they not all on his side and ready at a moment's notice to do his bidding, to harass me, to evict me, and if I were disagreeable—as I have been—to put me in prison? Ah, alter the law you say, and Horatio would shriek: "Hang the profiteers from lamp-posts," but what madness it is to countenance and tolerate evil and villainy, and then to waste useful mens' time in imprisoning miscreants! *Punishment never did any good.* Bringing offenders to justice while the causes of offence are not investigated that repetition may be prevented is but an aggravation of the evil, and, as Oscar Wilde said, with pathetic prophecy (in his admirable anarchistic essay "The Soul of Man": "When we read expurgated history we are appalled, not by the crimes that the wicked have perpetrated, but by the awful punishments the good have inflicted." I have been in prison—not as an interesting political offender—but as a "criminal," and, while there is blood in my veins, I am the comrade and champion of all poor wretches who, in the name of justice, are tortured and brutalized *for being poor or resenting poverty*, by their strong and lusty brothers at the bidding of grotesque pantaloons in wigs and gowns, the paid bullies of soulless capitalism.

Think the matter out to its logical conclusion, Mr. Moss. Even assuming that the people may be disillusioned about the fatherhood of God before they see through the paternity of government swindle, *it is all of a piece.* One need not be a Shelley to be a Libertarian (the glorious poet of man's emancipation was greatly indebted to his Anarchist father-in-law) nor a Russian Prince to be an acceptable Revolutionist. I have no pretension to be "a cultivated person with a scientific form of mind" (Anarchism is the simplest philosophy in the world), but simply "one of the masses, still very badly educated." But I am as little likely to be intimidated by intellect any more than I am to be impressed by wealth. Few men have been poorer, none has ever been prouder, than I; and that is the glorious fruit of Anarchist teaching. Whatever my limitations, *I am a man*, and carry my head above my shoulders as nobly as any fellow who ever wrote rhymes. I claim the right to live my own life in my own way; always, however, on the *qui vive* that my actions do not *tyranically* obstruct the liberty of others (if I order a newspaper, the freedom of many individuals is necessarily restricted in consequence), and the general acceptance of this doctrine would make for the greatest possible harmony. Mr. Cohen has been telling us for twenty years that whatever men profess to believe, their lives are conducted

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on a purely atheistical basis, and if men have not called themselves Anarchists, it is none the less true that the finest actions of the greatest souls of all time have been full of the spirit of Anarchy. *The freest expression of individualism is consonant with the highest good of the community.* My personality and my wishes may be ever changing, and so I have no inflexible rules of conduct. "Whim" is eternally inscribed on my forehead. I carry my detestation of government to the extent that I would not even make "a law for myself," for the only image that phrase suggests to me is that of a sorely maltreated creature of muddled understanding suddenly finding his own strength, and, having vanquished all his persecutors, making up his mind to kick his own posterior.

I come to preach Life, not Death. I know the whole Art of Living, and I believe with Ingersoll that the way to be happy is to make others happy. Long live liberty! Let us always have Truth, nobility of purpose, and cleanness of heart. Away with gods, governments, and everything that obstructs free, spontaneous, and joyous existence. *Vive L'Anarchie!*

J. Effel.

MR. MANN AND THE SOUL.

Sir,—*Freethinker*, August 11, p. 421. I agree that Denniss *is an ass*, his allusion to the "drunken soldiers" shows that he has hardly ever read what he wants to refute. But on p. 429 W. Mann shows nearly the same kind of stupidity. He quotes Sylvanus Thompson's remark about the *spiritual perception*, which is unintelligible to the man who has it not; and Mann thinks he answers Sylvanus Thompson by saying "competent travellers tell us of numerous tribes who have no idea of God whatever." Who said they had? Not Sylvanus Thompson, if Mann's quotations are representative. Sylvanus Thompson said, in effect: "Some men have a sense of the non-physical." Mann answers as if he had said "All men have a sense of God." The former is true, the latter is false.

I, for instance, *know* I am not a mere function of my body; I lived before it, and will live after it. "Abracadabra" says I am "a liar, however sincere." "Abracadabra" is, as Sylvanus Thompson says, like a blind man denying sight. But I don't claim any knowledge of an almighty and all-good being; indeed, I am pretty sure there is none, though there are some many trillion times wiser and better than I am, and some equally worse.

C. H.

NIETZSCHE AND GERMANY.

Sir,—Your contributors have on more than one occasion vindicated the character of Nietzsche's philosophy in the face of clerical and lay prejudice, but I do not think sufficient stress has been laid upon his absolute *horror* of what is known as "Higher Politics," the power behind the "mailed fist" of nations to-day.

I was led to this reflection on looking through the correspondence columns of a back number of the *Nation* and seeing his name associated with "Prussianism" in a letter written by a few Russian *bourgeoise* resident in London.

This of a man who cynically referred to Italy's part in the Triple Alliance as a "mesalliance," with the "Empire" who suggested the word "German" as a symbol of depravity, who realized the hopelessness of addressing his message to a people infected by what he called "Rhinoscera, the worm of Empire," and whose ultimate mental breakdown is to be attributed in no small degree to the rude and vulgar treatment his refined and sensitive spirit experienced at the hands of the sons of "Europe's Flat land."

One stands abashed at the dishonesty of slandering what one has not even tried to understand. I know of a dear man—long since asleep in France—to whom the call to resist German aggression was strongest on account of his devotion to the principles as enunciated by the great Basle philosopher. *Imprimatur.*

E. A. McDonald.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Materialism.—The Editor	469
"Our Holy Mother Church."—J. T. Lloyd	470
The Triumph of Darwinism.—Mimnermus	471
Is Religion of Use?—E. Lyttelton	472
That Revival of Religion.—J. F. Rayner	473
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—Chapman Cohen	476
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	477
The Massacre of St. Bartholomew Day.—E. Anderson	478
Freethought in Christian Circles.—Evolutionist	478

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Materialism.

There has of late been much talk in some quarters as to the dangers of Materialism. The warning is an old one. The main purpose of these warnings is, of course, to warn the timid off something which is extremely dangerous to all forms of superstition. But the clergy in particular seek to attain their end by using the word Materialism in a double sense, and while offering one for criticism really working on the other. For Materialism may be used in both a moral sense or in a purely scientific one. Scientifically, Materialism may be taken as meaning that all natural phenomena are ultimately explainable by mechanical formulæ, and that life and mind are elaborate and complex results of purely natural forces. From this point of view the connection between Materialism and morality is about as close as that between geography and genesis, Manhattan and midwifery, or Homer and homœopathy. Apart from this is a secondary social or moral meaning—that of devotion to sensual gratification, with an ignoring of the higher aspects of life. If the protest were only against this last form, it would be endorsed by Freethinkers. But the policy of the clergy is to confuse the two senses of the word, and having proved that certain people are Materialists in the scientific sense of the word, convict them on the moral issue. The trick is characteristically Christian, for in the scale of intellectual virtues Christianity stands as near the bottom as may be.

* * *

Who Are the Materialists?

Now, surely, the last thing that can be brought against scientific and Freethought workers is that they are materialistic in a social or moral sense. On the contrary, their very idealism has often earned them the ridicule of their fellows. Scientific workers have not gone over the country parading their self-sacrifice with the unctuous selfishness of religious believers, but the last thing that could be said of them is that their lives were selfish or sensualistic. And the same is true of Freethought workers. All over the country hundreds of men and women are found publicly devoting themselves to a cause that can offer them no "worldly advancement, and can only promise slander and abuse." They go on bearing this petty persecution for a cause which the ordinary Christian repudiates because the solid and immediate personal gain is insufficient. And this very real idealism is the more admirable because it is so often consummated in solitude. It is comparatively easy to undergo martyrdom in a crowd, or to suffer persecution in a cluster. The test of character is to be alone—like Bruno at the stake—and then find in one's principles sufficient strength to stand against all that bigotry can achieve. The idealism of the Materialist is a standing rebuke to the Materialism of the Christian.

* * *

The Meaning of an Attack.

As a matter of fact, a great many of the arguments of Christians against Freethinkers turn on the Materialism of the former and the idealism of the latter. Everyone is familiar with the argument that in destroying the belief in future rewards and punishments the Freethinker is sowing the seeds of a widespread immorality. And what is this but saying that human nature in itself is neither hopeful enough nor helpful enough to find in conduct sufficient incentive or reward. Our offence here is that our ideals are too high; human nature will not respond to them; it needs palpable rewards or punishments. This may be true, but it is ridiculous calling those materialistic who champion Freethought. The ethical Materialism clearly belongs to the Christian. It is the same with the whole of Christian teaching. Charles Lamb said that he always felt like saying grace before reading Shakespeare; and in a Christian country this is regarded as a joke. But why not? If a man believes in God, why not thank him for *Hamlet* or *Lear?* The Christian who is so afraid of the effects of Materialism, reserves his grace for his dinner. His æsthetic feelings centre about the region of his stomach.

* * *

Christian Influence on Life.

Let us leave theory, and come to facts. Apart from all theory, could life be conducted on a more materialistic basis than it is in this Christian country after centuries of Christian nurture? Among select circles the artist, the man of letters, the scientist, the reformer, may each receive a measure of appreciation. But what of the mass of the people? It is a sober fact that with them the successful prize-fighter, the famous footballer, the victorious soldier, cuts a far greater figure. What is the ideal character placed before young men just entering life? Not the man who has devoted his life to high ideals, but the one who begins as a poor boy, and by the practice of a miserable thrift, and by qualities of a more or less "toadyish" description has amassed a fortune in solid cash. And once the fortune is made, the man with the money-bags is nowhere so sure of servile attention, flattery, and adulation, as in Church or Chapel. Not on the Stock Exchange is the man of money worshipped so much as in the religious meeting-house. We look down upon our hard-working but poor student, we praise and pension our successful fighting man or idolize our great merchant. Ruskin said that the motto of the Englishman was, wherever he was to get some-

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where else, and whatever he had to get more, while the Christianity of England, in practice, was such, that if engineers could build a tunnel to hell, Christians would invest their money in it and close all the churches for fear of lowering the dividends. Is this more than a brutal summary of facts? We have of late been deluged with the speeches about the greatness and the might of England; our Christian humility being quite consonant with self-laudation of the most nauseous character. But if we take the overwhelming majority of people, can we say that their conception of England's greatness ever reaches higher than that of power and money, territory and trade? It is the heretic who is always insisting that character is of more importance than cash; that all the trade and all the territory in the world will not save a country from decadence when it forgets that its only real and permanent wealth is the kind of men and women it breeds. * * *

A Demoralizing Creed.

In the vicious and ethical sense of the word, Christianity is a materialistic religion; Christian peoples are materialized by the influence of their creed. A religion that had held up sane and lofty ideals during its history, which has based its teachings upon realities while holding up the ideal of a gradually perfected human society, would have made impossible the money mania of the past four or five generations, as well as have prevented the cataclysm it is now experiencing. But the real worth of Christianity is seen in the fact that it could offer nothing to oppose the more demoralizing tendencies of modern life. Far from opposing them, it sanctioned and defended them. And its opposition to intellectual development and independence involved the brutalization of life all round. The condemnation of theology, said one writer, is its history; and a complete condemnation of Christianity is seen in the present condition of a world in which the Church has stood as a great moulding influence for so many centuries.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Our Holy Mother Church."

IV.

IT is often truly said that one of the most effective methods of disproving the Divine origin and character of Christianity is to explain its teaching; but it is equally true that no complete exposition of its dogmas is possible without utilizing to the full the witness of history. It is a generally acknowledged fact that of the history of the Christian Church no one can honestly feel proud. On this point even Christian scholars are in perfect agreement. We would naturally have thought, for example, that the Church would have been seen at its highest and best in its General Councils, convoked as the courts of final appeal on all theological and ecclesiastical questions. They were composed of the wisest, holiest, and most learned men of whom the Church could boast, the sole purpose of whose meeting together was to deliberate with the utmost reverence, self-renunciation, patience, and good temper on the various subjects submitted to them. As a matter of fact, however, such Councils were notoriously turbulent, veritable fields of battle where bitterest animosities and hostilities ran riot, and the most venerated Fathers in God were literally at one another's throats. Nobody can read the account of the famous Council of Nicæa, as related by Dean Stanley in his *Eastern Church*, and believe that its decisions were arrived at through the guiding influence of the Holy Ghost. Surely the Holy Ghost was conspicuous only by his absence from that Council; and the same thing may be said of most other similar gatherings. Dean Milman says:—

> Nowhere is Christianity less attractive, and if we look to the ordinary tone and character of the proceedings, less authoritative, than in the Councils of the Church. It is in general a fierce collision of two rival factions, neither of which will yield, each of which is solemnly pledged against conviction. Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent majority, decisions by wild acclamation rather than after sober inquiry, detract from the reverence and impugn the judgments, at least of the later Councils. The close is almost invariably a terrible anathema, in which it is impossible not to discern the tones of human hatred, of arrogant triumph, of rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated adversary (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol i., p. 202).

We now come to the Council of Constance (1414-18), convened after Christianity had been in power for upwards of a thousand years. At this time there were three Popes, each claiming the allegiance of Christendom. A few years previously (1409) a Council had been held at Pisa, which deposed Popes Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII.; and the following is the sentence pronounced upon them:—

> The Holy Universal Council, representing the Catholic Church of God, to whom belongs the judgment in this cause, assembled by the grace of the Holy Ghost in the Cathedral of Pisa, having duly heard the promoters of the cause for the extirpation of the detestable and inveterate Schism, and the union and re-establishment of our Holy Mother Church, against Peter di Luna and Angelo Corario, called by some Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII., declares the crimes and excesses, adduced before the Council, to be true, and of public fame. The two competitors, Peter di Luna and Angelo Corario, have been and are notorious schismatics, obstinate partisans, abettors, defenders, approvers of this long schism; notorious heretics as having departed from the faith; involved in the crimes of perjury and breach of their oaths; openly scandalizing the Church by their manifest obstinacy, and utterly incorrigible; by their enormous iniquities and excesses they have made themselves unworthy of all honour and dignity, especially of the Supreme Pontificate; and though by the canons they are actually rejected of God, deprived and cut off from the Church, nevertheless the Church, by this definitive sentence, deposes, rejects, and cuts them off, prohibiting both and each from assuming any longer the Sovereign Pontificate, declaring for further security the Papacy to be vacant.

A new Pope, Alexander V., was duly elected by the grace of the Holy Ghost; but, unfortunately, Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII. declined to be deposed, each, by the grace of the same Holy Ghost, calling himself Christ's sole Vicar on earth. Alexander V. died, and was succeeded by John XXIII. It was in order to put an end to this disgraceful schism that the Council of Constance was convoked conjointly by the Emperor Sigismund and John XXIII. Assuming the legality of the proceedings of the Council of Pisa, John was looked upon as the rightful Pope; and he presided at the early sessions of the Council of Constance. It was a huge assembly, consisting of four Patriarchs, twenty-nine Cardinals, thirty-three Archbishops, one hundred and fifty Bishops, one hundred and thirty-four Abbots, two hundred and fifty Doctors, one hundred and twenty-five Provosts. "With their whole attendance the clergy amounted to eighteen thousand." It was also a tumultuous assembly. The holy men quarrelled over almost every question brought before them. John curried favour on the right and on the left, and, for a time, seemed to be gaining in popularity. He was a man of the most scandalous character. There was scarcely a crime he was not charged with having committed. He tried bribery, heaping gifts and

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promises upon the cardinals. He admitted the truth of many of the charges against him, of which there were between fifty and sixty. The feeling against him grew stronger and stronger, until there was a well-nigh general demand for his cession of the Papacy. Like a coward, he took refuge in flight. Eventually he was deposed, and his two rivals as well. It took months of plotting and counter-plotting, and of endless intriguing, to bring the deposition about. So far the Council had assumed and acted on the assumption of its superiority to the Pope; but no sooner was the new Pope, Martin V., elected, who was a strong personality, than it was reduced to a position of slavish subordination. Even the Emperor prostrated himself before the Pontiff, thus recognizing his supremacy. To those who clamoured for reforms his Imperial Majesty bitterly said: "When we urged that reform should precede the election of a Pope, you scorned our judgment and insisted on first having a Pope. Lo, you have a Pope, implore him for reform. I had some power before a Pope was chosen, now I have none." As Milman remarks: "The Council saw its fatal error. In creating a Pope of high character, it had given itself a master." Martin was really opposed to reform, his one ambition being to regain the temporal power.

In the fifteenth century several Councils were held, but practically no reform of the Church resulted. In the words employed the Holy Ghost was much in evidence, but in the deeds of the Papacy there was no trace of his presence. The Pope was again the nominal head of Christendom, but his rule gave rise to a steadily growing amount of popular discontent. Everywhere there were loud complaints against his greed and avarice. Of holiness there was none, and true motherliness was wholly lacking. And from that day to this the Church has been on the downgrade. The learning which it suppressed on coming to power revived, and, for the last three or four centuries, has been slowly but surely exposing and supplanting its quondam suppressor.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Triumph of Darwinism.

Souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.
—*Matthew Arnold.*

Sixty years ago Charles Darwin demonstrated that man has attained his present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect state. The general admission of this truth sweeps away at once the old Biblical legends which men have been accustomed to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the Devil, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forth. With it also goes the Bibliolatry which—like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Bible of the ancient Hebrews must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank among the sacred books of other and older nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance. And, strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come among us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths; but, compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been trifling. Silently and steadily, for sixty years, Darwinism has been resistlessly pushing its way till no educated man or woman now attempts to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals" while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of scientific thought, the new theory must appear like Banquo's awful ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and their prayers, and see the awful shape in front of them. Adam and Eve, the Lord God and the Devil, are driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin, with the more potent weapon—a steel pen.

Since Darwin's death, the clergy, who formerly denounced him with the whole vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, hypocritically, claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this black sheep in Westminster Abbey, and calmly pretend that the teachings of Evolution is wholly in accord with that of the Church and the Bible. Only two religious bodies have been honest in this matter. Poles asunder in many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to ignorance. On no condition will they part with Eve and the apple and the talking snake. Catholics and Salvationists alike believe that Darwin and his colleagues are suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured folk no more believe in evolution than they understand the rudiments of science. But those who are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, religion and science, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the glib speakers on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms, are assuring us that the great truths of evolution are all in harmony with the Hebrew Bible, and that the discoveries of science are an assistance to religion.

All this Christian camouflage might succeed were it not for the fact that men have so many other sources of information than the pulpit utterances of their "pastors and masters." The publication of the *Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Hooker* should make many persons think furiously. For in these volumes Darwin, being dead, yet speaks on these tremendous matters. From the letters of this lifelong friend of Darwin we get a wonderful picture of the group of men who made the nineteenth century illustrious by throwing a new light into every corner of human thought. The very names are an inspiration: Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, Lyell, Hooker, to mention no others. In these pages we find recorded something of the beginnings of the great struggle for the theory of evolution, already so potent a force, yet only, in its modern form, sixty years old. Once more the salient facts are recounted, the facts which are ever in danger of being obscured, misrepresented, or forgotten.

Slowly, with lapses into its "loved Egyptian night," mankind is shaking itself free of the last desperate clutches of superstition. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hand of the priests, it stands amazed on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later it will lead mankind to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals:—

New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.....
Nor attempt the future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

Mimnermus.

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to think or act beyond mankind. —*Pope.*

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Is Religion of Use?

Dr. Lyttelton's Reply.

SIR,—The title at the head of this letter is the one you gave to your last article. I repeat it, though proposing to-day to move the discussion forwards and downwards to a new fundamental issue. Meantime, let me say, our readers—if we have any—ought to be grateful to you for lucid writing. It is a great thing to be dealing with an interlocutor on questions concerning religion who always makes his meaning clear; else, as was once remarked, you only have his own word for it whether he is in the clouds or in the mud.

Let us take your statement of the point now reached, which I will not traverse, because it lets down a shaft into a region whither I have all along been desirous of penetrating, viz., your own positive beliefs about progress; and, if I am not mistaken, they would be not incorrectly stated as follows: Certain non-religious social forces have in the past been associated with religion and have curbed the latter, preventing it from producing far more mischief than it actually has produced, being "an essentially irrational and progressively harmful thing." The rest of your article explains how in the infancy of societies man revealed his childish "volitional" view of nature, and you also give some hints as to these remedial progressive social forces to which mankind owes so much.

Now, I propose to shift the discussion away from the question as to the correctness of your view of man's history, because, as already urged, the discussion of anything historical nearly always leads on to a quagmire, which, owing to its trackless character, is noisy with dissentient voices. It has all the disadvantages of a wilderness combined with the tumult of Cheapside. But if we look at your assumption as to this remedial corrective power which has all along been, and still is, at work cleansing men's minds and sloughing off the outworn rags of religion from the limbs of the body politic, it is plain that we shall be considering something, not of antiquarian, but of present-day interest—to wit: a power for good which not only is operating to-day but is certain to be victorious.

What, then, of this power or these "forces" to which so much is attributed? If this were a vulgar newspaper controversy, which, I am thankful to say, it is not; you would expect me to argue that there is no such thing as this power, or that it is a woeful mistake to suppose that it has acted beneficially, and so on. I am going to do no such thing, simply because I heartily agree with you about the existence of this power and the effects of its operation; and, further, I see hope of a real clearing of the air if we examine into the nature of the thing, and see if we can discern any laws of its working. You imply there are laws, and, again, I agree.

We seem to be like two men engaged in digging for a treasure in the field. One of them (A) has for a long time been saying that he has found it. The other (B) shouts from the hole he has been excavating that A is wrong in supposing that what he has found is a treasure at all; it is really quite worthless, and essentially baneful. A then rejoins: "Never mind that; if it contents me, that is something; but what I wish to ask is, what is the nature of *your* find? Because I strongly suspect that you have come upon another portion of the same treasure, but for some reason, not very plain to me, you are eager to show that your find is wholly different from mine, in quality and in operation. You seem to think we should both be happier men if this fundamental difference could be established, whereas I feel certain we should not be the happier for that at all; quite the reverse; and that even if you were right in your surmise, it behoves us both to clear up the question, Is our treasure the same or different? because we both believe in the advisability of following after Truth."

In other words, what you, Sir, call social forces, I call God; and the question now looms in sight why you shrink from using the same title; my conviction is that the more your assumption is examined, the more Theistic it will be found to be.

For it has to be observed that these forces are credited with an amazing strength. Anything that raises public opinion on social habits must be uncommonly strong; the public being like a bulky and unskilled mountain climber, full of enthusiasm about getting to the top, but ponderous when it comes to hauling him up the face of a rock. But the forces in question, according to your estimate, have till quite lately been restricted to a tiny, almost invisibly small, section of mankind; I mean those who can fairly be called non-religious. I am here relying on the information of travellers and other learned people, who tell us that there is hardly such a thing as a tribe in the wildest regions of the earth's surface who have not shown that they believe in a God of sorts, and in their own strange way worshipped him. Now, whether we agree with this estimate or not, whether we deplore it or not, is not the question. I affirm that in any case we may only imagine the truly non-religious people to have been a very small minority of the whole number at any given moment. Thus these ameliorative forces, though working in a tiny number, have done a very wonderful thing, even if they should fail in fulfilling your forecast and finally purging mankind from error and unprogressive ways. They have been, and are, lifting the mass of their fellow-men—say some ninety-five per cent.—right up and above the slough of superstition.

We have, surely, gone far enough now to face the really interesting question: Can we define at all clearly what and whence these social forces are? May I invite you to do what our card-playing friends—before the War, of course—used sometimes to do—lay some of your cards on the table? or go back to my previous figure: will B, for a moment, leave off denouncing A's treasure, and tell us as plainly as he can how his own differs from A's? I am afraid A's notion that it is the same treasure all along may strike B as little better than blasphemous, but that is no reason why B should not comply.

E. LYTTELTON.

Before Worship.

"THE church bell's ringing; hurry up, my dear.
It's turned the quarter—so we must make haste.
The weather is all right—the sky quite clear.
I think this hat is in the best of taste.
It's hardly right, as I was saying to dad,
To dress for church in brightly coloured things.
A quiet blouse with georgette's not so bad.....
A simple hat.....I always hated wings!
Now, *are* you coming, dear? Please hurry, do.
We're never there in time—you're always late.
What's that? You've lost your hymn-book, and
your Prayer-book too!
Oh! how much longer have I got to wait?
Perhaps you left them —— Now, just let me think.....
Behind the workbox on the mantleshelf?
Or on that desk where mother puts the ink?
Oh! let me come—I'll look for them myself.
Why, here they are, upon the new hall chair,
Just where you left them. What a head you've got!
Now, come along.....We are a lively pair!
The church bell's stopped, and we shall have to trot."

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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That Revival of Religion.

> The weakest thing about the Victorian age was not its admiration for its great men, in which it will presently be recognized to have been mainly right, nor its interest in ethics, which is in fact its closest link with all the greatest ages of the spirit of man, but a strange delusion into which many of its abler minds were led by its prodigious achievements in science, and the vulgar by its mechanical discoveries. Twenty years ago the writer of these words heard an ordinary fairly intelligent Victorian say that he had "outgrown poetry." The speaker was a man as innocent of the mysteries of machines as of those of the Spencerian philosophy, and he certainly did not know how typical of his age he was. Nor was either he or his age at all aware that the process he referred to is not in fact one with which any word having any connection with growth has anything at all to do. Man cannot live by material progress, mechanical inventions, physical science, and an intellectual system of beliefs or disbeliefs; and the completed bankruptcy of the notion that he can is the greatest achievement of the last thirty years. It has been more complete and conspicuous in France than in England perhaps, and perhaps it was more needed there than here. But it has been very visible in England too. The people who thought that religion and art and poetry belonged to the childhood out of which mankind was passing are dead; and art and poetry and religion are not dead.—"*Times*" *Literary Supplement*, July 4, 1918.

THIS solemn nonsense forms one of the latest examples of the constantly recurring assertion that the present age is predominantly religious, succeeding to one predominantly irreligious; and here it is amplified to include poetry and art as being then under eclipse. If we understand the writer, he would have us believe that—

(*a*) Religion, poetry, and art are allied, and are not found apart.

(*b*) The Victorian age was an age of triumphant science and materialistic intellectualism, devoid of religion, science, and art.

(*c*) The present time is characterized by a repudiation of these tendencies, and has returned to religion, etc.

These statements we oppose (as Gladstone said) by a very simple method: "Everything the honourable gentleman has affirmed I shall deny; everything he has denied I shall affirm," as thus:—

(*a*) Poetry is found conjoined with scepticism in many of its greatest masters, *e.g.*, Lucretius, Voltaire, Heine, Burns, Byron, Shelley, Swinburne, Walt Whitman, Hugo, besides Omar, Lessing, George Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, James Thomson, Buchanan, M. Arnold, Eden Philpotts, d'Annunzio, *cum multis aliis*. Art is found conjoined with scepticism in Salvator Rosa, and—more or less veiled—in many other old masters, as Mr. H. G. Farmer shows; and in such moderns as David, Delacroix, Courbet, Turner, Watts, F. Madox Brown, Morris, Rossetti, Linton, Du Maurier, Verestchagin, Berlioz, Wagner, Grieg, to name no more.

(*b*) The Victorian age was when the great discoveries of science had to struggle for recognition, when Lyell and Darwin were reviled and ridiculed by nearly all popular leaders, such as Gladstone, Beaconsfield, Salisbury, when books on the "wonders of creation" were decorated with hymns and pious invocations, when the mild heresy of *Essays and Reviews* was stigmatized by the good Lord Shaftesbury as the "spawn of hell" (what would he have said to the deliverances of the present Bishop of Hereford?), when Sunday was still a day of penance. It was the era of great preachers and successful revivalists like Spurgeon, Liddon, and Moody, of the immense circulation of devotional books, such as Macduff's, Goulburn's, Oxenden's, of the High-Church Movement, of the "miracles" of Lourdes. Rationalism truly was dawning; its day was at hand. But unpoetical the Victorian age was not; we need but recall the names of Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Whitman, Hugo; in prose imaginative literature it saw Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, George Sand, Turgenev; in art, the *maestri* cited above, and others.

(*c*) That a secular and rationalistic spirit prevailed at last, and is now prevailing, is evidenced by the falling off in attendance at church and Sunday-school, and the popularity of Sunday cinemas, Sunday games, and Sunday excursions, unthinkable fifty years ago, by the tone of the popular press and of the leading novelists (mostly avowed Freethinkers), but the departure of religious allusions from manuals of natural history, even those issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, by bishops warning us not to teach the Bible uncorrected by Darwin, by the greater and greater dependence on materialistic rather than "spiritual" aid, *e.g.*, at the War disease is combated, not by holy water from the fount of "Our Lady of Lourdes," but by ordinary, unsanctified HO^2 just run through sand or treated with bleaching powder.

It is a little amusing—we may add—that, according to Dr. Lyttelton, that urbane but earnest Christian advocate, the religious revival took place, not thirty or forty, but 150 years ago.

Moreover, according to Professor Bonney and other pietists, when animadverting on present-day phenomena of which they disapprove, society is now suffering from a "flood of materialism," made in Germany, needless to say. The old adage: "Set a thief to catch a thief" (*mutatis mutantis*, as the back of the dictionary has it, of course), seems appropriate here: set a Christian advocate to refute a Christian advocate.

J. F. RAYNER.

Acid Drops.

Scotland is moving. There are now Sunday bands in some of the parks, and the local Christian Endeavour Union and Free Presbytery have protested vigorously against this profanation of the "Sawbath." We think they are likely to protest in vain. Once the Scots get a good thing they will not easily let it go. We note that our old friend and contributor, Mr. H. G. Farmer, conducted the band of eighty performers at Kelvingrove. More power to him!

In view of the above we can understand why a discussion is going on in the Glasgow *Record* on "Has Religion Failed?" Some of the older folk will be thinking that religion is dead. Bands on Sunday! Newspapers discussing the failure of Christianity! There should be a great increase of Freethinkers in Glasgow in the near future.

There are good souls who do their little bit to alleviate the hardships of those ministers of the Gospel who have taken up their burden of poverty. Pastor Fort Newton, of the City Temple, who has to struggle along on a salary of getting on for a thousand a year, recently had 100 Treasury notes sent him, with the message, "For your holiday, from a big sinner." We wonder whether Dr. Newton wishes the message came from a bigger sinner?

Religion is admittedly at a low ebb just now, but the decrease in crime is extraordinary. The daily average population of convict establishments in this country before the War was 2,704, whereas to-day it is only 1,393. The county prisons' population has fallen from 14,352 to 7,335, and that of reformatories for inebriates from eighty-one to three.

The Young Men's Christian Association bids fair to become a firm of universal providers. It is now appealing for second-hand clothing and boots for discharged soldiers. Hence some of the young Christians will become "old clo'" men.

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Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York, has been dangerously ill, and is now dangerously well again.

"There was a time when Martin Luther was popular in England," declares the *Daily News*. Things are come to a pretty pass when the grandmotherly *Daily News* lays this sort of Catholic nonsense on the decorous Nonconformist breakfast table. The reputation of "the solitary monk who shook the world" was not made by journalists; it cannot be upset by them.

The endowment of superstition goes on apace. An anonymous gift of £4,000 has been sent to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

On August 24, Rev. T. McDonna was charged at Edinburgh with "improper behaviour" towards two boys. In defence, it was said the accused was not conscious of having acted in a wicked way. The Sheriff said that, in view of the severe discipline of the Roman Catholich Church, he thought a fine of £20 would meet the case. Evidently the discipline of the Church had not been powerful enough to prevent the offence being committed.

Three clergymen—Rev. Sir P. Thompson, Rev. R. Sugden, and Canon Stephen Campbell—left between them estates valued at over £267,000. The mortification of spirit they must have undergone in bearing such a burden demands our deepest sympathy. Let us hope they will meet their reward.

Profanity is more popular than it used to be. The *Daily Mirror* recently published a paragraph concerning a woman-gardener with the headline, "Mrs. Adam." If this had appeared in the *Freethinker*, people would have called it vulgar and in bad taste.

Swearing in police courts is not usually a solemn process, but a young Russian girl nearly caused the policeman at the Thames Police Court to faint, when, taking the oath, she broke out with the words, "Everything I shall tell shall be the untruth." This was indeed a home thrust.

The mentality of the real religionist is always an interesting study to those who are interested in psychology. An interesting sample is supplied in a recent issue of the *Express and Advertiser*, Hawick. The anonymous writer describes how some allotment holders, in defiance of custom, religion, and the "unco guid," decided to cultivate their ground on Sunday. This dare-devil resolve took place in the spring. But the Lord was watching them. The Sunday workers planted their seeds a fortnight before those who attended church on the "Sawbath." With what result? A nipping frost came at a vital moment, blighted the seeds that had been sown on Sunday, and left untouched the seeds of the church-goers that had been planted a fortnight later! Thus, says the writer, "it pays to remember the Sabbath and the God who ordained it for the life and needs of man." Thus God punished the violators of the Sabbath—and helped Germany in its endeavours to starve England!

But that is not all. The same writer says that in the South of England there was a vegetable show, and the whole of the four prizes were won by men who, from religious scruples, would not work their land on Sunday. We should much like to know the name of the show and the names of the men. But we are left wondering about the munition-makers who work on Sunday. Does God do anything to them? Or does he only punish those who try to raise food, but blesses those who make shells? If God is half as curious as his advocate in the *Express and Advertiser*, we should not be surprised at anything.

Speaking on the Education Bill at the Glasgow Presbytery meeting last week, Dr. Brown Bellahouston said he did not grudge the Roman Catholics and Episcopalians their privileges, but surely it was reasonable to give the same privilege to the Presbyterian Churches which had 82 per cent. of the population of Scotland. We wonder how Dr. Brown arrives at his statistics? Does he include as Presbyterians all those who are not either Roman Catholics or Episcopalians, such as Freethinkers, Agnostics, Unitarians, Nothingarians, and others?

Holy Mother Church frowns at divorce, but many people laugh at the Church. Thirty-five *decrees nisi* were made absolute in one day recently in the Vacation Court.

Owing to the decrease of pauperism, a number of workhouses are being closed or amalgamated. Changed economic conditions have produced these alterations when centuries of praying have failed.

Newspaper proprietors all over the country are now charging the usual advertisement rates for notices of religious services instead of inserting them without charge as in pre-War days. If the promised revival of religion takes place, the dear clergy will find that publicity will be expensive.

An Anglican chaplain, who has served for nearly three years in France and Mesopotamia, testifies that the bulk of soldiers are utterly indifferent to religion, and that nothing like a revival has at any time taken place among them. He praises the men in everything except their attitude to religion. He cites the following incident as characteristic:—

> Here is a true instance of this kind of attitude in its application to prayer. The enemy is placing a heavy barrage on our lines. Here is a man on his knees, praying hard. A short distance away is another man, watching the "effect" of prayer. Questions of all kinds arise in his mind. Presently a shell kills the "praying man." See the attitude of the watcher: "To hell with prayer; I shall never pray again."

Sir William Tilden, speaking at King's College, said: "Our so-called educated classes were almost entirely ignorant of elementary science." This practically explains why so many people accept the fairy tales of the Bible without question.

A writer in the London *Daily News* declares that Billy Sunday's popularity is owing to his having been a baseball player, and his talk is reminiscent of his sporting days. The dear clergy insist that his popularity is due to religion, but they overlook the tens of thousands of preachers who are unpopular.

The American invasion of British pulpits is going on apace. In a short time the Gospel should "hustle" or "get a move on," and our home-grown sinners "hit the sawdust trail." Educated congregations may sing "The bells of hell go ting-a-ling, a ling."

The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, has just published eight pamphlets against Materialism, Atheism, Secularism, and other kindred forms of unbelief, which even the *Church Times* damns with faint praise. Judged on their argumentative merits, "we should have been inclined to doubt if this very scrappy treatment of vast themes could really be convincing." We, on the other hand, are strongly inclined to pronounce the whole series, not merely unconvincing, but fundamentally fallacious.

To E. Romanes, writing in the *Church Times* for August 30: "it is incredible that people should think it worth while to spend money" on "efforts to undermine the faith of young soldiers." To us it is equally incredible that sane people can believe in a religion to the falseness of which all history bears irrefutable testimony, and which converts its genuine believers into despots who cannot tolerate the least opposition.

That there is some religion left in unexpected places is shown by the illuminated sky-sign above a Broadway (New York) cinema theatre, which reads, "To Hell with the Kaiser." This is the title of a picture-play being exhibited there. Let us hope that the management bring the audiences back again.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

IT is when need arises that one discovers one's friends, and the affection felt by readers for what so many of them call "Our Paper," is again shown by the appended first list of subscriptions to our "War Fund." Such a response is in the highest degree gratifying, although it would be mere affectation to say that we are surprised. We are not, but we are deeply impressed and appreciative. No editor ever had a more loyal body of readers, and the knowledge that they were there, ready to help when called, and often helping without the call, has been the one thing that has given us heart to press on in the face of all difficulties.

To adequately deal with all the letters received would require a special issue of the *Freethinker*, nor do I think it would make an uninteresting number. Many of the letters received are, however, of so generous, and even intimate, a character, that I can only thankfully acknowledge their receipt—and preserve them for re-reading on those occasions when one feels the need of a stimulant. I can only assure their writers that hard as the struggle has been, and is, these communications go a long way in the direction of repayment.

Amongst the first letters opened was one from a member of a whole family of sturdy Freethinkers—Mr. E. D. Side. He writes expressing his pleasure at being able to help, and hopes the response will be such as to at least put financial worries to flight. Mr. R. Wilson sends cheque in acknowledgment of our conduct of "the best paper he knows." Mr. W. D. Columbine writes:—

> All Freethinkers are indebted to you for the very able manner in which you are conducting the journal, and I am sure we ought to do all we can to relieve you of any financial burden in connection with the matter.

Mr. J. Pendlebury hopes for a long list of names and "a large total." The same desire is expressed by C. W. B. and many others.

Our old friend, Mr. T. Robertson (Glasgow), writes:—

> You have managed during the last year amazingly well. To require less in these times than was raised in pre-war days entitles you to the chairmanship of some of our government spending departments. It is a good thing there is no excess duty on minimized deficits. The £5 enclosed is a very small recompense for the pleasure derived from the pages of the *Freethinker* during the past twelve months, and for the feeling of pride I have in its conspicuous excellence.

Along with a personal compliment, Dr. P. M. McDermott says:—

> I have an especial affection for the journal, for it was through accidental contact with it that I was, from a staunch Goddite, converted, found salvation, and became saturated with the grace of reason.

If only half of those who have found "salvation" through this paper recognized it in the same way, what a host of readers and helpers we should have!

A cheery letter comes from Mrs. S. M. Peacock, of South Shields, whom we are glad to say continues her late husband's, and her own, interest in the Cause.

Mr. W. H. Blackmore proposes to send a monthly subscription until at least the end of the year. Finally, "Delta," in the course of a lengthy letter, says:—

> I am almost ashamed that I cannot send a cheque adequate to my desire. But such as it is, it comes from one who is in a position to appreciate the nature of the fight you are so successfully conducting. I have been connected with newspaper and publishing enterprises for over thirty years and, therefore, *know* something of the difficulties that must be met. Frankly, I was one who quite expected that, on the removal of so striking a personality as the late G. W. Foote, the *Freethinker* would have shared the fate of the *National Reformer* and the *Agnostic Journal*.....It would have been a triumph to have kept the *Freethinker* alive, but to have secured so large an increase in the circulation of the journal, and without asking from its readers more than in a time of peace, is indeed a triumph. As one writing, so to speak, from the inside, this is evidence of both business and organizing capacity that reflects credit on all concerned. After these four years, we Freethinkers can have the fullest confidence in the management of *our* paper, and the brightest hopes for its future.

As to the last sentence, we have in contemplation a development which will, we believe, be of considerable importance to the *Freethinker*, and to the Cause generally. On that matter we may write more fully a few weeks hence.

The following represents the subscriptions received up to the time of our going to press:—

First List of Subscriptions.

F. W. Hall, £50. C. W. B., £5. Mrs. F. Burns, £1 1s. Mrs. S. M. Peacock, £1 1s. H. Cairney, £1 1s. W. A., £2. Dr. P. M. McDermott, £10 10s. T. Robertson, £5. A. R. Wykes, 10s. J. B. Middleton, £5. Dr. and Mrs. J. Laing, £3 3s. Victoria Park (per J. Neate), £1. W. E. Bruce, 10s. Halliday (per Miss Vance), 1s. T. Burgess, 4s. 6d. A. Atherton, 5s. J. O. Connor, £1. Pte. D. T. Evans, 2s. 6d. E. A. Macdonald, £1. M. Matthews, 10s. Sergt. McFarfane, 9s. 6d. K. C. Clarkson, 10s. 6d. J. Davie, £1. V. Massey Crosse, £1 1s. J. Sumner, £5 5s. J. B. Palphreyman, 10s. Techne, 10s. G. E. Webb, £1 1s. W. B. Columbine, £10. D. D. B., £3 3s. R. Wilson, £5. J. Pendlebury, £5. A. Delve, £2 2s. S. E. Owen, £1 1s. W. Dodd, £1. G. Backhouse Church, 5s. W. Mather, £2 2s. R. H. Side, £3. E. D. Side, £2. Mrs. E. D. Side, £1. R. H. Side, Jun., 10s. Mrs. A. Robertson, £1. Kepler, 5s. F. Tongue, 2s. 9d. E. Syers, £1. G. White, £1. J. M. Gimson, £5. J. Breese, £2 2s. W. H. Blackmore, 5s. G. R. Harker, £1. Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s. J. T. Jones, £1 1s. J. Greevz Fysher, £1. C. R. Richards, 10s. Anno Domini, 10s. Belgravia, 10s. V. H. Smith, 10s. F. W. Walsh, 1s. 6d. P. and J. P., 10s. M. Bird, £1 10s. E. Wilson, £5. E. B., £1 1s. Dr. A. W. Laing, £5 5s. W. M., 2s. 6d. Pte. W. A. Williams, 2s. J. Kelsey, 3s. W. Kersting, 5s. E. L. G. (Dundee), £1. W. E. Pugh, £2 2s. J. Fergarson (per A. M.), 5s. Major Warren, 10s. M. S., 2s. 6d. S. Sweet, £1 1s. W. P. Jacobs, 10s. J. S. Buckle, £1. W. P. M., £1. J. N. Hill, 2s. A. W. Coleman, £2. T. Teasdale, 2s. H. Tucker, £1. V. P., £1 10s. "Delta," £2 2s.—Total £184 16s. 3d.

A number of acknowledgments are held over until next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

DAILY RULE.

Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, the arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I who have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly, and the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me, not (only) of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in (the same) intelligence and (the same) portion of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly, nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and the lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 8, Maesteg; September 15, Aberdare; September 22, Birmingham; September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

MRS. F. BURNS.—No one can value more than we do the appreciation felt by a good woman for the *Freethinker*. We should say that you are, by your life, reading your Christian friends a lesson it would be to their interest to master.

H. CAIRNEY.—We have no doubt we shall, as you say, "emerge successfully" from the fight against the present unparalleled difficulties. We are thankful for your help in pushing sales of the *Freethinker*. Shall look forward to seeing you soon.

D. D. B.—Thanks for subscription, also for sentiments expressed, which we greatly value. We are acting on the suggestion made.

J. S. BUCKLE.—Letters quite to the point. Impossible for us to fathom editor's reason for refusing to insert.

E. PARKER.—Have sent on label for waste paper. Will do as you suggest.

ONE of our readers would like to send a copy of the *Freethinker* to some soldier at the Front. We have no doubt this note will bring the required address.

LIBRA.—Thanks for new reader. We cannot have too many.

W. JANNAWAY.—The only guard against one person exercising undue influence over another is by education on the one side and a sense of moral restraint on the other. But the influence of one person on another is one of the inescapable facts of social life.

B. A. MILLICHAMP.—We are quite ready to send sacks for the transmission of waste paper. There is no need to wrap up parcels in sheets of brown paper. Tied securely with a label attached is quite enough.

C. M.—Thanks for birthday congratulations. You were in time. We achieved our half century on September 1.

T. C. LANGRIDGE.—*Organic Evolution*, by R. S. Lull, Macmillan, 1917, price 16s., is a work we can recommend for its comprehensiveness. As you say, the *fact* of evolution is questioned by none. It is the factors of evolution around which the discussion turns. *The Romance of the Human Body* will give you in a compact form an account of the human mechanism. Wells, Gardner & Co., 1917, price 5s.

V. H. SMITH.—We are obliged for the encouragement you are giving your newsagent to continue displaying the *Freethinker*.

ANNO DOMINI.—The suggestion you make is a flattering one, but hardly practicable now. Wait till we are out of the wood, then we shall be entitled to shout.

J. E. J. (Barrow).—The notes on Pastor Russell appeared in the issue for December 3, 1916. We hardly think the man's career is worthy of special attention in this paper.

W. SMALLRIDGE.—We are sending a parcel of literature for distribution. We hope it will be useful.

J. BREESE.—Your P.O. came to hand quite safely. We do intend to "keep the flag flying."

R. WILSON.—See "Acid Drops."

W. C. PUGH.—Sorry we cannot place the quotation, "There's none ever feared that the truth should be told, but he whom the truth would indict," for you. We are flattered by your kind words concerning the *Freethinker*. We may one day revive the special feature you name.

MR. J. BLACKHALL writes pointing out, in reference to Mr. Lloyd's article of August 25, that the place where the Papal Nuncio was waylaid and plundered was between Old Cumbris and Berwick, about seventeen miles north-west of the border city.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

There was a transposition of places in last week's announcement of Mr. Cohen's lectures. He lectures at Maesteg on September 8 and Aberdare on the 15, not *vice versa* as announced. The meeting at Maesteg to-day (September 8) will be held in the Gem Cinema, afternoon and evening, at 2.30 and 7 o'clock. We daresay there will be a good muster of Freethinkers if the weather is favourable, and, we hope, a good number of other folk.

It is some years since Mr. Cohen was in Aberdare, and his lectures there on Sunday next (September 15) will be held in the Grand Theatre, Aberaman; afternoon at 2.30, evening at 7. Admission is by silver collection.

Freethinker readers will be pleased to have something of Mr. T. F. Palmer's writings in a more permanent form than that of an article. *The Story of the Evolution of Life* has just been issued by the Secular Society, Limited, and it provides in a concise and comprehensive form an outline of the evidence upon which the theory of Evolution rests. The pamphlet is a purely propagandist effort, and is, therefore, issued at the low price (nowadays) of twopence, postage 1d. We hope to see the pamphlet secure the circulation it well deserves.

Mr. C. R. Richards writes:—

> The *Freethinker* seems more interesting than ever, judging by the correspondence I get from the fighting Fronts—France, Italy, and Mesopotamia. It is quite a bright streak in their lives, which they appreciate to the utmost. Never, they say, do you see a copy lying about idle, and at times it forms the basis of very interesting debates, in which the Atheist invariably comes out on top. It is good to know that you are able to carry on so successfully against such odds.

We are delighted to add this testimony to the others as to the part being played by the *Freethinker* in the theatres of war.

Our persistent "nagging" on the question of Secular Education has borne some fruit. We have received reports of forty-seven resolutions passed by Trade Union and other bodies, which have been duly forwarded to the Minister of Education. We should like to see this number greatly increased. Several friends have written suggesting that Mr. Cohen should issue a leaflet on the question. This may be done if he can find the time. Meanwhile there is already in print, in his *Religion and the Child*, an examination of the whole question.

The Swansea Branch opens its autumn meetings to-day (September 8) at 6.30, at the Elysium, with an address by "Casey," subject: "Music and the People." "Casey" is a skilled instrumentalist, and Dr. Vaughan Thomas will preside. Tickets for the lecture are 6d. each, and the proceedings commence at 6.30. We hope to hear of a good send off to the Branch's season.

A soldier writing from Palestine to the *Bradford Pioneer* says:—

> When I started this letter three days ago, I had made a resolution to quit fuming, and to try smiling instead. But to-day we had a compulsory church service, and once again I am raging. A church service is not a hardship, but to be compelled to attend is unbearable. To make things worse, the chaplain is a fool, and less than half the officers were present. Officers, apparently, do not need spiritual guidance. It was some consolation to see the whole service a fiasco, for the fellows wouldn't sing the hymns nor say the "Amens." The address was "The Beauty of Worship"—worship of a god who is all love and beauty. There was a prayer for "victory" and a "lasting peace," which was a pretty cool request, I thought.

May we again remind our readers that we are still collecting all the waste paper we can get in order to turn it into printing material? We are ready to pay the full schedule prices, and will send labels or sacks on request. This engaging in a kind of marine-store business is not a nice occupation, but we would go round ourselves and collect rags and bones rather than see the *Freethinker* "hung up," and we seem a long way from the end of the wood yet.

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A Search for the Soul.

X.

(*Continued from p. 453.*)

HAVING fully noticed the materialistic theory of the relation of body to mind and the correlation of the brain and thought, we will now see what the great physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge, has to say upon the subject. In his *Man and the Universe*, that distinguished scientist says :—

> The brain is our present organ of thought. Granted; but it does not follow that the brain generates or secretes thought, or that every thinking creature in the universe must possess a brain. Really we know too little about the way the brain *thinks*, if it can properly be said to think at all, to be justified in making any such assertion as that.....The physiological mechanism called brain and nerve are our servants, not our masters: we have to train them to serve our purpose; and if one side of the brain is injured, the other side may be trained to act instead. Destroy certain parts of the brain completely, however, and connection between the psychic and the material regions is for us severed. True; but cutting off or damaging communication is not the same as destroying or damaging the communicator: nor is smashing an organ equivalent to killing the organist. When the Atlantic cable broke, in 1858, instant communication between England and America was destroyed; but that fact did not involve the destruction of either America or England (pp. 92, 93).

The foregoing statements, it is almost needless to say, are not in agreement with science; they are merely a sample of what Americans call "highfalutin." Sir Oliver Lodge commences by admitting that "the brain is our *present* organ of thought," and he immediately proceeds to modify that admission and to contend that it is not that organ at all, but merely an instrument that is controlled by the mind. It does not follow, he says, "that the brain generates thought, or that every thinking creature in the universe must possess a brain." The first of these statements evidently depends upon the second; for if there are "creatures" in the universe that have the power to think without possessing brains, then it might follow that the brain is not necessarily the only organ of thought. So far as we know, however, every thinking creature in the universe has some rudimentary kind of brain; but Sir Oliver, as a Spiritist, believes that the so-called "discarnate spirit" is a "thinking creature," and this accounts for the foregoing statements. The latter is, of course, a purely imaginary being.

Sir Oliver next says that the brain and nerves "are our servants, not our masters." This is pure nonsense; for if the brain by its action induces a state of consciousness called Will, its further action in another region to carry out the mandate of that Will is solely one of co-operation. There could be no Will, in the first instance, without the molecular action of the brain.

Sir Oliver says that "we have to train the brain and nerves to serve our purpose, and if one side of the brain is injured, the other side may be trained to act instead." These statements are questionable. We all know, for instance, that the motor nerves on the right side of the brain move the muscles of the left side of the body, and that those on the left side of the brain move the muscles of the right side of the body; consequently, an injury to the brain on either side might paralyse the voluntary motion of the muscles and limbs on the opposite side. Now, nearly three years ago a young man of my acquaintance received a wound on the left side of the brain, and, in consequence, all the muscles of the right side of his body were completely paralysed. How was the right side of his brain to be "trained" to do the work which the injured side was unable to perform? The young man did not know, neither did the doctors know. For two full years the latter were unable to effect any change; for the same period no power of will on the part of the wounded man produced any alteration. The young man remained with one side paralysed the whole time—and then died. Comment is superfluous.

"Destroy certain parts of the brain completely," says Sir Oliver, "and connection between the psychic and the material regions is for us severed." This is an apologetic method of saying that when the grey matter of the brain which generates thought is completely destroyed there can be more thought. To speak of a psychical and a material region as two separate entities which require a "connection" is simply misleading; there is no psychic *region* apart from the brain; the whole of that organ is material.

Next, after admitting that when the brain is destroyed the connection is "severed," Sir Oliver says: "True; but cutting off or damaging communication is not the same as destroying or damaging the communicator, nor is smashing an organ equivalent to killing the organist." Here we see that the resultant of the functioning of the brain (*i.e.*, thought) is regarded as something quite apart from the cerebral organ, and, therefore, requiring "communication" between the two; also that smashing an organ is not killing the organist that plays upon it. This, again, is pure mystification. The brain is both organ *and* organist. In "smashing" the first, the second is annihilated. A more fitting parallel would be certain brain-cells of the organ and the music they give forth, the organist being the cerebral energy. Furthermore, we have the Atlantic cable analogue which indicates even more plainly how the brain and thought are regarded as separate entities. In this case, no one with a grain of sense *could* imagine that the breaking of the cable involved the destruction of England or America—a fact which the writer admits on the same page by saying that the argument is inconclusive. But why was such an inane argument ever employed?

Leaving Sir Oliver Lodge and his mystifications, we will now look at a few short extracts from Professor Huxley's lecture on a "Lobster." This physiologist in that lecture said :—

> Let us consider the tail of the lobster.....If I look at this physiologically, I see that it is a most beautifully constructed organ of locomotion, by means of which the animal can swiftly propel itself either backwards or forwards. .But how is this remarkable propulsive machine made to perform its functions? If I were to open one of these animals and take out the viscera only, leaving the white flesh, I should perceive that the lobster could bend and extend its tail as well as before.....Close observation of the newly opened lobster would soon show that all its movements are due to the same cause—the shortening and thickening of the fleshy fibres, which are technically called muscles.....The movements of the lobster are due to muscular contractility. But why does one group of muscles contract when the lobster wishes to extend his tail, and another group when he desires to bend it? *What is it that originates, directs, and controls the motive power?*.....In the head of the lobster there lies a small mass of that peculiar tissue which is known as nervous substance. Cords of similar matter connect this brain of the lobster, directly or indirectly, with the muscles. Now, if these communication cords are cut, the brain remaining entire, the power of exerting what we call voluntary motion in the parts below the section is destroyed; and, on the other hand, if, the cords remaining entire, the brain mass be destroyed, the same voluntary mobility is equally lost. Whence the inevitable conclusion is, that the power of originating these motions resides in the brain, and is propagated along the nervous cords.

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In the foregoing extracts it is conclusively proved that what is called "an act of will" in the living organism can only be performed by means of the brain and nervous system. When the lobster experienced (in the brain) the desire to go backwards or forwards, its wish was telegraphed along the motor nerves to the muscles in the tail, whereupon the energy locked up in those tissues immediately caused the necessary contractions—the movements of the tail instantly following the desire. The case is precisely the same in man and the higher animals; we thus have a clear proof that what is ascribed to the agency of the soul by Dualists like Sir Oliver Lodge is really performed by the brain.

(*To be continued.*) ABRACADABRA.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew Day.

AUGUST 24 was the anniversary of the above-mentioned national crime, and it should be annually borne in mind by every Freethinker throughout the world as an instance of the effects of priestcraft and unchecked religious feelings. It also demonstrates the evil which follows the linking any religion with politics and State affairs.

Let us briefly review the tragical circumstances, and call to mind the doings upon that horrid and terrifying night.

The cause of all the trouble was the Queen-mother of Charles IX. who feared that the influence of the Huguenot faction would ruin her family. This Queen Catherine de Medici found herself supplanted in affairs of state by Admiral Coligni, the leader of the Huguenots, and it is certain that she, with the assistance of the Dukes de Guise, Anjou, Aumale, and others, arranged the massacre, and used the Catholic fanaticism among the people merely as a tool. On August 22 Admiral Coligni was shot at from a window by a follower of the Duke de Guise, and wounded in two places. This enraged his supporters who collected and demonstrated and threatened reprisals. The weak-minded king was easily persuaded that he was in danger, and gave the dreadful decree. It was arranged that the bell of St. Germain should toll out the signal to start the massacre in the dead of night. The guilty mother and horror-stricken son looked from the Louvre windows upon the proceedings. All Paris rang with the murderous cry "Down with the Huguenot! Kill, kill!" About thirty thousand men, women, and children were slaughtered, many in their sleep. All the next day it continued, until in the evening the King sent out his trumpeter to stop the slaughter. It is said that owing to the circumstances, every man could kill his private enemy without fear of any inquiry, and many Catholics suffered from this. Many of the large cities caught the infection, such as Rouen, Lyons, etc., and the Queen took no steps to prevent it.

The end of the story is one which every sensible person expects. The King died two years afterwards, a prey during all that time to bitter remorse and horror, and a broken spirit, filled with every mental and physical suffering.

An event of this nature could not have occurred without the connivance and assistance of the Catholic Bishops, and, as a matter of history, we know that it was blessed by the Pope. Owing to this, the whole responsibility has been debited against the Catholic religion by Protestants; but although we are assured of the universal mischievous effect of Catholic teachings, let us not put all the blame on that source of evil. Protestants and their ideas are also to blame, and until Freethought and Science disposes of all these notions of supernatural things, let us not rest in the idea that we are safe from such tragedies.

E. ANDERSON.

GOD AND MAN.

An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.

BY CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE THREEPENCE. POSTAGE ½D.

Freethought in Christian Circles.

ONE of the strange experiences of my life has been to observe how wide-spread is the principle of freedom of thought in Christian communities. I could write a volume of my experiences in connection with this permeation of freedom of thought right to the very citadel ef religious life. A few years ago I was approached by a most eloquent preacher—who, if I attempt to describe, would be instantly recognized, he is so strongly individualized—with the direct request, would I join his Church? Upon my expressing surprise, saying: "Oh, I know you cannot really know my opinions," he said: ", I know all about you, I know where you are, you are a good man, you want to live a good life, that is enough for us, I will ask you no questions at all. Give me your consent and you shall be made a member." I thanked him but declined. I know the case of a regular reader of your columns. I have seen his name among your subscribers, yet he has paid pew rent in a chapel for the past fifteen years for no other purpose than his interest in the ethical development of his family. He and his wife at times go to hear the minister. "Oh, he is a fine man; never mind what is his creed. He does you good at times to listen to him." This the justification for attendance upon things the mind has outgrown.

I knew the case of a lady of great culture and wide reading, who is an Agnostic. At her table are to be found at times officers of the Salvation Army. They know her mental attitude towards their beliefs. She subscribes generously towards their social work, saying, they have a mission for the slums which none other can do.

In Scotland there is a distinct phase of temperance—nay, prohibition—reform that is distinctly antagonistic to all religious teaching. The leader is just now in prison as a Conscientious Objector. His following have maintained a very high and earnest opposition to the drink traffic, but have been able to do this separate from religious association.

The other day I attended a Unitarian service. Beautiful hymns were sung; an invocation was read as prayer; the address was a very fine one upon the ancient sun-worshippers. To my own knowledge, every male attendant at that meeting was Agnostic—the preacher himself.

"Oh, I go to church for the choir and organ," said a blunt old shoemaker to me, recently; "I like to get my bass in the singing." This man is an Atheist, and has been one for thirty years of his life.

Go among the society of the Friends, the Theosophists the Free Christians—temperance and humane workers—and everywhere you find men and women who have outgrown creeds and beliefs, who find spiritual homes in churches which they know and realize are not really big enough for them; but they remain inside, but not really of it. Associations of friends, music, culture, reform, altruism in its widest aspiration, keep them there.

Some day a Church will arise big enough to embrace all the needs of mankind, all its moral and emotional aspirations. Was it not Mr. Bradlaugh who said, "No one ever sees a creed die"? It imperceptibly emerges to fit the new growth.

EVOLUTIONIST.

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT AND THE PRESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The article by "Mimnermus" in your issue of March 31, 1918, emphasizes what has repeatedly been urged from our side, namely, that a very considerable proportion —perhaps the greater part—of our public does not care for the Christian religion, if not actually antagonistic to it.

Curiously, in the same issue, you lament, in your "Views and Opinions," that the "press" stands on the religious side. One may well ask, Why? You argue that journalists, knowing better, have to yield to the tastes and predilections of their readers.

Well, if "Mimnermus" is right, the journalists are wrong. That is all. I trust, and I have thought so for a considerable time, that such is really the case. The public would

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welcome a daily which is above bigotry and gives them trustworthy information. I do not mean that such a paper must be on the Freethought side, but it should give Rationalism and its activities the same representation as religion. It should be indifferent, as a journal.

I venture to suggest that some wealthy Rationalist, if such a person exists, might start a daily paper in competition with the existing leading papers. Of course, he must be a man of considerable means, because his paper would in the first period have to fight its way, not only against the real enmity of the Black Army and the papers under their thumb, but also against the commercial prudence of advertisers, who would not risk their money before the paper has sufficient readers. I have, however, not the slightest doubt but that it will, even from a purely financial standpoint, eventually be a huge success, and will eclipse the biggest present one-sided daily in popularity.

The proprietor must, of course, be a sound business man, and he will soon attract the best intellects of the journalistic world to his side, and the public will soon find out to which paper they have to look for real news and guidance, and for trustworthy information about politics, social matters, education, science, art, and literature.

Johannesburg, S.A. J. H. OERDER.

[We are afraid our correspondent underestimates the difficulty, apart from finance, of putting his idea into operation. We are working at breaking down the unofficial boycott, and the efforts made are meeting with some success. What a Freethought paper needs is persistent and adequate advertising. And that resolves itself into questions of finance and organization.—ED.]

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—In yesterday's *Herald* you print the terms of an amendment to the Education Bill, drawn up by the Scottish Churches, etc. In it you refer to the "Conscience Clause" in 1872 Act, which gives relief to parents on behalf of their children. But what about a "Conscience Clause" for teachers who cannot conscientiously teach "religious" instruction? Is it fair that the exemption or relaxation which is granted to the child should be refused to the teacher? Certainly the number of teachers all over Scotland claiming this exemption might be small, but is that any reason why their case should not be considered? Teachers as a body are beginning to demand more control over the curriculum and over their conditions of employment, and are becoming more zealous of the rights of their members. This, then, I think, is a very proper question for the Government to tackle on behalf of a minority that is daily growing.

W. D. K.

[The above letter was sent to the *Glasgow Herald*, but failed to appear. We are asked to insert it, and, as it raises an important point, we comply with the request.—ED.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUG. 29.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Braddock, Brandes, Eager, Gorniot, Kelf, Leat, Neate, Neary, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Spence, Thurlow, Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Miss Pitcher, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were received for Bethnal Green, Goldthorpe, Maesteg, Sheffield, Swansea, West Ham, and the Parent Society (eighteen in all).

The President reported further activity in Wales, and it was also reported that summonses against Mr. F. Wood (South London) and the General Secretary (Miss Vance) had been issued at the instance of the L.C.C. for persisting in selling the *Freethinker*; the contention being that, although the permits issued to the N. S. S. were available to the end of September, they gave no authority for the sale of current numbers; therefore the matter would have to be dealt with again.

It was formally reported that the Special Committee elected by the Conference to formulate a scheme for reorganization had met on August 3 and 4, and their report would shortly be issued.

It was further resolved that the minutes of the Whit-Sunday Conference be sent to the Branches; and these comprise the report of the afternoon and a summary of the morning's proceedings.

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.

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

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

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

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and Life.—The Editor	481
The Authority of Jesus.—J. T. Lloyd	482
A Man Who Cheers Us All Up.—Mimnermus	483
The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer	484
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—Chapman Cohen	487
Paine: Prophet and Sage.—Ignotus	489
How Long Will They Wait?—F. J. Gould	489

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Life.

Many of my readers will be acquainted with Herbert Spencer's method of reconciling religion and science. The contest between the two, he said, was due to a delusion. The business of science, he explained, was with the known and the knowable; the business of religion with the unknown and unknowable. All that we know, or will ever know, is outside religion, and belongs to science; but all that we either know now or can know at any future time, belongs to religion. And if each keeps to its own sphere, there can be no conflict. The humour of the reconciliation may have been unconscious, but it was superb. Under cover of a philosophic camouflage, religion was informed that it began where human knowledge, actual and possible, ended. Ignorance, complete and irremovable, was its empire. Religion could avoid slaughter by agreeing to commit suicide. The business of religion was to worship a vacuum, and the conflict between it and science had resulted from its attempting to deal with things about which something could be known. That, we admit, is a dangerous thing for any religion to do.

* * *

Keeping Things Distinct.

We were reminded of this famous "reconciliation" by a passage in Dr. Lyttelton's article in last week's *Freethinker*. Dr. Lyttelton also thinks that the quarrel between the Freethinker and the Christian is due to a confusion, not, it is true, that of either stepping outside his proper sphere, but that of failure to recognize that each is really concerned with the same thing under different aspects. What we call social forces, Dr. Lyttelton calls God. About that Dr. Lyttelton must be the supreme judge. If he chooses to deify, and, we presume to personify, social forces, we have no right to object, much as we may wonder what justification he has for so doing. For we are quite certain that religion has never meant by "God" a complex of abstract and impersonal forces. The God of religion has always been, to quote Mr. Balfour, "something other than an Identity wherein all differences vanish, or a Unity which includes but does not transcend the differences which it somehow holds in solution." These later forms we cannot but regard as being fundamentally semi-philosophic excuses for the retention of a belief which lacks either verification as truth or justification in utility. So that when Dr. Lyttelton wonders why we shrink from calling social forces God, our reply is, because they are not God. Our reason is exactly the reason we have for not calling a yard of calico a pound of treacle. Of course, we can do so if we please, and can, on the basis of our wayward nomenclature, defend the sweetening properties of calico. But we are quite certain that few will understand what we mean, and, even when they grasp our meaning, will continue to use the old word in the old sense. And, on the whole, it is really better to call things by the names that the rest of the world use when speaking of them.

* * *

The Force Behind Religion.

And here, we are afraid, we fail to deserve the compliment paid us by Dr. Lyttelton as to our "lucid writing." For as our friendly critic has failed to grasp the essential point of our article for September 1, we are bound to conclude that in that case, at least, we failed to make clear our meaning. After saying that we "credit social forces with an amazing strength," Dr. Lyttelton writes:—

> The forces in question, according to your estimate, have till lately been restricted to a tiny, almost invisibly small, section of mankind; I mean those who can fairly be called non-religious.....There is hardly such a thing as a tribe in the wildest region of the earth's surface who have not shown that they believe in a God of sorts. .....(therefore) we may only imagine the truly non-religious people to have been a very small minority of the whole number at any given moment.

Now, this certainly misses the whole point I had in my mind when writing—which may be due to my want of lucidity. For the whole point of my argument was that, instead of the operation of the social forces being confined to "an invisibly small section," their influence was felt by all. We said that "so far as man consciously adjusts conduct to circumstances" religion dominates; but that religious beliefs, under the pressure of the social forces, are being continually modified to meet social needs—the social forces thus acting as a selective factor. So that it is not the *operation* of the social forces that is confined to a tiny section; but the recognition of their real nature, the majority continuing—as a result of their want of enlightenment—to clothe the products of social life in a religious dress. To take an illustration, the agriculturalist who mutters a religious formulæ while planting his seeds, and who prays and performs religious rites during their fructification, will naturally regard the product as due to his religious devotion. The non-religious person, separating the essential from the non-essential, omits the religious business, and secures, other things equal, as good a result. It is not here a question of one obeying certain natural laws, and the other ignoring them. Both obey, the one blindly, the other consciously. The first stands for the religious phase of human history, in which natural conditions are observed, at least to some extent, in ignorance of their nature, but accompanied by religion. The second stands

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for the rationalistic phase in which man becomes conscious of the nature of the forces at work, and leaves religion on one side as unnecessary.

* * *

A Question of Interpretation.

I hope the above will make my position perfectly clear. Man discovers the nature of the forces at work, but he does not create them, nor do they commence to function only when he becomes conscious of them. Gravitation was a discovery, not an invention. Natural selection did not begin with Darwin, he merely became aware of its existenoe. The whole matter, the real point at issue in the long struggle between religion and science, or between religion and rationalism, is really one of interpretation. The world is the same for all. Natural forces and conditions are the same for all. Disease attacks Atheist and Christian alike, but whether it is called a "visitation from God" or an outcome of natural conditions is a question of enlightenment. The same constellations look down upon us that looked down upon primitive man. The difference of our attitude towards them is a question of knowledge. We have epileptics and lunatics with us, as Jesus is said to have had with him. We have the same cases of hallucination and delusion to-day that two centuries ago caused hundreds to be burned for witchcraft. The facts of life do not alter, it is our interpretation of them that changes. And that interpretation marks the dividing line between the one who believes in God and the one who does not. And so with all other facts. If we may say it without conceit or impertinence, there is logical room in my philosophy for Dr. Lyttelton, but there is no logical room in his for me. We can explaim him, can he explain us. The Atheistic view allows for the world starting religious and ending non-religious. Can the Theistic view allow for the reverse process?

* * *

The Value of History.

Finally, we really cannot appreciate Dr. Lytteleon's desire to avoid a discussion of man's history, because we feel that it is only in the light of human history that we can understand the question in dispute. Allowing that we are in danger of landing in a quagmire, surely this is not inevitable. And the question to-day is for millions of people—not whether the belief in prayer, or miracle, or God, or heaven is true, that question is quite settled for them. What remains is the question: "How did people come to believe in these things?" And when that question is settled the reason of their existence nowadays is easy to find. Moreover, if, as Dr. Lyttelton says, God is what we call social forces, the historical question still remains. As an Atheist I believe that what men have called God is really a personification of natural and social forces—including under the latter head human emotions and ideals. And we have suggested how it was that man came to fall into this blunder and so to misinterpret Nature. In a word, what we have to do is to separate the facts from certain mistaken interpretations of them. Or, if these interpretations are not mistakes, we think it is Dr. Lyttelton's task to explain what function of life cannot proceed as well without religion as with it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

It is quite honour enough (and I expect before we get it done, we shall find it quite work enough) to get one truth cleared from rubbish before we die.—*Charles Kingsley.*

The doubts which beset men upon many of the greatest matters are the direct result of the lies and falsifications of our predecessors.—*Helps.*

The Authority of Jesus.

CHRISTIANITY, after a career of nineteen centuries, is still in the making, and its adherents are by no means agreed as to the best method of accelerating the process. This is true of it as represented under Catholicism. The development of doctrine in the Catholic Church is an intensely interesting and instructive study. No one can read the history of the General Councils without realizing that Christianity is an evolutionary product. We are reminded of Tennyson's well-known lines:—

> Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning Age of ages,
> Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into shape?

So it has been with Christianity in the Catholic Church. Many æons have passed and touched it into its present shape. This is truer still of it under Protestantism. Protestant theology being the most changeable thing under the sun; and it should not be forgotten that evolution implies dissolution. What we wish specially to emphasize just now, however, is that Christianity is in a vague, loose, fluid condition, liable to be affected by every wind that blows. Nothing is really and finally settled. Practically all questions relating to it are open, and are being freely debated. Dr. D. L. Ritchie, in a suggestive article in the *Christian World* for August 15, frankly admits that even the question of authority in religion is not closed, and that "there are trends of opinion and drifts to action among us that make it clear it must again be stirred." Then he ominously adds:—

> There is a sense in which it is always with us, and much confused thinking and vagrant policy would be escaped if only it were first frankly faced and settled. It is the sword that lies hidden in many of our controversies.

What a sad, humiliating confession for a minister to make in the twentieth century of his religion! It is a peculiarly Protestant confession, as Principal Ritchie himself acknowledges. He even speaks of "our present helplessness as Protestants and Free Churches" due to "our confusions here." Then he asks the old, familiar question:—

> Is the final seat of authority to be found in the Church, or in the Bible, or in the conscience, as God and his truth meet its needs? To that question there must be an unfaltering answer.

Unfortunately, however, to that question there are different and conflicting answers, each one of which is absolutely unfaltering. Has it never occurred to Dr. Ritchie that this fact alone proves conclusively that there cannot be any final seat of religious authority? He asserts that "Romanists do not hesitate in their reply, nor do Protestants who have thought through their position," which is doubtless true; but the determining factor is that Romanists and Protestants are at hopeless and fatal variance on the subject. Besides, Protestants are at loggerheads with one another on this fundamental point. The Principal is aware of this, as the following extract abundantly shows:—

> Certain it is that a clear decision must be made by many of our teachers, for the appeal in a circle, first to private judgment, then to the Bible, now to God known in the soul, then to the letter of Scripture, as either best suits, cannot longer be endured. It is the uncertain note that is so baffling and leads many to say that the dogmatism of Rome, with its Church authority, is to be preferred to the hesitation of not a little Protestantism. Does authority in religion rest on experience of God's grace, or on something external, be it an institution, or a person, or a book? If the latter, then to-day, with the results of scholarship in our hand, Rome, with its Church authority, is more strongly placed than a Protestantism with only a book authority, and

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how much more than the Church that trusts to neither and yet claims both! But all Protestantism that is not timid in its venture on God boldly affirms the former. It believes not only in a God who has spoken, but in a God who speaks, and that, too, as the Father, intimately and authoritatively, to all his children. And it claims the right to try the spirits whether or not they speak with the voice of the Father. The progressive religion of to-morrow will find its authority in God through experience.

We have now before us three different seats of authority, the Church, the Bible, and experience of God's grace; and Dr. Ritchie accepts the third. In reality, however, this is a trinity in unity, like the Godhead. The Church is a body whose head is Christ, and when it speaks it is Christ who speaks in or through it. The Church is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and it follows that its voice is divine and holy. The Bible, too, is the Word of God, and, no matter what scholarship may say, a clergyman is bound to treat it as such. Even Higher Critics, like Sir George Adam Smith, in so far as they are professional theologians, find in it the final revelation of God to the world. Both Church and Bible are fallible, in certain respects, but both are also, in certain other respects, God-given and God-filled. Is not the same thing true of individual believers? Do they not admit that they are at best but fallible, imperfect, and sinful, and yet is it not their proud boast that they are supernaturally born and supernaturally guided in all their ways? In what sense, then, can it be claimed that the seat of authority is in them rather than in the Church or the Bible? And what is the Church but a society or community of individual believers in whom God is supposed to speak? Dr. Ritchie laughs to scorn the notion that the Protestant Reformers rejected the Church and set up the Bible. "This is largely hearsay, not history," he rightly declares. "The Reformers claimed the right to try the Scriptures by the Gospel that made the Gospels." True; and yet it was in the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles that they found the Gospel; and having found it *there* they rejected any portion of the Bible which seemed to them to contradict it, as Luther condemned the Epistle of James. In any case, it was God's voice, whether in the Bible, in the Church, or in their own hearts, that appealed to them as finally authoritative.

Now, our contention is that God's voice, like God himself, is a figment of the imagination, possessing no objective reality whatever. Conscience is one of the noblest human faculties, but its decisions are determined alone by heredity and environment. A man's conscience is simply an expression of himself in his relation to his fellow-beings, or merely the voice of the social sense within him. In other words, it is the man himself as a member of society. A conscience cleansed by grace is, like sin, a theological invention. To be of any service conscience must be regnant, self-sufficient, and assertive, not submissive, humbled, and apologetic. To call it the voice of God is to woefully misunderstand and misrepresent it. Dr. Ritchie says that the seat of authority is found "in its obedience to the truth of Christ meeting its need and leading it forth bravely to witness"; but what is the truth of Christ other than theological fiction? Surely the Principal cannot mean by it the ethical teaching attributed to Jesus, for to that nobody ever dreams of rendering obedience, not even the most enthusiastic Christians. The Rev. Vivian T. Pomeroy, preaching at the City Temple, London, lately, asked: "What would ensue if the Sermon on the Mount were preached to-day?" He flatly denied that it is preached, and candidly confessed that he did not preach it. He was confident that no congregation would listen to him if he did, without protesting. Both Dr. Ritchie and Mr. Pomeroy are ordained ministers of the Gospel of Christ; but both are bound to recognize the fact that the Gospel they preach, in so far as it embodies the ethical teaching of the Gospel Jesus, is a dead letter, although they declare that "when war-madness has spent itself, when this interlude of measureless war is past, and the pride of man has utterly spent itself in wild rage, the authority of Jesus will be seen and felt like the peace of a storm-washed sky." That prediction has been indulged in millions of times before; but to-day the authority of Christ is as far from realization as it ever was, with the result that the utterances of the pulpit were never so unpopular, or received with such derision as they are at present.

The authority of Jesus has never been a reality in human history, and the authority of the Church is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. The priest of to-day is often laughed at as a nonentity even by multitudes who nominally believe in him. His day of power is gone for ever. He is already but a relic of the times of ignorance and superstition. The future shall know no other authority than that of enlightened and socialized reason. Under Christianity war has flourished, and myriads of its converts were won at the point of the sword. The present War is being waged in the name of God, and most of the belligerents profess that the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth is their sole aim. War shall cease only when the reins of national and international life are in the hands of Reason—scientifically trained and fully moralized.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Man Who Cheers Us All Up.

Do I view this world as a vale of tears?
Ah, reverend sir, not I. —*Robert Browning.*

THE function of the humourist is undervalued. In his little, unobtrusive way, the man who jests and sets you smiling back at him does a great service. The physiological value of laughter has never been appraised. Although doctors bestow a benevolent patronage on cheerfulness, and give it a minor place in the pharmacopœia, no one will dispute that the humourists are benefactors of society. And yet, with the exception of Rabelais, Cervantes, and Dickens—who is liked better for his pathos than his fun—humorous writers are held to be only second-rate literary artists. It is not that we do not laugh—though we do not laugh as much as we should—but we laugh apologetically, as if laughter were a weakness of humanity, a thing pertaining to the trivialities of life. So many people think that *Vanity Fair*, which is, on the whole, a serious book, is, therefore, greater than *The Pickwick Papers*, which is, on the whole, a comic book. Yet there is much to be said for the view that smiles are as important as tears. Falstaff is just as great a creation as Hamlet. It is allowed in all but the most pedantic circles that Shakespeare was a very great man, and his Falstaff is comedy in the highest.

The great Rabelais declared that laughter is the peculiar property of man; the outward sign which distinguishes the paragon of animals. The man that hath no music in him—we know for what he is fit; and just as certainly the man who has no laughter in him is fit for nothing that is of high service to man.

An advanced movement like our own can have no better champion than a humourist. 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 born humourist

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like Robert Ingersoll was genuinely our benefactor. Although a master of the lash, he used 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 like Voltaire, into whom has passed the geniality and suavity of Renan. It is a mellowed and a transformed Voltaire, looking upon a sadder and a busier world with the laughing eyes we know so well.

Ingersoll was a master of what Milton calls the "dazzling fence." His attacks on orthodoxy were answered over and over again by ministers of all denominations, and he drew Cardinal Manning and Gladstone into the controversial arena. In his discussion with Gladstone, the English politician taunted Ingersoll with riding a horse without a bridle; with letting his ideas run away with him. Ingersoll retorted crushingly that this was better than "riding a dead horse in a reverential calm." 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."

Men seldom talk as brilliantly as they write, but Ingersoll was an exception. A volume might be compiled of his clever sayings, not as invented or recorded in the author's study, but as expressed in society; not as it grew in secret like a flower the blooming of which all admire, but as it flashed forth like sparks from flint and steel in social interplay.

Ingersoll's conversation was full of epigrams and jests, the least of which must have been the envy and despair of politicians. When a friend, finding a set of Voltaire's works in his library, said: "Pray, sir, what did this cost you?" the Colonel answered: "I believe it cost me the governorship of Illinois." Speaking of a hot-headed and sanguine acquaintance, he said: "Show him an egg, and instantly the air is full of feathers."

One of his best stories was that of an excitable Fenian who was boasting of the condition of Ireland. The Irishman said: "We have got 30,000 armed men in Ireland. They are ready to march at a moment's notice." "But," replied the oher man, "why don't they march?" "Why?" retorted the Irishman, "the police won't let them." When Ingersoll first met G. W. Foote he was desirous of paying the English Freethought leader a compliment. At dinner Foote passed the oysters, and Ingersoll said, smiling: "Not like oysters, Foote! That's the only fault I can find in you." How good, too, was the Colonel's description of a banknote: "A greenback is no more money than a menu is a dinner."

When Ingersoll was on his first visit to the Pacific coast he was shown through the depth of the Comstock mines, and as he came out he remarked: "If there's a hotter place than this, I'll join some church." While he had his office at Washington, lightning struck and burned a church situated in the same terrace. 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 declared: "Had such men as Robert 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 back, solemnly divided their coat-tails, and warmed themselves." A woman preacher once called Ingersoll "an infidel dog," and he replied: "The lady would have felt annoyed had I referred to her as a Christian female of the same species."

Doubtless we can have, in Hamlet's phrase, "something too much of this." This is our own affair. The historian of wit does not invite us to a surfeit of it. He spreads the board; he can do no more, and should do no less. We may take it as they are said to take a play in China; or we may take a reasonable cut and come again. "Here is sixpence," said a father to his son, "Don't make a beast of yourself."

MIMNERMUS.

The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

IV.

(Continued from p. 465.)

OUR Great Northern Coalfield extends for fifty miles, and the Tyne forms the main highway for the carriage of the fuel to the metropolitan consumer. The Wallsend coal so highly esteemed by the London public, arrives from the Newcastle region. Experts differ concerning the distance beneath the waves at which the mineral may be mined. Perhaps the estimate of Sir Lindsay Wood, that of three miles from the shore as a limit of working where the seams dip under the ocean is that most usually accepted. Elliot considered three-and-a-half miles a fair estimate south of the Tyne, while to the north of the river, Forster regarded two miles as the limit for undersea mining.

The coal measures of Scotland are valuable and important, and include the splendid coalfield of the Clyde Basin, the Midlothian and Haddington deposits, the Ayrshire, Fifeshire, and other formations. In 1904, Dixon placed the available resources of Scotland at 15,681,450 millions of tons. This total embraces a vast mass of fuel reposing beneath the bed of the Firth of Forth. Mining has been successfully conducted below the waters of the Firth at Bridgeness. A dense accumulation of clay rests on the bed of the estuary. This forms a wonderful waterproof barrier which permits the miners to labour in safety in the coal seams below. But were the pressure of the water to penetrate this barrier mining operations would be seriously handicapped. In a weighty address delivered in 1899, Dron forecasted the exhaustion of the proven coal deposits of Scotland by the close of the twentieth century. Let us trust that this gloomy prediction will remain unfulfilled.

Ireland also possesses coal, but most of her Carboniferous formations have long since vanished. A remnant, however, of Erin's original deposits has survived the tooth of time, and still remains for the service of man. Her southern beds embrace those of Clare, Cork, Carlow, Queen's County, Tipperary, Limerick, and Kilkenny. These seams contain anthracite, while the coal found in the counties situated to the north of a line drawn across the Island from Galway to Dublin Bay is bituminous. The Leinster coalfield (Queen's County, Tipperary, and Kilkenny), is the most valuable of the southern measures, and the Ulster beds in Tyrone are of considerable economic importance both from their richness and their easy accessibility to the industrial towns of North Ireland. Unfortunately, mining in this district remains in a very languid state. A geologist who studied the problem on the spot prayed that—

> the day may come when the great manufacturing province of Ulster may awake to the discovery that while it is dependent on England and Scotland for its coal supply, there is a large undeveloped quantity of mineral fuel at its door.

As late as 1903 only about 100,000 tons were raised from Irish beds, while in the same year nearly thirty million tons were mined in the Midland seams of England alone.

The known coal measures of Britain, if exploited at the rate of about 240 million tons annually, will, probably, last for 600 years. It is highly likely, however,

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that two extensive and previously unsuspected coalfields traverse southern England. One formation appears to range from Dover towards Bristol, while the other reaches from Romney Marsh in the direction of Glastonbury in Somerset.

The coalfields of France and Belgium are physically one, although in places discontinuous. The total extent of these deposits approaches 1,200 miles. The Saarbruck beds of Prussia possess an area of 900 square miles. This is the deepest formation in Western Europe, and the lowest seams descend near Bettingen to a depth of 3·6 geographical miles below sea level. It has been noted that this represents a depth below the ocean surface "equal to the height of Chimborazo above it; and at this depth the temperature may be inferred to range as high as 467° Fahr." This coalfield is interesting to the evolutionist inasmuch as it has yielded the fossils of several reptiles which serve to connect the Batrachians with the Saurians. The intermediate character of these extinct creatures is strongly pronounced. The remains of lower types of animals are numerous, while the fossil plants of this coal formation are abundant.

The German measures of Westphalia produce coals of fine quality that enjoy excellent transport advantages. The Weald deposits of Hanover and N.W. Germany are extensive, while those of Silesia are richly stored with fuel. Austria, Hungary, and Spain are fairly well furnished with coalfields, but production in Spain is very meagre. There is scope in Russia for future progress, although much of the coal is of inferior quality. The coal measures situated between the Dnieper and the Don are the best in European Russia. Poland possesses a small but highly productive deposit. One of the coal seams attains the abnormal thickness of sixteen yards, and is regarded as the thickest layer of fossil fuel in Europe. Extensive coal strata exist in India and China, while Australasia is opulently provided with coal.

British North America has poor supplies of coal, but the United States contains huge formations. The immense basin of the mighty Missouri is stacked with sufficient fuel to satisfy the demands of the Northern continent for 1,000 years, even were it as densely populated and industrially developed as England is to-day. According to Professor Rogers, the Missouri basin covers 100,000 square miles. But this is one field only among many, for the total coal regions of the States form nearly 230,000 square miles.

Vast stores of coal have been discovered in Brazil, and the adjacent republic of Uruguay seems well supplied. Other formations doubtless await discovery. So that, despite our present meagre rations, the world is assured of ample coal supplies for many centuries to come. Various substitutes have been suggested to replace coal as our chief material for heating and power purposes. Water power could unquestionably be employed on a far larger scale than at present, but streams and waterfalls are not everywhere available. Professor Forbes, after a careful review of the question, concluded that heavy engineering and other expenses, combined with further obstacles, rendered any serious competition with coal as a generator of power as highly improbable, in our Islands at least. Scotland appears the only part of the United Kingdom which possesses the immediate possibility of the substitution of water power for coal as an instrument of production. The Falls of Niagara, with their constant flow of water, certainly promise enormous results. The Cauvery Falls of Mysore, and the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi, with their descent of 400 feet, vary greatly in volume with the seasons, although at periods of flood Professor Forbes states that the Victoria Falls are capable of evolving energy quite six times that of Niagara.

As a substitute for coal, peat is out of court. It contains too much moisture, and the cost of compression is considerable. Moreover, it contains an excessive proportion of refuse, and it has been proved that one ton of good coal produces at least fourfold the heat as the same weight of peat.

The claims of petroleum to rank as a competitor must be reviewed. This mineral oil is of ever-increasing importance for propelling machinery, gas production, and other purposes. Although Britain is so generously stored with superior coal, it is nearly destitute of petroleum. Oil may be distilled from the Kimmeridge clay, but our only important oil products are those of the oil shale deposits of Scotland. America and Russia are the premier petroleum States. The estimate of Redwood for petroleum production in 1901 totalled 5,746,000,000 imperial gallons. Upwards of 5,000 million gallons of this huge total were raised in Russia and the United States. But great as these figures appear, they are insignificant when compared with the world's annual output of coal. Sir Boverton Redwood informs us that "if you double the existing production of petroleum..... it would only be an equivalent of about 5 per cent. of the present coal consumption."

We may safely say that science has so far failed to find any real substitute for coal. But, as already intimated, our coal measures will endure at our present rate of consumption for another 600 years if mined to a depth of about 4,000 feet only. And this represents the extreme limit of contemporary mining possibilities.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Acid Drops.

We shall hear much of the Continental Sunday when the War is over. The British troops, brought up to take their pleasures sadly, will never consent to return to the Puritan Sabbath after tasting the delights of a real weekly holiday. The correspondent of a London daily paper describes a French "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon." There were five bands, fencing matches, concert troupes, theatrical turns, dances, and all the fun of the fair. The account is sufficient to make Chadband and Stiggins drop down dead; but it should help to make "Merrie England" more than a phrase after the War.

Really we shall be getting quite popular soon. The *Daily News* notes it as remarkable that no one should have quoted "Tom Paine" in connection with the Luxury Tax. Paine, says the *D. N.*, "hit this particular nail very forcibly on the head." Moncure Conway's great biography was a step towards giving Paine his proper place in history, but it will be a long while before he is placed before the public cleared from the slanders and misrepresentations of religious bigotry. When it is done, he will be seen to have been one of the greatest benefactors of the English-speaking race.

"We all in this life have our crown of thorns," declares a provincial parson. Hallelujah! It is, however, quite unnecessary to sit on it every Sunday.

Billy Sunday, the Yankee evangelist, understands the art of loving one's enemies. His latest sample of this beautiful trait of Christianity is a statement that the German Kaiser is so far down that he would need an aeroplane to get to hell.

The Rev. W. W. Trelcaven, a Wesleyan minister, of Kendal, Westmoreland, was found dead in his study chair. Had he been a Freethought lecturer, the editors would have found a lot to say on the subject.

Christ said: "Woe unto ye rich," but the dear clergy prefer to tread the primrose path of dalliance. The late Rev.

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C. E. Hornby, vicar of Ebrington, left estate to the value of £69,822.

A woman fortune-teller was fined £20 at East Ham. The clergy have honours and money heaped upon them for telling people what will happen to them in the "next world."

Speaking of after-War problems, Lord Beauchamp observes: "After all, two and two will still make four after hostilities have ceased." Believers in the Trinity should kindly note.

At Matlock an old man, aged seventy-seven, was charged with sacrilege. He was caught inside the parish church, and money was missed from the contribution box. "Sacrilege" is a more serious offence, legally, than ordinary theft, and helps to show how the clerical caste has looked after itself.

Highly amusing is the ingenious but sophistical manner in which a clergyman gets over difficulties. Jesus says, "Love your enemies"; but does he want us to love the Germans, who are the only enemies we can think of to-day? Of course, he does; and yet how can we love such enemies? That is the problem over which Dr. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth, as reported in the *British Weekly* for September 4, plays the sophist to perfection as follows:—

> Love was not the weak, sentimental, flabby thing usually meant. Love included righteous anger, with the will to punish. And love to the Germans must include the purpose of punishment for the crimes which could neither be glossed over nor condoned. We could love them without liking them, for liking was instinctive.

Quite an original method of loving, in which we have absolutely no faith.

Dr. John A. Hutton, of Glasgow, says that, as Jesus was dying, the world cried to him: "Come down from the Cross, and we will believe thee." "But," adds this popular divine, "Jesus remained upon the Cross." So he did, simply because he could do no other. Peter said he could not come down for two reasons, the wickedness of his enemies and the holy will of God. At any rate, upon the Cross he was bound to remain until he was dead.

In a laudatory account of a lady preacher, a London newspaper said: "Clad in spotless white, she looked a striking and picturesque figure in the pulpit." Very few male parsons wear their "petticoats" gracefully.

A bold advertisement in the *Daily News* asks "all godly men and women" to offer up prayers daily at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. We suggest the use of praying barrels. They would waste less time and be less noisy.

The Christian religion is sadly in need of bolstering in these strenuous days. Perhaps this is the reason why the publishers of Harry Lauder's book, *A Minstrel in France*, announce that the comedian's "faith in a future life and reunion" is "simply but confidently stated" in its pages. Simplicity and confidence are not unexpected qualities in this particular association.

"Tax on Sunday" was a headline in a daily paper. It referred to the introduction of the new stamp duty on cheques; but the title suggests that Christians should be taxed for wasting a holiday in gloomy gospel-shops.

Owing to overcrowding, it has been found necessary to restrict the number of American soldiers, sailors, and nurses admitted to the Sunday concerts at the Palace Theatre, London. Only those in uniform, and bearing tickets, will be admitted. It has not been found necessary to issue a similar order with regard to churches and chapels.

The question of religion in the schools continues to occupy attention in the Scottish newspapers, and we hope that the controversy will be kept alive until a just conclusion is reached. A very good letter appears in the *Scotsman* of September 3, by Mr. Alex M'Nair, from which we take the following passage:—

> In moving his amendment to Clause 7 of the new Education Bill, Mr. Gulland stated with apparent jubilation that in almost every burgh and parish of Scotland the Bible and the Shorter Catechism were taught, and that in Edinburgh only 50 or 100 out of 30,000 children had been exempted, and in Glasgow to-day not more than 100 out of 100,000 were exempted. I read these figures with some degree of astonishment at the time, and I have my doubt still as to their accuracy. But, assuming they are correct, I venture to say that the non-exempted in the schools of Edinburgh and Glasgow are neither so willing nor so unanimous in their acceptance of the *decretum horribile* of the Shorter Catechism as the insignificant fraction of the exempted would lead one to think. The children certainly do not vote for the teaching of the Catechism, neither do they understand or believe it when it is imposed upon them. And as for the religious results of the teaching of the Catechism, they have not yet been ascertained; certainly they are not always such as would be of a gratifying character to the Churches. I am equally certain that the parents of the children do not approve of the Catechism to the extent that Mr. Gulland's appalling figures would suggest, and that a vast number of the children must therefore be receiving religious instruction of a kind which their parents do not approve, but are so indifferent as not, by any outward sign, to disapprove. All that Mr. Gulland's statistics prove is that an enterprising propagandist party may dominate the religious teaching of the schools of a great city to such an extent as to distort the numerical relations between those who think with them and those who do not.

There is much truth in the last sentence. The Churches are well organized. It should be for others to see that they meet organization with organization.

"Does Religion Count?" asks a Salvation Army advertisement. It does—in the balance-sheet.

Hythe Town Council has informed the local clergy that it cannot interfere with Sunday baseball. The Councillors will be remembered in the clergy's prayers.

It is very unkind of editors to print such lengthy examples of the great American "slanguage." A striking instance is this gem of purest ray serene: "We are prepared to fight till hell itself freezes over, and if Germany isn't beat then we'll buy skates and get after her on the ice." The author of this resplendent thought is Billy Sunday, who is a doctor of divinity in his own country.

A new book bears the title, *Jewish Fairy Tales*. We wonder if they are as humorous as the story of Noah's Ark, and other Biblical yarns.

Now, Dr. Hutton maintains that the Church is imitating Jesus by doing nothing in the present terrible crisis. The world cries to her, "Do something, take some decisive action, and we will believe in thee." Consequently, the Church is "in a real strait," being undecided as to what line of action she ought to take. "If she would only say a certain word," Dr. Hutton declares, "every church might be filled to overflowing." He thinks that if she is wise, she will remain "above the battle, unentangled, unperplexed, dealing with matters still deeper than those in dispute." As a matter of fact, the Church is not "above the battle," but, both in Germany and this country, is doing her utmost to back up and encourage the opposing armies, and she is doing this because she is powerless to do anything else.

The *Cambridge Magazine* cites the following from the *Sphere*: "The Kaverondos belong to a very peaceful tribe in British Africa. When trained they make fine soldiers." Who says that Christianity does not spread peace and brotherhood?

Providence is said to take a particular interest in the fall of sparrows; but nothing prevented Sissinghurst villagers from killing 1,621 of these birds, whom they regard as being as destructive as mice and rats.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

We should be rather less—or more—than human if we did not experience a feeling of elation at the response to our Sustentation Fund. It proves, as we said in our statement of September 1, that the *Freethinker* still retains the confidence and devotion of those who have stood by it in the past. We feel repaid for our struggles during the past four years, and face the future with renewed courage and confidence. Unhappily, the War has prevented our doing many things we had hoped to do, but these plans are deferred, not abandoned. We have every confidence of one day placing the *Freethinker* in a better position than it has yet occupied in the country, and that means benefiting the whole Freethought Movement. It is for that purpose the paper exists, and we have kept that ideal steadily before us all the time.

When we get back to normal times we hope to tell some part of the story of this War-period. We cannot tell it now for various reasons, some of which may be guessed. Many will doubtless share Mr. G. Brady's feelings who, enclosing a subscription, writes:—

> All along the wonder to me has been how you managed so much on so little. With the utmost admiration for the way in which you "carry on" the best of all causes.

All we can say now is that it has not been done without much care and anxiety, and we have not been among the smallest contributors, even from a monetary point of view.

A well-known writer, who veils his identity under the pen-name of "Alpha," writes:—

> In these days of ill-balanced and prejudiced journalism the excellence of the *Freethinker* stands out more conspicuously than ever. You are doing a great work, and I was heartily pleased to see by the list of acknowledgments that your labours are appreciated. My own contribution is—of necessity—a small one; please accept it as indicative of my appreciation of good work well done. Personally, I doubt if I should have had the courage to shoulder the burden, but that only increases my admiration for those who have done so.

Mr. G. L. Allward, one of the Old Guard writes:—

> Pleased to read your statement in the paper, and to learn that the circulation has grown. The *Freethinker* is splendid reading, and, as an old Freethinker, I am delighted to know that we have at the head of the Movement one who has determined to push forward at this critical time.

From Major Warren:—

> I am not in the least surprised that you have been compelled to make another call on us Freethinkers to help you to keep the flag flying. My only wonder is that you have been able to carry on at all, and hasten to send you all I can spare in these hard times. I wish it were ten times as much, as your weekly instalment of "Views and Opinions" comes to me like a tonic for the depression caused by the shallow and misleading verbiage of the ordinary press.

Mrs. A. Lawrence writes from the Willesden Freedom League:—

> Some of us are regular readers of your very valuable journal, and we generally consider your work of fundamental importance, and wish you the greatest success in your endeavour.

The above reminds us that at present quite a number of advanced Societies take the *Freethinker* for display on their bookstalls. A very welcome advance, and one that promises developments. We should like to quote from other letters received, but defer doing so until next week.

The following represents the subscriptions received up to the time of our going to press:—

Second List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £184 19s. 3d. G. Allward, £1 1s. J. G. Finlay, £2 2s. J. Mathy, 10s. 6d. E. Parker, 10s. J. Blackhall, 5s. 6d. G. T. R., 2s. 6d. J. Steggall, 3s. W. Mendez, £2. T. and F. White, 10s. J. A. B., £1. W. C. Maurice, 10s. 6d. S. Clowes, 5s. J. Close, 5s. E. B., £1 1s. T. Dunbar, 2s. 6d. Edward Oliver, £3 3s. F. Reed, 10s. W. W. Mowbray, 10s. C. F. Hall, £1 1s. W. H. Knight, £1. Mrs. S. Dobson, 5s. A. L. Morris, £2 2s. Winifrede Hogg, 10s. A. J. Watson, 2s. 6d. S. Healing, 2s. 6d. Mrs. H. Parsons, 10s. 6d. Lt. W. T. Phillips, £1. Willesden Freedom League, 5s. C. A. Goddard, 5s. Blackburn, 5s. J. F. Rayner, £1. H. Jessop, £10. H. C., 10s. J. O. Restall, 5s. H. E. L. Wright, £1 1s. M. T. M., £2. J. F. W. (Liverpool), 10s. Dr. C. R. Niven, £1 1s. Mrs. A. Brooke, 10s. George Brady, £3. J. Lazarnick, £1 1s. M. S., 10s. "Alpha," £1. S. Scott, £1. J. Ratcliffe, £1 1s. B. H. Godfree, £1 1s. C. and T. Holmes, 5s. Jno. Hudson, 10s. D. C. Drummond, 10s. Lady Sarah Maxim (In Memory of Sir Hiram S. Maxim), £5. J. Higgins (first subscription), £3. J. Robinson, 2s. H. Irving, 10s. B. Bowlem, 10s. G. Scott, 5s. H. Mitchell (Leytonstone), 5s. H. Austin, 5s. C. W. Marshall, 10s. E. Dawson, 5s. Mr. and Mrs J. Neate and son, £1. H. J. Earthy, 2s. 6d. J. M. Henley, 10s. H. S. Wishart, 2s. Pte. E. A. Impey, 3s. H. Boll, 5s. Mrs. H. Boll, 2s. 6d. Mr. T. Boll, 2s. 6d. T. Garstang, 4s. C. Heaton, 2s. 6d. D. Seddon, 10s. 6d. A. H. Smith, £2 2s. A. H. Harden, £2 2s. A. B. Moss, 10s. 6d. O. Friedman, £2 2s. H. Good, 10s.

Per Mrs. H. Rosetti:—West Ham Branch, £1 1s. Individual Members:—Mr. H. Taylor, 5s. Mr. Pankhurst, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Rosetti, 2s. 6d. Miss M. Panhhurst, 3s. Miss M. Pitcher, 3s. Mr. Lowman, 2s. Mr. Gallery, 1s.—Total £2.—Total £251 6s. 9d.

Corrections.—"E. Wilson, £5" in last week's list should have read "E. Whitehorn, £5." "J. N. Hall, 2s." should have been "5s." The total has been altered accordingly. We have received a P.O. for 5s., but without name of sender. As the envelope bore the postmark of "Blackburn," we have acknowledged it under that name.

Chapman Cohen.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 15, Aberdare; September 22, Birmingham; September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

A. J. Marriott.—Both Mr. Moss and Mr. Effel have had their say on the subject, and we regret that the restricted space will not warrant our enlarging the matter.

T. Pullock (Bristol).—The *Truthseeker*, 62 Vesey Street, New York, will, probably, meet your needs. There is no Branch of the N. S. S. in your city, but there ought to be.

W. Mowbray.—There is no question, we think, of our going under, hard as it is to keep afloat. We have several life-belts, chief of which is the loyalty of our readers.

J. Close.—You will be pleased to see that your expressed wish is being realized in the published subscription lists.

S. Clowes.—We feel that we may, without undue conceit, congratulate ourselves on the number of new readers secured; and in that we evidently have your support, as we have had your help.

T. White.—Pleased to learn you have heard from your son. It is a trying time, but we must hope that the end of the War is nearer than many of us think.

W. Mendez.—We plead guilty to enjoying a fight, when the object is worth fighting for. We hope we deserve *some* of the good things you say of us.

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S. C. (Ireland).—Shall be very pleased to see you when you get leave. Hope the illness at home to which you refer will then be gone. Your letter was much delayed in reaching us.

MR. S. DOBSON.—The appreciation of such as yourself acts as a constant spur to renewed endeavours.

C. A. GODDARD.—We note you hope that the Fund will "beat all records." It is certainly doing well up to date.

R. SMITH.—The Secretary of the Manchester Branch, N. S. S., is Mr. H. Black, 446 Great Cheetham Street, Higher Broughton, Salford. We have been much interested in your letter.

ONE of our readers calls attention to the fact that Mr. Guy Aldred, who has been in prison since May, 1916, as a conscientious objector, has just been again sentenced to two years' imprisonment for disobedience of military orders. In the face of the Government promises, and the express provision made for such cases, there is only one word for such treatment, and that is—disgraceful. A man who has served two years in prison, and undertakes a third term, has given us strong proof of his genuineness as is possible, however mistaken some may believe him to be.

CAN any of our South Australian readers supply the address of Mr. F. Price, one time Freethought lecturer at Broken Hill, N.S.W.? If so, will they communicate with Mr. W. L. Rowe, Village Deep, Johannesburg, Transvaal, S.A.?

M. S.—We shall be glad to hear from you as to the success attained by your newsagent in selling the *Freethinker*, and also concerning the plan you mention. We certainly are not inclined to measure the feelings of anyone towards this journal by the size of the contribution.

ONE of our readers, Mr. T. Wadsworth, reminds us that the lines, "There's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard," etc., is from Burns' poem, "Here's a health to them that's awa'." As often happens, we remembered it when we were told.

B. DUPREE.—Pleased to hear of the successful opening meeting of the Branch on Sunday last. Hope it is prophetic of the rest of the course.

J. M. HINLEY.—We are grateful for all you are doing to help in a peculiarly trying time.

E. B.—Labels have been sent. Carter Paterson would do quite well. The "unsolicited testimonial" to the paper you enclose is very encouraging. Thanks.

J. M. GIMSON.—Thanks for reference, which we recalled on being reminded.

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 (Sept. 15) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures—afternoon at 2.30, evening at 7—in the Grand Theatre, Aberaman. This is, we hope, the commencement of a revival of Freethought activity; and after the lectures Mr. Cohen will be pleased to see visitors from other districts with a view to a further extension of the work in South Wales.

Next Sunday (Sept. 22) Mr. Cohen opens the season's lectures at Birmingham. These meetings are held in the handsome new Repertory Theatre, and a good list of lecturers has been arranged. The experiment last year was so successful that the Branch was induced to repeat it. The course involves considerable expense, and we beg to draw the attention of Birmingham Freethinkers to the desirability of their lending the Branch full support, both moral and financial. Those who can help in either capacity, or in both, should communicate with the Secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

Mr. J. F. Rayner sends us a good-natured grumble which deserves publicity:—

> I have much pleasure in enclosing £1 towards your Sustentation Fund, and wish you every success in your arduous undertaking. Your article on the ethical and social activities associated with Christianity, and erroneously supposed to be an integral part of it, is very suggestive. If these activities were, n any noticeable degree, associated with Secularism, our cause would flourish more. As it is, we are little more than critics, and a cause cannot live on criticism alone any more than man, woman, or child, can live on medicine alone. I was struck, on rejoining the N. S. S. after thirty years' absence, that it had made no progress, either in the extent or style of its propaganda. We are still slogging away with the same old arguments, and people ask: "What good do you suppose you are doing?" The answer: "Clearing men's minds of superstition and cant" seems hardly convincing, and we've been doing that for half a century, and still we find it has to be done, and what have we to show for our expenditure of energy? if we *have* cleared away superstition to any extent (I think we have) why don't we fill its place with positive Secular doctrine? but we only do this incidentally and inferentially. The Churches peg away, after their fashion, with guidance, such as it is, in the trials and puzzles of daily life, but we do little more than find fault. You will answer, well, what are you doing now but finding fault? So I am, but it is friendly fault-finding as the treasury note within may testify.

Mr. Rayner's letter deserves more attention than we can at present give it. Perhaps we may return to the subject later. For the moment we can only say, briefly, that much turns upon whether one regards the Freethought movement as building up a new sect in a world of sects, and giving all its associated activities a sectarian label, or whether we take our work to be that of liberalizing and rationalizing thought in all directions. Next, we think Mr. Rayner rather underestimates the influence our movement has in creating and popularizing "positive Secular doctrines." The pages of the *Freethinker* itself, during over more than twenty years' association with it, bears evidence of much that has been done in this direction. And the task of preparing the public mind for sane views of the universe and of men is itself a work of tremendous importance, even, if not of a spectacular kind. However, we can only glance at some of the important issues opened by Mr. Rayner's letter.

Mr. Cohen's meetings at Maesteg on Sunday last were very successful, the hall being well filled both afternoon and evening. There were a few questions, but no direct opposition. There was also a good sale of literature, the supply being exhausted at the afternoon meeting. The members were all highly delighted with the day's work, and are looking forward to a vigorous and successful season.

Readers in the Abertillery district will please note that Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures at Blaina to-day (Sept. 15), at 7.30. We do not know the name of the hall, but we daresay it may be easily found.

The Bethnal Green Branch concludes its season's lectures with an address from Mrs. Rosetti this evening (September 8). The lecture will be delivered in Victoria Park, near the bandstand, at 6.15. We think this is Mrs. Rosetti's first appearance in Victoria Park, and we hope local "saints" will do their best to see that the attendance is a good one.

While we are dealing with the subject of lectures, we beg to call attention of Branch Secretaries to the need of their getting notices of meetings, both for the Lecture List and for reports of work done, to this office not later than the first post on Tuesday morning. We are always pleased to insert reports, but they must reach us in good time. If secretaries would make it a point of writing a few lines before the Sunday meeting closes and posting it at once they would ensure its appearance in the following week's issue. This cannot be done when it does not reach this office before Tuesday afternoon.

We are asked to draw special attention to the Committee Meeting of the Manchester Branch announced in our "Guide" column. There is important business for discussion. The last "Ramble" of the Branch will be held on September 29.

One of the contributors to our Sustentation Fund asks, "What reason is there that the 1,300 new readers you have obtained should not become 2,000 during the next few weeks?" None whatever, so far as we are concerned. All it needs is for those who read the paper to make sure that

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others shall get it also. And it is not nearly so difficult to get new readers as many think who have not tried. Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to be able to announce that the additional 760 have been captured.

Paine: Prophet and Sage.

THOMAS PAINE is the Foe of Flunkeyism, the Terror of Toadies. His pen makes the knees of the Belshazzars to shake. In indelible words this great pioneer of Freedom has indited the fate of tyranny and autocracy.

Yet, comparatively, how very few are familiar with the *facts* about this great Englishman! This condition of things must be attributed to the sedulous efforts of courtiers and lying sycophants, who have vilified as brave a soldier of Justice and Progress as ever lifted voice or wielded pen.

Slanders cannot be transmuted into truth; but they can receive a currency and gain a credence only possible in the case of unfashionable prophets. For example, Theodore Roosevelt, without challenge from any organ of the press, is at liberty, or licence, to denounce Paine —whose shoe latchet he is not worthy to unloose—as a "dirty little Atheist"! Three lies in three words! Paine was neither dirty nor little, and he was *not* an Atheist. So much for the information of so-called eminent men! But George Washington appreciated and honoured Paine; and we take leave to say that Paine's services to America will be remembered and extolled when the name of Roosevelt is forgotten.

Paine never allowed his passion and enthusiasm for human liberty to override his reason. He was a stickler for accuracy in thinking and accuracy in statement. He was businesslike in the best sense, and had great organizing and administrative gifts. He had the mathematical mind striving after plainness and precision, yet full of appreciation for all the beauty of Nature.

Paine has been represented by his vilifiers as a red revolutionary and a firebrand. Nothing could be further removed from the truth. Paine's great aim was to advance the cause of humanity by peaceful means and methods; by getting the nation to recognize that the Government, or the State, is the nation's servant, and not the nation's master—really, and not merely in name. Can a man who writes like this be called a red revolutionary and a firebrand?—

> I have always held it an opinion (making it also my practice) that it is better to obey a bad law, making use at the same time of every argument to shew its errors and procure its repeal, than forcibly to violate it; because the precedent of breaking a bad law might weaken the force, and lead to a discretionary violation of those which are good.

All Paine's arguments are appeals to Reason, and not to Force. He was a convinced Republican, firmly opposed to all hereditary government. He has abounding and abiding faith in his fellow-men when they are not duped and deluded; when they are informed and enlightened. He writes:—

> To say that any people are not fit for freedom is to make poverty their choice, and to say they had rather be loaded with taxes than not. If such a case could be proved it would equally prove that those who govern are not fit to govern them, for they are a part of the same national mass.

Changes, Paine held, could be brought about "without convulsion or revenge." "It is not worth making changes or revolutions," he writes, "unless it be for some great national benefit: and, when this shall appear to a nation, the danger will be as in America and France to those who oppose."

Those who favour the formation of a League of Nations for securing the future peace of the world may find stimulation and instruction in the teachings of Paine. The incurable conservatism of many Britons unhappily turns their preferences into exclusions. It has been the fashion of the schools to read Burke. Some of our young intellectuals, who have been taught to worship Burke, the sentimental Monarchist, the weaver of sophisms, and to shun Paine as the coadjutor of the Devil, may be surprised to learn that Burke himself did not entertain a poor opinion of the personality and power of Thomas Paine. One hundred and twenty years ago Paine urged for the adoption of a scheme of Old Age Pensions. Now, you ladies and gentlemen who wish for a League of Nations, listen, please, to this:—

> Government founded on a *moral theory, on a system of universal peace, on the indefeasible hereditary Rights of Man*, is now revolving from West to East by a stronger impulse than the government of the sword revolved from East to West. It interests not particular individuals but nations in its progress, and promises a new Era to the human race.

Paine preached the doctrine (which was embraced by many Radicals after his time) that true reform more often consists not in the enacting of new laws, but in repealing many of those which already exist. "But how often," he exclaims, "is the natural propensity to society disturbed or destroyed by the operations of government! When the latter, instead of being ingrafted on the principles of the former, assumes to exist for itself, and acts by partialities of favour and oppression, it becomes the cause of the mischiefs it ought to prevent."

Paine is naturally impatient when he comes to deal with mystery-mongering. Government, in his estimation, is nothing more than a natural association acting on the principles of society. He conceives the hereditary element in government to be the great obstacle to progress:—

> Man has no authority over posterity in matters of personal right; and therefore no man or body of men had or can have a right to set up hereditary government. Were even ourselves to come again into existence instead of being succeeded by posterity we have not now the right of taking from ourselves the rights which would then be ours. On what ground, then, do we pretend to take them from others?.....I smile to myself when I contemplate the ridiculous insignificance into which literature and all the sciences would sink were they made hereditary; and I carry the same idea into governments.

This is his description of the American Government:—

> It is representation ingrafted upon democracy. It has fixed the form by a scale parallel in all cases to the extent of the principle. What Athens was in miniature, American will be in magnitude. The one was the wonder of the ancient world: the other is becoming the admiration and model of the present. It is the easiest of all the forms of government to be understood and the most eligible in practice, and excludes at once the ignorance and insecurity of the hereditary mode and the inconvenience of the simple democracy.

Surely Paine justifies a claim to the title of "Sage" in these wise and pregnant words:—

> Government is not a trade which any man or any body of men has a right to set up and exercise for his own emolument, but is altogether a trust in right of those by whom the trust is delegated, and by whom it is always resumable. It has of itself no rights: they are altogether duties.

How true of our own time is this passage also:—

> Governments now act as if they were afraid to awaken a single reflection in man. They are softly leading him

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to the sepulchre of precedents to deaden his faculties and call attention from the scene of revolutions. They feel that he is arriving at knowledge faster than they wish and their policy of precedents is the barometer of their fears. This political popery like the ecclesiastical popery of old has had its day and is hastening to its exit.

Paine anticipated Cobden in the view that free and extending international commerce would be a fruitful producer of international amity :—

> If commerce were permitted to act to the universal extent it is capable of, it would extirpate the system of War and produce a revolution in the uncivilized state of Governments. The invention of commerce has arisen since those Governments began, and it is the greatest approach towards universal civilization that has yet been made by any means not immediately flowing from moral principles.....There can be no such thing as a nation flourishing alone in commerce ; she can only participate ; and the destruction of it in any part must necessarily affect all. When therefore Governments are at war the attack is made upon a common stock of commerce, and the consequence is the same as if each had attacked his own.

What would have been Paine's attitude to the present conflict? This is not a war between Governments, at least so far as Britain and her Allies are concerned. It is really a struggle between nations, and, lover of peace as he was, can we doubt that Paine would have rejoiced to see the Alliance between Britain, France, and America —a project always close to his heart of hearts? Is it surprising that his contemptuous wrath was stirred by the unreasoning hatred of the English people of his own time against France and everything French? Burke had no little share in fostering that enmity. Is it surprising that Paine was roused to mordant criticism of the British statesmen of his day who so misread the signs of the times, and tried to strangle the infant American Republic in its cradle? The Alliance of to-day is the dream of Paine accomplished, and his heart must swell in the Elysian fields as he contemplates it. What we take to be the chief lesson to be learned from Thomas Paine is that each people must work out its own emancipation and salvation. Let our modern Socialists ponder this: national and international happiness and security are only to be attained through voluntary co-operation and socialization working from within. If we choose to subject ourselves to a bureaucratic system of State Socialism superimposed from without, we are but forging the fetters of a new tyranny. The sovereignty must remain in every case in the people as a whole.

IGNOTUS.

How Long Will They Wait?

"HOPE deferred maketh the heart sick,"—the Hebrew book of *Proverbs* said very wisely.

One of the key-words of the Christian religion is "expectation," in the sense of hope. We are now in the year—a very tragical year for mankind—1918. If Christians turn over the pages of one of their revered documents, written so long ago as the second century, or the latter half of the first century, namely, the Pauline manifesto called *Romans*, they will find these yearning words :—

> I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.

The early Gospel was mainly the Gospel of the Poor, or (to use a term current in India to-day) the Depressed Classes. Such classes are always expectant, for life deals hardly with them, and yet the unconquerable human spirit hopes for a day of liberty and joy. They waited for heaven to open, and disclose, in glory, the God-Christ who would emancipate them from exploiters, from their own sin, from all the dullness and darkness of the earthly existence.

That was how Christians expressed themselves in the period 50 to 150. And Christians still wait.

The remarkable thing is that, in remoter ages, people did not expect God at all. They saw him. They saw him either as fire, or lightning, or luminous cloud, or as a Superman—that is to say, angel. When the slave-woman, Hagar, sat solitary in the wilderness, she beheld the Angel of Yahweh (the Lord), and conversed with him. Her master, Abraham, was visited one day by three such Angels, who ate and drank with him, and one of whom talked in terms that implied his God-hood. Moses shepherded his flock in Midian, and "the Angel of Yahweh appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." The Israelite horde, in its emigration to Canaan, was guided by Yahweh in the shape of a pillar of cloud, which, at night, glowed brightly over the road. On one occasion, a Hebrew deputation ventured into the Divine presence on a mountain-top, thus :—

> Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ; and they saw the God of Israel ; and there was under his feet a paved work of sapphire-stone.

In many a legend, the Yahweh-fire flickers, illumines, and sometimes devours. When the wandering Jews openly criticized the hard conditions under which they tramped the Wilderness, Yahweh's anger was kindled, and his flames consumed those who complained. Fire fell from heaven at Elijah's prayer, and licked up sacrificial bullocks, along with stones and earth. Elijah, having finished his earthly pilgrimage, was received into the heavenly palace in a fire car sent by the celestial King himself. Later on, this fire suffered a curious evolution. It was used, not so much as a garment to clothe the Heaven-God, as an instrument of punishment for God's enemies. In the second century B.C., a poet whose visions are found in the book of *Enoch* described the fate of the Fallen Angels :—

> I saw a horrible thing, a great fire which burned and blazed, and the place was cleft as far as the abyss, being full of great descending columns of fire ; neither its intent or magnitude could I see, nor could I conjecture. Then I said, "How fearful is the place, and how terrible to look upon!" Then Uriel answered me, one of the holy angels who was with me, and said unto me, "Enoch, why hast thou such fear and affright?" And I answered, "Because of this fearful place, and because of the spectacle of the pain." And he said, "This place is the prison of the angels, and here they will be imprisoned for ever" (*Charles's translation, chap. xxi.*).

Some three hundred years after this explosive poetry was published, we find similar fires lighted in the New Testament scriptures, as, for example :—

> The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that knew not God (*i. Thessalonians i. 8*).

It is, however, fair to add that the references to such fire are not so numerous in the New Testament as is often supposed. It was the monks of the Middle Ages who elaborated the idea so deeply and so widely. In any case, the progress of fire was from heaven to hell, so that, whether in Milton's inferno, or in Goethe's drama of Mephistopheles and Faust, popular fancy thinks of the Devil as having his home in flames and fumes.

Meanwhile, Yahweh was being displaced by the Christian imagination in favour of the God-in-flesh—Jesus. There are flashes of the ancient fire in the scene of the

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Transfiguration, when Christ's face shone like the sun, and in the descent of the Holy Pneuma (spirit) in the form of cloven tongues of fire on the Day of Pentecost. But, on the whole, the Fire and Thunderstorm element gives way to the human element; and God walks the earth as a carpenter, a teacher, a camp-meeting orator, a faith-healer, a prophet. So human is he that Roman soldiers crucify him. It is true, he is said to have risen again, but the figure of the Crucified captured the heart of Christendom more than the figure of the resurrected God.

At this point the Pauline voice is heard breathing a hope that this God will return to earth; and so earnest was this expectation of the Primitive Church that (by design or by chance) the New Testament Scriptures were so arranged as to make the *Apocalypse* the final book; and it ended thus:—

> Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. (Rev. xxii. 20).

There is, of course, an ensuing verse, but it is merely a salutation to the reader.

A review of the facts which I have briefly set out will indicate a very notable process in theological thought during the last 2,000 or 3,000 years. I mean the disappearance of God. At first he came before men very visible and very obvious, as fire, cloud, angel, and the like. In the New Testament he is divested of these cruder attributes, and is chiefly presented as the Son of Man so evidently and characteristically human that he is penniless and homeless, and, at certain critical moments in Gethsemane, friendless. Then he is slain, he rises from the dead, he ascends, he is lost sight of, he is earnestly expected.

Why does he not reappear as fire? Why not again sit on a royal chair with a sapphire foot-stool? Why not fling once more volcanic torrents on his enemies? Why not labour again at the carpenter's bench, or give sight again to the blind?

"A cloud received him out of their sight," says *Luke* in his story of the Ascension.

The cloud remains. The human mind refuses any more to see God in gross Old Testament forms, or in the milder and homelier New Testament form. Still affirming its faith in the Incarnate God, it, nevertheless, experienced a secret doubt, and deported the God-Christ to heaven. And having, nearly two thousand years ago, "earnestly expected" his return and new revelation, it has allowed him to exist for centuries as a question for debate, and a subject for the speculations of argumentative preachers and Professors of Ecclesiastical History.

We have travelled a long way since Abraham and Yahweh ate and drank together as host and guest under the oak of Mamre! How near was Divinity to us then! In this day of World-War, how far!

F. J. Gould.

Correspondence.

"MR. MANN AND THE SOUL."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Owing to the divagations of the Post Office and the newsagents, I did not see the criticism of "C. H." in the *Freethinker* for September 1 until it was too late for an answer in the next issue.

"C. H." accuses me of "stupidity" in countering Sylvanus Thompson's claim to "spiritual perception" by the statement that there are tribes and nations without any idea of a God. "C. H." says: "Sylvanus Thompson said in effect: Some men have a sense of the non-physical." This is quite false. Sylvanus Thompson was not a Spiritualist, and there is nothing in his book, *A Not Impossible Religion*—as "C. H." would know if he had read it before rushing into print—to countenance the interpretation which "C. H." attempts to force upon his words.

By "spiritual perception" Thompson meant a knowledge of God and worship of Jesus Christ. No doubt he also believed in a future life; but he does not treat of it in his book.

Thompson claimed that "the instinct of religion is then innate," and as natural as our other instincts; and I pointed out that this was diametrically opposed to the facts by the existence of Atheistic peoples. Where is the "stupidity"? There are worse things than stupidity. One of them is the calculated attempt to twist another man's words into conformity with our own belief.

"C. H." says he has lived before! One can only marvel that the experience gained in a previous life—or lives—has not resulted in better morals and better manners. If "C. H." wishes to receive any future notice, he must adopt the manners of common courtesy.

W. Mann.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C): 11, R. Dimsdale Stocker, "Our Warriors as Poets."

OUTDOOR.

Battersea Branch N. S. S. No Lecture.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mrs. Rosetti, A Lecture.

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss Kough, A Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 6, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Can an Unbeliever Blaspheme?" Mr. R. Norman, "Bible Stories for the Young."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. J. B. Johnson, A Lecture.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Yates, Swasey, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Aberaman (The Grand Theatre, Aberaman): Mr. C. Cohen, 2.30, "Why Men Believe in God": 7, "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?"

Blaina: 7.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, Important Business Meeting. Will all Members try to attend?

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road): 6.30, Discussion, Opened by D. J. Morgan.

OUTDOOR.

Manchester Branch N. S. S. Ramble to Stalybrushes.—Meet 10.30. Piccadilly for Stalybridge Car. Bring refreshments. Committee Meeting.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
God and Man.—The Editor	493
"Our Holy Mother Church."—J. T. Lloyd	494
America's Great Thinker.—Mimnermus	495
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	496
Autumnal Notes.—Andrew Millar	497
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund	499
Religion and Life.—E. Lyttelton	501
The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer	501

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

God and Man.

It is part of the Christian myth that God suffered for the benefit of man. And if there is a God that is quite the proper thing for him to do. For, on the Theistic hypothesis, man, as a part of nature, is God's handiwork. God made nature with all its possibilities and consequences. Presumably, he could have made things different from what they are. He might have made men perfect, but preferred them imperfect. He might have made progress sure and rapid instead of uncertain and slow. Common sense might have been made violently contagious instead of the majority being immune to its attacks. But things being as they are, the suffering of humanity being what it is, the blunders of "creation" being what they are, the responsibility rests with God. *If*, then, God suffered for man, or with man, there is nothing magnificently generous in his suffering. It is no more than a recognition—or an attempted rectification of an original blunder or crime. For, we repeat, if God made man—directly or indirectly—the responsibility is his; and it is as idle to talk about God's judgment on man as it would be to talk of a parent's right to punish a child for developing an inherited disease. God is in no position to judge man. It is rather man's place to judge God. And in that trial the verdict of common sense would be that of sheer neglect, stupid bungling, or deliberate cruelty.

* * *

Who is to Blame.

Unfortunately, it is not true that God suffers for man. The truth is that man suffers for God. Man seldom blames his God—he blames himself. When disease raged he blamed, not God, but himself. When an earthquake occurred or the crops failed, it was man who had done wrong—not God. God was chastizing man for his faults, correcting him for his good. There is not a brutality in human records, not a cruelty in history, that has not pleaded this justification. Thousands of women and children were burned for witchcraft. It was God's will. Thousands were imprisoned, and tortured, and killed, for not worshipping God aright, or for refusing to worship him at all. It was God's will. People have been for generations shut off from rational enjoyment and healthy education one day out of seven. It was God's will. Children are born diseased, millions live in poverty, a few thousands riot in luxury. It is God's will. A war breaks out, it is God's judgment on our sinfulness. Always man's fault—never the fault of God. It once took a woman of more than average courage to throw a stool at a Scottish preacher; there have never been more than a few men and women with the moral courage to tell God—if there be a God—that the faults of the world are his, not ours. A better God would have made better men and women. We do not need *his* forgiveness for being as he made us; it is he who needs ours for his making us as we are:—

> O, Thou, who man of baser earth did make
> And e'v'n with Paradise devise the snake,
> For all the sin wherewith the face of man
> Is blackened—man's forgiveness give—and take.

* * *

The Antithesis of the Ages.

God and man! That is the great antithesis of the ages, conveying at one and the same time a colossal falsity and a profound truth. A falsity, because we know nothing of any gods save such as man himself has created. Good and bad, man makes them all. He creates them in his own likeness, and then prostrates himself before the creation of his own imagination. And it is precisely because the gods are all man-made that the antithesis it embodies conveys so profound a truth. The gods of the world's religions are no more, and no less, than the inherited images of the man of the past. The God of the Bible reflects the moral outlook of a semi-civilized Bedouin tribe; the God of Paul, who saves who he will and damns who he will, reflects the society of a bygone age. The conflict between God and man is thus fundamentally a contest between a less civilized past with a more civilized present. That is one reason why all religions place the golden age in the past, and why they all strive to perpetuate the past so long as it can be done. The war between religion and science is fundamentally the clash of two culture stages, and the fighters those who would have modern ideals spring from modern knowledge, aiming at the gratification of modern needs, and those who would keep men as nearly as possible at the mental level of the Stone Age.

* * *

Giving God a Chance.

It was an apt reply to the conceited person who boasted of being "a self-made man" that the statement, if true, removed a heavy burden from the Lord's shoulders. But the Christian will not have it so. He insists that God made man, that God made the world; and this being so, the full responsibility is his. He might have made both man and the world differently; he preferred them as they are. He designed that man should start existence hardly distinguishable from the brutes; that progress should be achieved through cruelty and bloodshed and unmerited suffering. He designed that the children should suffer for the faults of the parents; that the parents should eat sour grapes and the children's teeth should be set on edge. He designed that half the animal world should be compelled by their very nature to lead a parasitic existence at the expense of the other half. All the suffering and wrong of animal and human

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history are part of *his* plan; they result from forces which *he* called into being or forced into operation. If these things came without God, then indeed would a heavy responsibility be lifted from the Lord's shoulders. But how can the believer admit this? He is bound, so long as he believes in a God, to credit him with a plan, and power to execute it; and in his haste to credit God with the greatness of a creator, he inevitably endows him with a character at the side of which all the imaginable cruelty of human nature stands as a perfect monument of philanthropy. * * *

How Long?

God gives nothing to man; it is man who gives all to God. From man the gods derive their being, and from man they receive their death warrant. Like the fairies in *Peter Pan*, who are saved by extinction only by the belief of the children, so "God" lives upon the belief of his devotees. Cease to believe, and God ceases to be. Yet to this "figment of the mind" man has given of his best and of his dearest. Since the dawn of history he has covered the earth with temples, maintained an army of priestly parasites, sacrificed his wealth and his comfort, prostrated his intellect, and sacrificed his affections, all for the glory of gods who are literally no more than heritable products of primitive ignorance and credulity. How long will the tragic farce continue? How long will it be before people recognize that the gods of to-day are no more than the surviving representatives of a once numerous family, with no better claim to continued existence than had those who have already ceased to exist?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Our Holy Mother Church."

V.

IT has been known for at least two decades that Protestantism is in a decaying condition everywhere. Both in quality and in quantity it is a visibly weakening, evaporating force. This we learn beyond a doubt from the annual statistics of the various denominations, as well as from the heart-breaking lamentations uttered by the leaders at their yearly stock-taking assemblies. We read of diminishing congregations, decreasing memberships, and depleting funds. At this year's Wesleyan Conference there was to be heard a note of despair, almost, when the declaration was repeatedly made that "the distinctive message of Methodism is being lost and that its passion and conviction are disappearing," and particularly when it was realized that in the last few years there had been a loss of nearly twenty-nine thousand members and of a hundred and fifty thousand Sunday-school scholars. The same mournful tale of persistent decrease is being told of the other Protestant sects in all parts of Christendom. But whilst this dirge is being sung in the Protestant camp, we are assured that the Catholic Church is enjoying a glorious revival, specially in Protestant countries, such as Great Britain and America. This is regretfully admitted by some Protestants who dread the triumph of Catholicism, and gleefully boasted of by the Catholics themselves. But is it true? No; it is the very opposite of true. For upwards of a century and a half the Catholic Church has been steadily losing ground, not only in Great Britain and the United States, but in the very countries which in the past were always loyal to Rome. Mr. Joseph McCabe, in his *Decay of the Church of Rome*, supplies statistics which show that in the year 1909 the Catholics numbered only 190,000,000, and that of these 120,000,000 were illiterate. And yet, utterly ignoring such official and Catholic statistics, the *Catholic Directory* for 1918 unhesitatingly declares that there are 301,960,485 Catholics in the world. Curiously enough, while Cardinal Gasquet, at the Catholic Congress in July, 1914, proudly claimed that there were 300,000,000 Catholics, Father A. King, O.P., in December, claimed only 250,000,000. In the same month the papal *Monitor* put the number at 350,000,000. In January, 1915, Bishop Foley set the total down as 400,000,000. Two years later still, the *Catholic Herald* (December 8, 1917) reduced the number to 300,000,000. It is evident that we cannot rely upon Catholic priests and journals for an accurate estimate of the Catholic population of the world; but, by putting together and comparing a large number of statistics, from official sources, it is safe to state that during the nineteenth century the Church of Rome lost at least 1,000,000 members.

Turning now to England and Wales, we find that in the *Catholic Directory* for 1917 the Catholic population is stated to be 1,894,243, the inhabitants being described as flying in crowds into the bosom of our Holy Mother Church. As a matter of fact, this claim is wholly false. Instead of gaining in England and Wales during the last hundred years, the Catholic Church has been losing on a large scale. According to Mr. McCabe, the Catholic population is, at the most, 1,200,000. Even according to the *Catholic Directory*, there has been a loss, for in its issue for 1914, the number of Catholics was given as 2,100,000. In 1890, Cardinal Manning estimated the Catholic population of England and Wales at 1,500,000, of whom only 200,000 were English; and it was his sorrowful confession that "we have lost the people of England." In Tract No. 6 of the *Protestant Press Bureau* it is stated that "during the last seventy years one million Roman Catholics have left the Church in Great Britain," while Mr. McCabe estimates the losses to be not less than 2,000,000. Cardinal Bourne has not the temerity to claim an increase, but is content to give the same total as Manning. As the *Tablet* observes, "it must be admitted.....that the estimate of the Catholic population in the British Isles, though made with every care, is full of uncertainties." It is true that there are conversions—it would be a miracle if there were not; but the conversions are outnumbered by the relapses. There are Catholic as well as Protestant revivalists, and probably the former ply their art with greater skill and success than the latter; but revivals, however scientifically planned and conducted, never prove of permanent benefit to the Church. London is no doubt a city which Rome is supremely anxious to win back, and with that object in view she spends money most lavishly in providing it with handsome churches and eloquent preachers. "Large colonies of Jesuits, Oratorians, Dominicans, Passionists, Franciscans, etc., devote their abundant and comfortable leisure to the conversion of England, especially of wealthy London. London seethes with Catholic intrigue, from the small manœuvres of the parish priest to increase his congregation, or of the Jesuit to attract wealthy women, to the secret plotting that is continually afoot round Westminster" (*The Popes and their Church*, p. 251). And yet the number of Catholics in the metropolis, with its population of over seven millions, is less than a hundred and fifty thousand.

The same thing is true of America. An impartial estimate gives the Catholic population there as 9,000,000. Catholics themselves claim that their number is at present 15,089,906; but some of their own scholars admit a loss of 20,000,000. Their losses are much in advance of their gains, so that we can reasonably conclude that the prospects of our Holy Mother Church are no brighter in the States than they are here. In both countries the

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War has already alienated tens of thousands of thoughtful people from the Church, Protestant and Catholic alike, and is calculated to alienate countless myriads more. The War is the mightiest eye-opener Christendom has ever had.

Now, why is the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, so conspicuously losing its power over the modern mind? Why are there such numerous secessions from its fellowship? The only answer is that the light of knowledge is dispersing the darkness of superstition which was the only soil in which the Church could have taken root and grown to its present dimensions. Deprived of that soil nothing awaits it but certain death. Such a General Council as that of Constance in the fifteenth century is no longer possible, because the Church of Rome is to day but the shadow of what it was then. Though the parish priest still wields a tremendous influence over his flock, his word is not the inexorable law that it was three centuries ago. His parishioners are beginning to realize that he is but a human being like themselves; and even the Pope's excommunications have been robbed of most of their awful terrors. The spread of education is having the effect of unmasking the Church and showing it in its true character. The Pope has been shorn, not only of his temporal power, but very largely of his spiritual sway over men's minds and consciences. When Pius X. found this out he broke his heart and died. So far as Christendom at large is concerned the present Pontiff is little more than a figurehead, while the Church is treated with something like silent contempt. The Church never was what it claimed to be, only mankind were too ignorant to discover it; but its false claims were so confidently and so skilfully put forth that they had the practical effect upon the multitudes of being true. The Church is being ignored or opposed to-day, not because it is in any sense or degree different from what it was in the days of its might, but simply because men and women are, at last, taking it for what it really is. During the Ages of Faith, when the Church was all-powerful, ninety-five per cent. of the people could neither read nor write, and were, consequently, wholly incapable of forming an intelligent judgment upon the nature of its claims; but now, the day of reason having dawned, its reign is for ever at an end. Our Holy Mother Church has ceased to be, except for an ever-dwindling minority, for most of whom it is still profitable to believe in and serve it.

J. T. LLOYD.

America's Great Thinker.

Emerson is the sweetest memory of his land and century.
—*G. W. Foote.*

The books which help you most are those which make you think the most.—*Theodore Parker.*

No less a critic than Matthew Arnold has told us that Emerson's works are the most valuable prose contribution to English literature of the nineteenth century. If this be true, Emerson's well of inspiration will run for many a day. Of all his contemporaries he is now the strongest, the most influential, the most read. The latest voices in philosophy, like Nietzsche, simply repeat in varied language the golden message of Emerson, and send us all back with renewed interest to the master's writings.

It is natural to feel curious concerning the evolution of a great literary force that is really original. To watch Shelley as he grows from *Queen Mab* to *Prometheus Unbound*, or to trace Shakespeare's genius as he progresses from *Venus and Adonis* to the masterpieces of the world's literature, form the best introduction to a re-reading of the works of these authors. Nor is such curiosity wasteful in the case of Emerson.

This great Freethinker first saw the light in a parsonage, and he had clericalism in his blood. His father and his grandfather were clergymen. At first he followed in the footsteps of his ancestors, and was ordained as a Unitarian minister. Even in those early days his preaching was ethical rather than devotional. Emerson did not care for the threshing of old straw. There is a suspicion of chafing under the harness, and the bent is towards Secularism. The prime duty, he thought, was to be truthful and honest, and he revolted at the "official goodness" of the ministerial position.

Then his intellect rebelled. There was a question of the rite of the Communion, and his mind was brought to a pause. His elder brother, William, was even more rationalistic, and declined altogether to take "holy orders." Emerson's ethics took a practical form. He opened his church to anti-slavery agitators, and made the acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle, whom he visited at his Scottish home. This was the germ of a great friendship, notable in the history of literature.

Emerson's first book was, characteristically, a volume on *Nature*, and it revealed the fact that he found the Unitarian fetters none the less real for being simple and few. From the publication of his first book Emerson became a power, and his subsequent career is familiar to all who care for the higher things in literature. Lowell says:—

> Those who heard him while their natures were yet plastic, and their mental nerves trembled under the slightest breath of divine air, will never cease to say:
>
> Was never eye did see that face,
> Was never ear did hear that tongue,
> Was never mind did mind his grace
> That ever thought the travail long,
> But eyes and ears, and every thought
> Were with his sweet perfections caught.

Since that eulogy was written, time has only more assured Emerson's position among the really great writers. Those who have read his pages with attention know that his real and essential religion was the religion of humanity. He tells us plainly that the day will come when Churches built on Supernaturalism will be superseded and left behind by the conscience of the race:—

> There will be a new church founded on moral science, at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come; without shawms, or psaltery, or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry.

A church founded on ethics! Is it not the trumpet of a prophecy? The superstitious may well laugh, for daily they are discarding their dogmas, and heading their Churches towards the Emersonian ideal.

What distinguishes Emerson from so many philosophers is that he had a shrewd Yankee head on his shoulders. Long before Ruskin declared "There is no wealth but life," Emerson said "The best political economy is care and culture of men." Years before attention was paid to ethics as a serious factor in religion, Emerson wrote: "I look for the new teacher that shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart, and shall show that Duty is one thing with Science." This great American thinker dreamt of vaster accomplishments and nobler victories than man has yet witnessed. "We think our civilization near its meridian," he exclaims, "but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star." It is difficult to formulate the Emersonian philosophy. It is unquestionably individual. "Be yourself" is the keynote;

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"Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Emerson's counsel of perfection is like that which Shakespeare put into the mouth of old Polonius :—

To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou cans't not be false to any man.

Despite his Transcendentalism, Emerson was a Freethinker. Golden thoughts confront us on every page of his writings :—

A world in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Who shall forbid a wise scepticism?
Let us have to deal with real men and women, and not with skipping ghosts.
So far as a man thinks, he is free.
Knowledge is the knowing that we cannot know.
Whoso would be a man must be a Nonconformist.

In Emerson we have a notable contradiction of the adage which excepts a prophet from honour in his own country. He became a classic during his lifetime. His detractors are few and feeble. The joke that, when Emerson interviewed the Sphinx, she said to him, "You're another," explains their outlook very well. Certainly, no writer stimulates thought like Emerson. His maxims are a perpetual antidote to the insidiousness of custom and tradition.

The fragment of granite which marks his grave is a fitting symbol of his nobility of character and singleness of purpose. That grave reminds us that there were giants in those far-off days of struggle and stress. Let us take heart from this heroic American, who was ready not only to die for civilization, but to live for it. For his splendid literary legacy is the best philosophy at the worst of times.

MIMNERMUS.

A Search for the Soul.

XI.

(*Continued from p. 478.*)

WE now come to the localization of mental functions in the brain. I have just read an important medical work by Bernard Hollander, M.D., published in 1910, entitled *The Mental Symptoms of Brain Disease*, in which the localization of mental functions in the brain is spoken of as a fact well known to all physiologists and members of the medical profession. Though immortality is not mentioned, the book has a direct bearing upon the question. In introducing the subject Dr. Hollander says :—

> There is a mass of clinical evidence, already accumulated, which shows that psychical states, as well as the corresponding sensations and movements, are associated with definite regions in the brain.....It is through the histological studies of recent years that the localization theory has gained its most notable victory.....Every decided advance in the knowledge of the localization of functions has been due to the careful collection of cases with autopsies and the study of their common features.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to refer to the well-known fact that we have some parts of our brain in common with the higher animals, while other and later-developed parts are distinctly human. By taking the lowest class of animal possessing some rudimentary kind of brain, and noting the gradual development upwards till we reach the highest ape (whose brain most closely resembles that of man) we perceive that there is a part of brain corresponding to the frontal lobes in the cerebrum of man, which is more developed in the ape class than in that of any of the other animals—though it is still smaller and less developed than in the human being. This latest portion of the human brain, which includes the reflective and reasoning faculties, is the anterior part—namely, that of the frontal lobes. The other lobes, being common to animals and man, are of a lower nature, and have largely to do with animal impulses and emotions. One has but to look at the receding foreheads in all our domestic animals, or in those at the Zoo, to see what portion of a man's brain is solely human. In the early part of his work Dr. Hollander says :—

> The first principles which we must consider as established are—Firstly, all mental operations take place in and through the superficial grey matter or cortex of the brain; and, secondly, that the cortex of the brain is not a homogeneous organ, but consists of a multiplicity of centres. The cerebrum is the material organ through whose instrumentality all the processes of thought and feeling are carried on.....The existence of facts, such as that injuries to the head affect not infrequently one or more of the mental powers, while others remain perfectly sound, makes it more than probable that *different portions of the cerebral hemispheres have different functions allotted to them* (p. 20.)

This last statement, which I have here italicized, is, of course, what is meant by the localization of mental functions—the functioning, for instance, of the frontal lobes, giving rise to judgment, reflection, and reasoning; the functioning of the posterior lobes to natural feelings, emotions, and animal spirits. These last acquired frontal lobes in man also exercise a restraining influence upon the functions of the lobes in the rear; and, in the absence of this controlling force, say by disease or the action of opium or alcohol, man becomes little more than a mere animal. Upon this subject Dr. Hollander says :—

> We find that when the frontal lobes are destroyed by injury or disease, the processes of judgment and reason are diminished, there is an inability to fix the attention, to follow a continuous train of thought, or to conduct intellectual processes.....We find, moreover, that in such men the struggle between the lower instincts and ethical feelings is diminished or does not any longer exist, and instead of a rational man, we see a creature given over entirely to the satisfaction of his lower desires. Such is the case in all forms of lesions of the frontal lobes, and it does not occur in lesions of other parts of the brain (p. 24).

In confirmation of the foregoing and other views expressed, Dr. Hollander cites the results of the investigations by many well-known medical writers (pp. 27-34), from some of which results I quote a sentence or two. These are the following :—

Bianchi.—The frontal lobes preside over certain higher mental faculties, and are, so to say, a centre for the intellect.

Flechsig.—In the frontal lobes is located the anterior association centre of attention, reflection, and inhibition. It is concerned with abstract concepts and other complex intellectual processes.

Durante.—Lesions of the frontal lobes are always followed by intellectual changes, and the frontal, especially the pre-frontal region, is the seat of the highest mental powers.

Professor MacAlister (British Association meeting, 1892).—Increased growth of the frontal lobes is the physical accompaniment of intellectual activity.

Allen Starr (*American Journal of Medical Science*, 1894).—The form of mental disturbance in lesions of the frontal region is rather to be described as a loss of self-control and a subsequent change of character..... This action of control involves judgment and reason, the highest mental qualities.

J. S. Bolton (*Journal of Mental Science*, 1906).—The pre-frontal region is the region of the cerebrum which is concerned with the performance of the highest co-ordinating and associational processes of mind.

Charles K. Mills (Professor of Neurology in the University of Pennsylvania).—The region of the brain in

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which focal lesions have produced persistent psychic symptoms has been the pre-frontal lobes. If these lesions are both extensive and deep-seated, disorders of memory, will, attention, comparison, and judgment may be present.

B. Sachs.—A defective development of the frontal lobes leads to a complete idiocy, even though the remainder of the brain has attained to normal growth.

Karl Vogt.—The brain formation of microcephalous idiots does not depend on arrest of the development of the whole brain, but chiefly of the frontal lobes.

Meynert.—All forms of dementia are due to brain atrophy affecting the frontal lobes.

Schuster, 1902.—Melancholia and paranoia are hardly ever observed in lesions of the frontal lobes, but mania and dementia are.

Ferrier states that all the monkeys which he operated upon (by removing their frontal lobes) lost the power of psychical concentration or attention.

S. J. Franz (*Archives of Psychology*, 1907) states that after training monkeys and cats, he destroyed their frontal lobes, after which he found that all freshly acquired habits and knowledge were lost; but if any other part of the brain was destroyed, the result of his training was not lost.

Here, it should be borne in mind, that all vertebrate animals possess rudimentary frontal lobes; it is from these that those in man have been so largely developed during the long process of evolution. A large portion of Dr. Hollander's book consists of cases showing the effects produced by lesions of different parts of the brain, his object being to show the importance to medical men of a correct localization of the cerebral regions which represent the different mental functions, in order the better to effect a cure. Hence, the soul is never once named. That this localization of the mental faculties *does*, however, affect the idea of a soul is unquestionable; for the latter imaginary being is alleged to be an entity, distinct from the brain, which thinks, wills, reflects, determines, and performs all the mental work ascribed to "the mind." If, then, the different parts of the brain produce all these phenomena, then the "soul" in man will at once be perceived to be purely imaginary.

The fact that mental functions *can* be localized in the brain is a proof, Professor Bonney says, that the mind "interacts" with the cerebral organ. He is mistaken; until it can be shown that "the mind" is something distinct from the body, it is a proof that all mental phenomena are produced by the brain.

(*To be continued.*) ABRACADABRA.

Autumnal Notes.

For lords an kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them dee, for that they're born;
But, oh, prodigious to reflect,
A towmond (twelvemonth) sirs, is gane to wreck.
—*Burns.*

ALREADY, at least, it is the evening of the year, and the quiet philosopher pensively contemplates the fading glories of the field. There is the War also, and those other flowers of the forest, trampled and torn on the fruitful fields of death.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And grasses wither at the North winds breath,
And flowers to fade, but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh, death.

And in quite superfluous addition, man, proud, impatient, imperial, invents a murder season of his own, and in which lethal atmosphere, man, deceived, devoted, destined, writhes, and gasps, and dies, and prematurely strews the earth like winter's withered leaves. The pity of it. The appalling stupidity of it.

All is so mute and still, and yet there seems a mild majestic eloquence in the sober scene, a voice insistent, solicitous, august. Even from the tomb the voice of nature cries: yea, but it is the echo of our own, not the voice of the dead—the still sad music of our living, and, we trust, growing humanity—the chord that vibrates in every breast, and by which alone there can be universal harmony—this is the creed of the Freethinker, let him be but worthy of it.

All is so mute and still. The very clouds and dappled skies seem to brood somnolent over the scene. And in the dreamy haze of those autumn skies appear, here and there, little wide-open, or half-closed eyelet-lakes of blue, like eyes of maidens half asleep, passively gazing over the changling earth as from the land of sleep and rest.

The nutweed is here, with its rough branching stem, hard, dark top, and crown of rich bluish purple. That "symbol dear," but jagged, the Scotch thistle, has also put on its red tam-o'-shanter, which it will doff so soon in the grey, incalculable descent of thistledown. There is an irregular yet harmonious display of large gowans, or marguerites, sadly seductive, suggestive of the summer's close. Beyond are the bluebells, or harebells, aerial-hued—invisible fairies ring their inaudible chimes—and mingled with the more sober button-shaped blue scabia, shading into, or succeeded by, the purpling heath, in the golfers' paradise. The numerous ragweed blooms, the golden glory of neglected fields. The little meadow has settled down to compose its latest masterpiece. How gloriously the summer goes, and, as it were, how lovingly it remains! The woods, "The dark woods, sombre and lonely," are still gloriously green; how august still and solemn in their own, and the shadows of eve and morn; but at noontide with more and more palpably bedraggled boughs, and leaves anticipatory dry and brown.

But there is no end. 'Tis but, as Bryant says,—

The lesson.....of eternity.
Lo! all grow old and die; but see again
How on the faltering footsteps of decay
Youth presses—ever gay and beautiful youth,
In all its beautiful forms.....

We apply the text to our own purposes—The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and ye are not saved; that is to say, taught. Man is slow to learn the lessons of his state. But he has learned much, and is learning still. He must, in the eternal reiteration and repetition of Nature's universal language; in the real and most royal pageant of the autumn, in the simple facts of birth and life and death.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

The Christian Evidence Society is asking for £100 to send literature to troops, in order to counteract the Freethought literature they are receiving. We are not surprised at this. Hitherto Christians have had it pretty much their own way in this kind of thing. But we made up our mind when the War started that this should be remedied, and we have done it to the best of our opportunities.

Some people are suggesting that in view of the coal shortage the evening church service might be abandoned, thus saving coal and light. A contemporary submits, however, that if they are continued at the churches, the firing would be saved in the houses of those who attend service. So that we may expect to see outside churches: "Come to service and save your coals." We are quite sure that our Ministry of Information would issue a poster to that effect if asked to do so. But what a change! Once upon a time people went to Church to escape hell. Now they are invited to go to get out of the cold.

Journalists write for money, but surely it is not necessary that they should pretend to share the ideas of the least intelligent of the community. In a leading article recently, the *Evening Standard* said, discussing an important subject, "the possibilities are enormous, so great, indeed, that one gropes instinctively to touch wood as one ventures to discuss them." There was no need for that journalist to grope far; he could have touched his own head easily.

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Here is a chance of useful work by the Christian Evidence Society. At Greenwich Court a girl of ten stated that she had never heard of God or the Bible, and had never been to church, chapel, or Sunday-school.

A quaint remark of Canon Horsley is quoted in the *Lady*, which says that he never despaired of a criminal who retained an appetite for apple-pie. Yet, according to Christian tradition, it was "an apple" that brought sin into the world and all our woe.

At a Sunday concert for the American troops at the Palace Theatre, London, the programme included scenes from *Tails Up*. To a pious mind it might suggest the procession of the animals from the Ark.

An eleven-year-old boy earned £2 picking whortleberries while on a week's holiday in Exmoor, and the editors are making paragraphs about the circumstances. The editors do not call attention to the £200 weekly of the bachelor Bishop of London.

Dr. Davis, the American dentist, records in the *Times* his surprise when he saw the Kaiser in a red flannel undershirt. This sort of thing adds a new terror to civilization. He might have caught "God's Anointed" in his bath.

The Rev. Dr. John A. Hutton, of Glasgow, has just made a discovery that will certainly immortalize his name. We are anxious to do what we can to give this original discovery as wide a circulation as possible: "Ways of living and of thinking, beliefs, religious practices and manners, do not die so long as they are alive." We wonder at our stupidity in not having found that out for ourselves.

Before the War, British divines regarded Germany as an almost ideal Christian country, and theological students were sent there to complete their education. For the year 1908, the *Daily Mail* published a volume about the Churches, in which Germany was highly eulogized by the late Bishop Wilkinson for her devotion to the Christian religion. After four years of the War, this is what Professor David Smith testifies in the *British Weekly* for September 12:—

> For a century Germany has been filling the cup of her iniquity, and now God is letting his vultures loose upon her and her accomplices.

How circumstances dominate Christian opinion!

The Roman Catholics are doing their best to popularize their superstition in this country. On Sunday, a lengthy procession of girls, children, and priests paraded some of the City streets. The principal feature of the procession was a huge plaster and gilt religious figure, covered with a lace curtain, and carried by two men. "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

The Young Men's Christian Association is now devoting some of its spare energy to the exploitation of Shakespeare, and "evenings with the bard" have been arranged for the coming winter. Christians will find it a welcome change to laugh with Falstaff rather than sob with the twelve disciples.

Some beautiful nonsense passes for wisdom in religious periodicals. Here is the *Methodist Recorder* writing: "To the slow, solemn music of the Dead March of Paganism Christ has added a pæan chorus." Is this a poetical way of alluding to the shouting of the "immortal fry" in Hades?

The Jewish New Year, dated 5679, is based upon Biblical chronology. To educated people, the figures carry their own refutation.

The Bishop of Peterborough likes his left hand to know what his right hand has done in the way of charity. His lordship publicly dedicated his palace as a military hospital. Probably he agrees with the cynical remark, "Sweet are the uses of advertisement."

The Rev. George Frederick Cox, of Gourock Parish Church, has been charged at Edinburgh Sheriff Court as being an absentee from military service. Evidently he prefers preaching and ladies' afternoon teas to fighting for his country.

By thirteen votes to nine, Glasgow School Board have decided not to interfere with the new Education Bill regarding education in schools, and prefer the *status quo* to any alteration; but is the *status quo* fair to a large number of ratepayers who have no interest in the teaching of religion, but for which they have to pay?

The Rev. Wm. Ross, of Kilmarnock, has a letter in the press on religious instruction in schools, in which he states, "the conscience and common sense of the nation feel it ought to be mandatory." How does he arrive at this conclusion without the subject having been before the electorate? In answering the question, "Why should not the Church do it?" he says everyone knows how small a proportion of the children are to be found in the Sabbath Schools. Surely he cannot have the argument both ways. If the conscience and common sense of the nation demand religious instruction, surely the children would be sent to the Sunday-school to get it.

What a thing it is to possess a "conscience" in a Christian country! 625 conscientious objectors to militarism have been court-martialled twice; 510 three times; 210 four times; and 18 have received five successive sentences. In addition, large numbers have been deprived of their votes in Parliamentary elections.

The Vicar of St. Anselm's, Streatham, complains that the finances of the church are in a very grave condition. He writes to his parishioners: "I have never known the hour to be darker financially than it is at present," and "unless everyone at St. Anselm's very markedly increases his support in money disastrous consequences will arise." The revival of religion at Streatham is not very marked.

The Bishop of Pretoria has been getting into trouble for championing the cause of the Blacks in South Africa. He has suggested that the taxes taken from the natives should be returned in the form of education, and a Johannesburg paper of July 13, *Life, Sport, and Drama*, declares that "such speeches should be suppressed," and "the authorities should take steps to silence such traitors to their race and colour." It also reminds the Bishop that "the Church is an obsolete institution and the bishops are public nuisances." We agree with the latter sentiment, but we have, all the same, considerable sympathy with those who protest against the exploitation of the Coloured races in the interest of the Whites.

The Glasgow United Presbytery passed a resolution calling upon the Government to maintain equality among the religious sects, and to make the teaching of religion compulsory in the new Education Bill. And what of the people who are outside the Christian sects? Look after the sects and never mind the rest of the public. That is the policy of all the Churches. It is really time that lovers of justice taught these people that there were others in the world beside Christians.

After wandering through several churches, the Rev. A. J. Waldron has now turned up at Sale with a lecture on "Why I Became a Spiritualist." We wonder whether replies from the audience would be permitted?

The revival of religion is not very apparent in South London. In the Kennington Road a Presbyterian Church is up "to let," whilst in the Walworth Road a chapel has been transformed into a cinema theatre, and a "gospel hall" is being devoted to more useful purposes.

Although paper is very scarce, during the four years of War, forty million Bibles have been distributed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. No wonder the output of fiction is increasing.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

"THE ready response to the Sustentation Fund," writes Mr. W. R. Munton, in forwarding cheque, "is most encouraging." With that we quite agree. There is no doubt of the deficit of last year being cleared off, and there will be a balance left to meet the recurring weekly deficit which is inevitable under present conditions. Expenses are still going up, and where the advance will stop "No man knoweth." But the support of our friends bids us face the future without dismay.

Many have written expressing the hope that we will keep open the Fund for a longer period than we did last year. We hope these will not be offended if we follow our usual plan of closing the Fund so soon as it seems reasonably proper.

Mr. W. Higgins, in sending a first subscription of £3, writes:—

> I think you should make an exceptionally strong personal appeal to the numerous readers of the paper, as at present they have a special responsibility by way of ensuring its sound position until the present crisis is over.

Mr. C. Heaton would like to see "three thousand readers respond to the Fund." Mr. J. Robinson thinks "the response generally is magnificent." "Veteran" says, in the course of a deeply interesting letter:—

> Having been connected with the Freethought Movement for many years, and knowing something of the history of the party, I cannot but regard the response to your appeal as a splendid testimony to the affection for the paper, and also of confidence in your ability and leadership. I hope, when the War is over, to see your efforts during the past four years duly recognized.

To that we can only say that our efforts will be "duly recognized" if the paper maintains its position or continues to progress during the last, and probably the most trying, period of the War. We ask for no other recognition than this. And we are deeply grateful for all that has already been done.

Mr. S. Scott says:—

> If it were my last pound, it would go to the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund. That paper is *our* standard in the great intellectual conflict of the age, and we must not let it go down. At all costs, we who contend for the "best of causes" must keep the grand old flag flying.

Mr. J. W. Wood writes:—

> I enclose cheque. A purely selfish act, as we should miss our *Freethinker*—yet, hanged if I know how you do it.

Well, sometimes we hardly know ourselves—except that it is not done without considerable anxiety and care.

And, as a further aid to cheerfulness, it has now been decided that the wages of compositors is to be advanced 10s. per week from the end of September. This means increases in other directions, and with the price of paper still advancing, we are not likely to die from want of excitement. Seriously, the addition of something between £75 and £100 a year on our wages bill makes one smile ruefully, but there is nothing for it but to tighten one's belt and go forward. From the point of view of wages, the Editor would much like to change places with one of his compositors.

Finally, we cannot forbear citing from one of our lady contributors, Mrs. E. Adams, who writes:—

> I enclose cheque value £5, and wish it were more. The deficit seems very little, considering all things, and I hope the response will be generous. It is surprising how in these times you can have managed so well. If no editor ever had a more loyal body of readers, no editor ever deserved it more. For the difficulties must have been great; and, after all, to give a little money, what is that compared to the worry and work?

The following represents the subscriptions received up to the time of our going to press:—

Third List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £251 16s. 9d. J. H. Waters, 10s. Mathematicus, 10s. 6d. C. Hiles, 2s. S. Hudson, £1. W. R. Munton, £5. W. Waymark, 5s. Fredk. Dell, 10s. 6d. "Veteran," £1. Sergt. W. Saunders, 10s. D. G. Massie, 5s. J. Carmichael, 5s. Sapper L. Cheetham, 3s. Lieut. Easterbrook, £2. S. A. Gimson, £2. Mrs. E. Adams, £5. P. F. Green (France), 7s. 6d. E. and A. Goodwin, 5s. F. C. Wykes, 7s. 6d. J. W. Wood, £1 1s. G. F. S., £3. T. Y. R., 10s. G. Saunders, 5s. J. Robertson, 5s. A. McPherson, 2s. 6d. Pte. G. Robertson, 2s. 6d. H. Dawson, 6s. James Wills, £5. A. D. W., 10s. M. Beale, 5s. Jersey, £1. B. F. B., 4s. W. Milroy, 5s. J. Milroy, 5s. W. Fitzpatrick, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. T. Garrett, 5s. F. C. Warnes, 1s. H. Cook, 1s. (per Mrs. H. Rosetti). S. Bernstein, 5s. A. B., 10s. J. McCartney, £1. G. Smith, £1. C. Harwood, 5s. James Thomas, 2s. G. W. Rogers, 6s. J. G. B., 2s. 6d. A One Time High Churchman, 2s. A. Mellema, 14s. 6d. W. Leeson, 10s. Vera, 2s. 6d. E. A. Reynolds, 10s. Mr. Matthews, £1. D. Richardson, 3s. D. Wright 4s. 6d. A. Millar, 2s. 6d. E. Overend, 5s. T. S. B., 5s. G. Attewell, 5s.—Total £293 3s. 3d.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 15, Aberdare; September 22, Birmingham; September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—September 29, Birmingham; October 6, Leicester; October 13, Maesteg; October 20, Southampton; November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

"THOMAS."—Name and address must accompany all communications—not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of genuineness.

R. F. HILSLEY.—We are sorry we cannot spare space for your letter. We do not complain that religion is becoming an amusement, we merely note the fact as a sign of the change that has come over the situation. You undervalue the experience of Freethinkers. Most of them have been in the state in which you now are. Your experience has been theirs. Their experience has never been yours.

T. NORMAN.—We have no special fund for sending literature to soldiers, although we have received and acknowledged in this column several sums spontaneously sent by friends. But we have been sending parcels out to the Front right through the War, and have never yet refused a single application. And we intend continuing this policy. The good done will quite warrant the cost.

HERBERT BARNES.—It is not at all a "well-known fact" that "a child of fourteen years has not a particle of the body it possessed at seven years." In fact, it is not true. And if it were, it would not at all affect the position of the Materialist.

C. W. MARSHALL.—We know that what you do is no more than an indication of what you would like to do. We are fortunate in our friends.

H. J. EARTHY.—We hope, with you, that conditions will be better after the War. Glad to know you have been doing missionary work with our Pioneer Leaflets. We shall soon need to reprint.

JNO. HUDSON.—We also wish you nearer. We could often do with a little help such as you could give. When things are normal, and we get back our lost pages, we might develop the feature you suggest.

MR. A. MITCHELL sends his congratulations on our keeping the paper going, also a contribution to our Sustentation Fund, and hopes that we shall soon find things improved from a monetary and other points of view, and adds: "I find your 'Views and Opinions' a fine mental tonic in these times, and suggest your publishing them in book form." Others have made the same suggestion, and we intend publishing a volume of selected essays after the War.

H. S. WISHART.—You write cheerfully, in spite of being on your back, and we hope that is an indication of rapid recovery. Yes, the discussion is attracting considerable attention.

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W. BINDON.—(1) The stamps were missing from your letter, but we have sent on twenty copies of *Deity and Design*, which, we hope, will be enough; (2) your friend's letter is no more than an expression of personal opinion, although an interesting one; (3) it is difficult to answer your question in a sentence. The chief defect is treating man as a lay figure, instead of as a centre of active and, so to speak, positive force.

SAPPER H. MORRIS.—MSS, to hand. Shall be pleased to publish, but not for some weeks, owing to the quantity of matter already in hand.

H. AUSTEN.—The Pioneer Press is quite prepared to open credit accounts with clients, they sending on money to be placed to their credit, to be drawn against as books or pamphlets are ordered. Some of our readers already adopt this plan as being more convenient, and saving the trouble of getting a number of small postal orders.

LIEUT. EASTERBROOK.—Paper is sent as desired. Your letter gives us great encouragement. Any balance left from your subscription we are using to send out literature to soldiers.

H. JOHNSTON.—There is a reliable translation by Professor Long which used to be issued by Bell & Sons. Also a seventeenth century edition, but we are uncertain if that is still in print.

SAPPER L. CHEETHAM.—We have no fear but that our readers will do their share. We shall look forward to your help in the way you indicate when peace returns.

D. G. MASSIE.—We do not know how far you are correct in saying that few would have pledged their whole private credit to keep the paper going, all we can say is it *had* to be kept going, and there was no other way open.

R. CHAPMAN.—(1) Pleased to have your congratulations, and note your opinion that in justice to ourselves the price of the *Freethinker* should be raised. But we are not so much concerned with that as we are with the ultimate welfare of the paper and of the Cause it serves. We believe we are acting for the best in keeping the price unchanged, and that events will justify our decision. We are looking well ahead. (2) *The Psychology of Insanity* (Cambridge Science Manuals, 1s. 3d.) forms a very good introduction. Freudian literature is now very extensive.

F. C. WYKES.—We will do our best in the matter.

A. RUSSELL.—Sorry we cannot, at the moment, give you the exact reference, but we believe it will be found in one of the letters in *Fors Clavigra*.

W. P. JACOBS.—Parcel of literature being sent. Glad to read the record of good already done by this means.

SHOULD this meet the eye of Mr. Chas. W. Stewart, of Maryport, Cumberland, perhaps he will kindly forward his present address to the Secretary of the Newcastle Branch, N. S. S., 107 Morley Street, Heaton.

INQUIRER.—Most of the Branches are fixing on September 29 as the day for Bradlaugh Sunday. The Birthday is September 26.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Sept. 22) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures in the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham; afternoon at 3, evening at 7. Tea will be provided for visitors from a distance, who should write to the Secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

The awakening in Wales continues. Mr. Cohen had two splendid meetings in Aberdare last Sunday. The audiences were large, attentive, and sympathetic. Interest in the meetings was shown by the whole supply of literature being cleared out at the first meeting. Mr. Powell, of Mountain Ash, presided over the meetings, and made a capital chairman. Visitors were present from Cardiff, Mardy, Pontypridd, Porth, Mountain Ash, Merthyr, and other places. Several of the above are expected to commence work immediately. Wales is moving.

Mr. L. Cheetham writes:—

> Many thanks for parcel of literature received a few day ago. Am very pleased to say they are already doing good and going strong. They were read with much interest by the boys on this section, and very soon a most interesting discussion followed. I might say that the strongest Christian supporter openly admitted that much was true which appears in the *Freethinker* from time to time. He was a London schoolmaster in peace time. Am pleased to say that when the paper comes along one or two of the boys request me to let them have it first, and hardly a week passes but what the copy has gone round the lot.
>
> The following incident happened last week-end: Being my half-day off, I took a walk, and was busy reading your reply to Dr. Lyttelton when a Tommy from another camp came along and said: "Any news chum?" I had to reply it wasn't the daily paper, but the *Freethinker*. "Oh!" he replied; "I have heard a lot of that paper, but have never read it." I gave him a few leaflets, and told him where to find me if ever he wanted more. Well, to my surprise, he came again, and wanted more reading of that kind. So I gave him what *Freethinkers* I had, and also a few R.P.A. books; and they will be read and passed on. I enclose you a letter from another friend, and you can see for yourself what interest is taken in the best of causes.

Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* has been out of print for some time, and the call for it decided us on setting about reprinting. As the resources of the Pioneer Press are limited, we tried for an outside estimate. We got it—six times the original pre-War cost. However, we hope to get it out soon. But the opportunities for excitement in the publishing trade just now are unpleasantly numerous.

The West Ham Branch has arranged for a "Ramble" from Upminster to Warley on Sunday next (September 29), and all members and friends are invited to join. The London train reaches Upminster at 10.37. Those joining are expected to provide their own lunch, but tea will be provided at Warley.

The last "Ramble" of the Manchester Branch takes place to-day (September 22) as *per.* our Lecture Guide. Next Sunday (September 29) the Branch commences its meetings at Baker's Hall, and on October 6 Mr. Cohen formally opens the season's lecturing with two lectures at the Co-operative Hall.

Freethinkers in the Rhondda Valley are earnestly invited to attend a meeting in the Institute, Tonyrefail, to-day (Sept. 22), at 2.30, in order to consider the question of organization.

We publish this week a new work by Mr. Cohen on *Christianity and Slavery*. This is a careful and elaborate survey of the whole subject—we think we may safely say the most elaborate yet issued in this country—and should prove of much value to propagandists. No pains have been spared to make the work complete, and full references are given throughout. A chapter on "Christianity and Labour" meets the plea that Christianity abolished slavery by inducing a more humanitarian ethic towards labour, and a concluding one on "White and Black" deals with the relation of the white and coloured peoples in Africa. Two plates illustrating the stowing of slaves on board the slave-ship *Brookes* adds to the usefulness of the book. The published price is one shilling, postage three-halfpence. The need for some such work as this has long been felt, and is now met. We hope soon to publish a companion work on *Christianity and Woman*.

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Religion and Life.

SIR,—You have set me a big task this time, as beside the huge question I raised about the meaning of your "Social Forces" you express a wish to hark back to the historical argument and challenge me to show "verification in truth and justification in utility" in religion. I propose, therefore, to deal with the first half of the latter point in this week's letter, and with the "Social Forces" in the following week, inviting you, mean time, to write more fully about them for the number which will come out on September 28. We can settle later how to proceed afterwards.

The points about the "Social Forces," which require some elucidation, are as follows:—I note your correction of what I said about their being confined to a very small number. Your view is that "their influence was felt by all," and that they "act as a selective factor." Mean time you marvel that I could call them God; and you give it as your conviction that they are not God. Very well, then, what are they? for if they are "selective factors" they surely are alive. They appear to be some living influence steadily making for good, purging the minds even of blind and besotted Theists (in time, though not very rapidly). Now, in estimating how far we agree as to this matter, I ought to explain what I mean by the word God, so as to show the relation between the Being, whom I believe in, and the social forces which I recognize much as you do. But it will clear the air more speedily if you will tell us something more of your idea of the social forces, on the assumption that they are not God. Does it not amount to this: that you conceive of men as possessed of a deep, powerful, subtle, instinct for something called "good" which, in time, prevails over another instinct also very powerful, such as for centuries has made them postulate a Creator, a personal invisible giver and guide of Life? If so, how stupendous the good influence must be which is able to dissolve so titanic and widespread an error as the belief in God! Yet it is an influence, I understand, originated entirely by man himself; the same being who started the huge and pernicious blunder of Theism. This is to attribute a very noteworthy faculty to mankind. Have you any theory how the faculty came into being? Also, what is your view as to man's criterion of what is good? Granting your assumption that the social forces are pressing steadily towards the establishment of truth and enlightenment, can you state your grounds for assuming that we all agree as to what are truth and enlightenment? So far, you have only told us that Atheism makes for cleanliness. What other good things does it make for, and do you hold that all men, roughly speaking, think these good things to be good?

If you clear up these obscurities, then I will put side by side of your interpretation of human life the Theistic interpretation, and we shall, perhaps, see which agrees best with the fundamental convictions we hold in common.

Now for the historical matter. Part of your answer would be to point to history and show that religion has been responsible for much evil. The reason why I fought shy of this subject is that, though we should differ, probably, as to any particular set of occurrences, we agree in the general statement; still, while it is of no use to flog a dead horse, it may be advisable to ascertain what killed it. I would, then, admit your contention in language quite as strong as any you have used, and say (with a living writer) that apparently the Infinite Perfect Spirit has instigated awful "crimes of deception, lust, injustice, cruelty," and has "required the aid of man's non-religious activites against man's religious apprehensions." This appears to concede most of your case.

But to be really fair, we must consider the following: "Man's personality is constituted by the presence and harmonization of a whole mass of energies and intimations belonging to different levels and values; and not one of these can in the long run, and for mankind at large, be left aside or left unchecked by the others, without grave drawbacks to that personality." Now, please leave aside the question as to whether this quotation is in perfect English, and consider only if it be true. Notice that the more we emphasize the hideousness of the result of isolating one set of energies, the more we corroborate the above statement. It is a tremendous fact, though not really bewildering, that religious people consecrated girls to lust, gave their own babies to the fire, denounced statuary, destroyed the great library of Alexandria; but all that was due to their refusal to harmonize their religious intuitions with those ordinarily called non-religious, viz., the æsthetic, the moral, the political or gregarious, and perhaps others. But the same disastrous results, though less dramatic, follow on the isolation of these other faculties and energies, either from each other or from the religious faculty.

Look what happened to Greek art when it lost the sustaining gift of religion. Or music. One knows of players who have isolated their technical skill from the sense of the sublime—the religious sense—and the result is a marvellous display of soulless fireworks. Similarly there have always been politicians who wish to divorce politics from morals; when they have succeeded, horrible things happen. Still more horrible things when business is cut loose from morals; or, rather, is not permeated with them. Please note that the hideous things are done in the name of the set of faculties which has been isolated. In the name of religion ghastly churches built; in the name of sport, men plunge into all kinds of life-wrecking gambling; in the name of bodily health, there supervenes hypochondria and manifold havoc of bodies; in the name of patriotism, the ravage of Belgium.

But I must stop, as you will have something to say about this. If you disagree with me here, please note that it means you are prepared to face and defend this policy of isolating one faculty from another in that complex and wonderful thing we call the human personality. If you agree with the above statement, then, Sir, we agree about a very important matter indeed, and I have good hopes of reaching an understanding of a perplexing divergence of opinion.

E. LYTTELTON.

The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

V.

(Continued from p. 485.)

FROM prehistoric times onwards a pleasurable appreciation of the effects of colour has distinguished mankind. Primitive peoples paint their persons and decorate their dress, while races in a higher stage of development delight in dyeing their garments in striking colours. We gather from the Hebrew records that the high priests of Israel wore vestments of purple hue. Also the skins of rams were stained with red pigments, while blue, purple, and scarlet were favourite tinctures for their linen cloths. Of old, the stately Tyrian purple was prepared from two species of molluscs. In Egypt, India, and in the Mediterranean region, purple products were in keen demand. Purple became the emblem of kings, and robes of that colour commanded a regal price. Acquainted with the dyer's art were the Greeks and Romans, and among the ruins of Pompeii an ancient dyer's workshop with its

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appliances may still be seen. As culture spread, dyeing was introduced into many lands where the art was long practised as a domestic industry. And even to-day, in the more remote areas of Europe, the pigments of home-spun textiles are obtained from vegetable dyes. To some extent this custom still lingers in the Scottish Highlands. In England the dyer's trade has existed for several centuries, and to our native colouring substances the New World added a few woods and barks, as well as the famous cochineal. Until 1856 such dyes were substantially the only tinctorial materials known to man.

Aniline was discovered by Unverdorben in 1826 in the indigo plant. The term aniline is derived from anil, which is Portuguese for indigo. But this vegetable product has since suffered eclipse as the bulk of our aniline dyes are now evolved from coal-tar. Indigo was sent to Europe in the sixteenth century, and its introduction was strenuously opposed by the woad-growers whose occupation it menaced. Under Henry IV. of France the use of indigo as a dye was made a capital crime. Now that the indigo plant itself has been superseded by coal-tar, it is worth noting that the cultivation and manufacture of vegetable indigo forms a leading Indian industry, and that the Oriental Peninsular remains the main source of European supplies.

The researches of Hofmann and his pupils in London led, in 1856, to the discovery of the first synthetic dye, Perkin's long celebrated mauve. This dye was produced from crude aniline, a substance itself prepared from benzene, a product of coal-tar. In his new work, *The Treasures of Coal Tar*, Professor Findlay remarks that:—

> Starting from benzene, toluene, phenol, naphthalene, anthracene, and a few other constituents of the thick black liquid, coal tar, which less than a hundred years ago was a useless waste material and a nuisance to the gas manufacturer, synthetic dyes, to the estimated value of nearly £20,000,000 are now manufactured annually, more than two-thirds of this amount being produced in 1913 in Germany. These dyes have, by reason of their almost infinite variety and applicability, their range of colour, and delicacy of tone, ousted the natural dyes to a very large extent from the dye works.

These wonderful colours are the outcome of a prolonged series of chemical changes. From various primary constituents of coal tar there are derived, as a result of the action of sundry chemical reagents, nearly 300 "intermediate" substances. These in their turn are made to combine and interact so as to evolve the completed dyes of which over 900 are now in request in the industries and arts.

The earliest coal tar dye that Perkin placed on the market was designated "mauve," "aniline purple," or "Tyrian purple." Perkin's efforts to induce English manufacturers to utilize his product met with scanty success. The more progressive French calico printers, however, soon introduced aniline purple into their patterns, and the commercial importance of the new colour became apparent to all. Perkin's purple was now crowned with success, and the colour so largely predominated in feminine attire in 1859 that *Punch* facetiously referred to it as "The Mauve Measles."

Subsequent experiments produced aniline red or magenta. Everything then pointed to a prolonged English supremacy in the evolution of aniline colours, but our inability to realize the vital importance of systematic chemical research allowed Germany to annex this truly magnificent industry.

One of the earliest results of chemical inquiry into the properties of coal tar was the isolation of benzene, a coal tar hydro-carbon. In 1834, Mitscherlich showed that benzene—a substance first separated by Faraday from oil gas—when treated with concentrated nitric acid, becomes converted into nitro-benzene. A further advance was made when Bechamp discovered that nitro-benzene could be transformed into aniline. Through the application of this discovery, Perkin elaborated the first aniline dye. During his investigations, that scientist, while experimenting with "a solution of aniline in dilute sulphuric acid with potassium dichromate," succeeded in isolating from the liquid a dark-hued resinous mass. From this unprepossessing substance the first aniline colour—mauve, or purple—was produced. Mauve led to magenta, and now magenta formed the basis for the development of several new dyes. Among these were Lyons blue, and Nicholson's water-blue, which proved an excellent dye for woollen stuffs. The brilliant Hofmann violets were produced from magenta by that great chemist. In recent years immense strides have been made in this department of science, but even now the coal tar industry is still in its infancy.

Shortly after Professor Perkin's discovery of mauve, Dr. Griess, a chemist attached to Allsopp's Brewery at Burton-on-Trent, ascertained that nitric acid, when acting on aniline, evolves a diazo compound. The diazo compounds thus produced possess the supremely important property of combining with certain aromatic substances, or with phenol, from which carbolic acid is prepared. By this process the now famous azo-dyes were produced. These are highly esteemed as wool dyes. Hundreds of these tinctorial compounds have been prepared, and a large proportion are in eager request in the several dyeing industries.

In addition to the colouring matters directly and indirectly derived from aniline and phenol, naphthalene, another coal tar hydro-carbon, provides a basis for dye production. Naphthalene was, until recently, in little demand for industrial purposes, but its value has now been greatly advanced through the chemist's capacity to distil many new and useful dyes from this coal tar product.

A large proportion of the earlier synthetic colours will dye silk and wool when directly applied. Plant fibres, however, notably linen and cotton, must be previously mordanted if they are to absorb the dye from the vat. A very marked departure occurred when Bottiger elaborated a novel series of azo-dyes capable of dyeing cotton and linen without the help of a mordant. This advance constituted an epoch in the history of tar colours. One of these new dyes was Congo red—the first direct cotton dye prepared by the synthetic process. Congo red led to the production of an imposing array of novel dyes, which embrace the complete colour realm, and possess the highly serviceable property of dyeing cotton fabrics *minus* the aid of a mordant.

These improvements promoted further progress. After a fabric has been successively impregnated and immersed in two different chemical solutions, a red dye appears on its surface. A dye developed in this manner on a fibre is termed a pigment dye. This particular pigment—para-red—is extensively utilized in dyeing processes. Professor Green's dye product, primuline, stains cotton directly to a primrose shade. This colour is fugitive, but it has proved the parent of primuline red, primuline orange, and other fast hues. Aniline black is another pigment dye employed in the textile industry. This dye produces a fast black colour, and researches still in operation promise to lessen the cost of production, while sustaining the blackness of the pigment.

(To be concluded.) T. F. PALMER.

All that is highest in wisdom entwines around all that is purest in love.—*Maeterlinck.*

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The Assistance of Literature to Science.

IN these days when the value of a scientific education is being so strongly urged and so widely recognized, it is necessary to remember that, while the study of literature is amply justified by the æsthetic pleasure which it bestows, it is also not without its value in the dissemination of knowledge.

Indubitably a wide reading of the great masterpieces of literature is of the greatest aid—if, indeed, it be not indispensable—to the cultivation of a lucid and concise literary style. To the scientist and educationalist clarity of expression is of supreme importance, since not only does it enable them to expound theories, illustrate principles, and state facts unequivocally and with economy in words, so that the student can fully apprehend their meaning without vexatious pauses to elucidate some ambiguous phrase or passage; it also renders the reading of an abstruse and sometimes tiring book less irksome: petty irritations such as occur when the reader is not certain of the author's meaning are eliminated; his time is saved by conciseness of statement; and the argument being unclouded by needless redundancy and superfluity of words is more easily followed. Moreover, where principles and hypotheses are decisively expounded, he is more likely to assimilate the knowledge communicated than where it is set forth in a vague and diffuse manner.

While, therefore, giving the study of science precedence to that of literature, we must beware of regarding the products of the art of writing simply as part of the efflorescence of civilized life—as something wherewith to gratify our æsthetic tastes in leisure moments. Science, even as literature, would benefit did every one with knowledge to impart follow the example of the great geologist Lyall, and deliberately cultivate a literary style.

RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

The essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object recognized as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire. This condition is fulfilled by the Religion of Humanity in as eminent a degree, and in as high a sense, as by the supernatural religions even in their best manifestations, and far more so than in any of their others.—*John S. Mill.*

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

(In reference to the discussion, "Christianity and Dirt.")

Thousands of years ago, when barbaric races began to adapt themselves to civilized life, they had a concern for their bodily health and strength. In classic antiquity the care of the body by baths, gymnastic exercises, etc., was greatly developed, and connected with religious ceremonies. The splendid aqueducts and baths of Greece and Rome show how much importance they attached to the external and internal use of water. The Middle Ages brought reaction in this province as in so many others. As Christianity depreciated this life and said it was merely a preparation for the life to come, it led to a disdain in culture and of nature; and as it regarded man's body only as a temporary prison of his immortal soul, it attached no importance to the care of it. The frightful plagues which swept away millions of men in the Middle Ages were fought with prayer, processions, and other superstitious devices, instead of with rational hygienic and sanitary measures. We have only gradually learned to discard this superstition. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that a sound knowledge of the physiological functions and environment of the organism induced people once more to have a concern for bodily culture. All that modern hygiene now does for the public health, especially the improvement of the dwellings and food of the poorer classes, the prevention of disease by healthier habits, baths, athletics, etc., can be traced to the monistic teaching of reason, and is altogether opposed to the Christian belief in Providence and the dualism connected therewith. The maxim of modern hygiene is: God helps those who help themselves.—*Ernest Haeckel, "The Wonders of Life."*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, M.P., "German Ethics and the War."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. J. B. Johnson, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, Messrs. Doughty and Norman, "Charles Bradlaugh."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. F. Shaller, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Thurlow, "Bradlaugh: His Place in History."

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Cradle, The Altar, and the Grave"; 7, "The New World, and the Old Faith."

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MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. Ramble to Stalybrushes.—Postponed from September 15. Meet Piccadilly 10.30. for Stalybridge Car. Bring refreshments.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Points of View.—The Editor	505
The Virgin Birth.—J. T. Lloyd	506
The Task of Freethought.—Mimnermus	507
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	508
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund	512
The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.—T. F. Palmer	512
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	514

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Points of View.

A great deal depends on point of view. And the point of view is, in turn, largely determined by habit, education, temperament—in a word, by personal equation. Psychology proves that what we *think* we see is a very small part of what we actually do see. The larger part of the image formed in the mind is really contributed by us, and not by the perceived object, the image being built up of the immediately experienced sensation *plus* the residues and memories of sensations previously experienced. Something of this nature must, I think, be held responsible for the view of the nature of the social forces held by Dr. Lyttelton, as illustrated in his article in last week's *Freethinker*. Dr. Lyttelton has been all his life a Christian. He has been in the habit of seeing "God" behind everything and through everything in such a way that phenomena are camouflaged expressions of Deity. My own prepossessions in the direction of Deity have never been of a robust character; ever since I reached years of discretion I have tried to reduce the personal equation to as small a compass as possible. What are the facts? What inferences do they compel? Not, be it noted, what theory may I frame without running the risk of refutation, but what theory ought I frame in the certainty of confirmation? And that seems to me to express the difference between the liberal religious and the freethinking point of view.

* * *

God and the Social Forces.

Now, let me take the case of the social forces, which Dr. Lyttelton treats as the equivalent of God, and is unable to see why I should not agree with him in so doing. And here emerges the power of the personal equation. By "social forces" I mean the sum of those relations, all the actions and reactions between human beings living in groups. Now, not having to marry these facts to a special theory, I am only concerned with their logical interpretation. And this interpretation follows the appreciation of the facts. Dr. Lyttelton being a Theist, has to harmonize the facts with a theory which precedes, and largely hinders, an appreciation of the facts. But adding "God" to the social forces gives us nothing in the shape of an interpretation of them. It does not help to an understanding in the slightest degree. Dr. Lyttelton says that if I am correct in calling the social forces "selective," they must be alive. Well, they are alive in the sense of their being active, and as an expression of the relations between living beings; but so far as they are consciously selective, the origin of the selection lies with man, not with God. Nor does it follow that because social forces are selective they are, of necessity, good. Selection, natural or social, implies only—selection. Whether social selection acts in the direction of developing a militarized State or an industrialized one, a religious type of individual or a rationalistic one, depends upon circumstances. All I submit is that, whatever the type, it must be one that does not involve the destruction of the group. And so far as I can see, there is no more need to assume "God" behind the operation of social forces than to assume "God" behind any other group of phenomena. Dr. Lyttelton agrees with me on the operation of the social forces; will he be good enough to explain in what way their action implies God, and in what way our understanding of their operation is furthered by assuming "God"?

* * *

The Nature of Morality.

Dr. Lyttelton puts to me a number of questions, and while quite alive to the dialectical advantage of asking questions instead of answering them, my case is sufficiently strong for me to acquiesce. First, let me say I do not conceive man as possessing a deep "instinct" for good, fighting another "instinct" for belief in God. The use of instinct in this connection is to me wholly unscientific and unwarrantable. It is one of those "blessed words" that serve no useful purpose. And I certainly do not assume that we all agree as to what are truth and enlightenment. It is quite plain that no such agreement exists. All that people agree on is in calling some things good and some things bad, some desirable, and some undesirable. And when we probe the matter deeply enough we come as a basis to the psychological reaction in favour of agreeable feelings, and a reaction against painful ones. The direction of these reactions and their development into more a complex structure is, with human beings, a matter of education; in other words, the play of the social forces. It is, indeed, on this educative capacity of man, particularly in the young of the species, that the whole question of progress turns. But this capacity admits of being trained in either a desirable or an undesirable direction. On this last point I think Dr. Lyttelton would agree; the point of difference would lie in his multiplication of "instincts" and "faculties" to explain a difference of conduct or of interpretation. And from the existence of sentient material capable of expressing a reaction, through its more elaborated expression of consciously felt pleasures and pains, on to the still more elaborate development in formulated moral notions and theories, I see no need and no room for "God." Perhaps Dr. Lyttelton will say at what stage in the process "God" emerges, or becomes necessary, and what precisely is the part played by "God" in this development.

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Naturalism and Growth.

But I do believe that human society is, with lapses, pressing towards a better state. And Dr. Lyttelton thinks that in this belief I, unconsciously, concede "God." Why? On what compulsion? If I may be permitted the reference, Dr. Lyttelton will find this point worked out at some length in my pamphlet *God and Man*, and I can only repeat here what I have said there. The dice are loaded in favour of a progressive morality, because morality is fundamentally a question of social adaptation, and adaptation is the law of life, whether of ideas, of institutions, or of organisms. And what takes place in human development is not, as Dr. Lyttelton apparently assumes, the creation of new "faculties," but the transformation of existing qualities, and their application over a wider area under the guidance of wider knowledge. When nature developed a lung it did not create a new structure, it took an old one and adapted it. And what is the widest and most comprehensive humanitarianism but the gregariousness of the primitive herd expressed in a more enlightened manner over a wider area? If we stick to the facts there really is no mystery in human or social growth; these are only problems. The mystery begins, and the problems threaten to become insoluble, only when we add to the facts the unprovable and unnecessary theory of "God."

* * *

Art and Life and Religion.

I have space for only a word or two on Dr. Lyttelton's reference to Art, but I must not let it pass unnoticed. Religion is no more "a sustaining gift" of art than is any other form of mental activity or of social life with which artistic expression happens to be associated. Naturally, in a society where religious beliefs hold a dominating influence, artistic forms will tend in the direction of religion. Apart from the economic incentive, there is no more here than is to be seen in the fact of ethical and social life generally being expressed, in their earlier stages, in a religious form. And I may suggest, in passing, that a vital question for Dr. Lyttelton to face here is the universal phenomenon of the growing liberation of all forms of life from definitely religious influences. And why Greek art should be selected as an illustration of the power of religion puzzles me. For the improvement of art in the hands of the Greeks was due to the fact that in receiving art forms from Egppt, Assyria, and Phœnicia, it largely eliminated the religious motive, and substituted the human ideal of beauty of body and strength of mind. I cannot now pursue this point further at present, but anyone who compares the Greek statues of mythological heroes with the religious statuary that preceded it will see the truth of what has been said. And Greek art declined after, say, the days of Pheidas and Praxiteles, not because of the decline of religion (as a matter of fact, the sceptical element in Greek art and literature was always pronounced), but because of the decline of the old city life, the struggle of State against State, and the final collapse of Greece before a greater military power. If Dr. Lyttelton wishes to trace the influence of religion in art, he may see it in the degradation of art under Byzantine Christianity, or during the mediæval period; and on the other hand, its revival under the Pagan derived impulse of the Renaissance. But on the whole question I may conclude by saying that the interpretation of life in terms of religion is something that is admitted. The justification of that interpretation is the real point at issue, and I await with curiosity and interest Dr. Lyttelton's handling of that theme.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Virgin Birth.

IT is well known that the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is not a New Testament dogma. There is no trace of it in any of the Epistles, and two of the Gospels make no mention of it. Even the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, apart from the passages in which such a birth is recorded as having actually occurred, contain not the remotest allusion thereto; and there is much internal evidence that even those passages were not found in the earliest copies. It is also a noteworthy fact that many present-day divines reject the doctrine of the Virgin Birth on the ground that it is not directly taught in the New Testament. While regarding the Incarnation itself as a veritable fact, they refuse to acknowledge that it was accomplished by means of a virgin birth. To us, however, the one is as inconceivable, being as contrary to nature as the other. But in the Anglican Church and in Nonconformity, there are prominent theologians who treat the Virgin Birth as a legend, if not as a myth. In a sermon which appeared in the *Church Times* for September 13, the Rev. A. E. Oldroyd, M.A., vicar of St. James's, West Hampstead, assures us that "on all counts, it will be found that those who deny the Virgin Birth will ultimately, because they must logically, make shipwreck of the Faith," a contention in which we heartily concur. If the Incarnation is an historical reality, we can see no necessity whatever to deny the Virgin Birth. If Jesus was not supernaturally born, there is no escape from the conclusion that he was a natural child. Mr. Oldroyd says:—

> I scarcely dare refer to the modern revival of the ancient Jewish calumny that our Lord and Saviour was a foundling, illegitimately born to Mary while betrothed but not yet married; and that she escaped the Mosaic punishment of stoning due to an adulteress only by a long period of lying and deception, in which Joseph acquiesced, after having been "minded to put her away privily," thus conspiring, like Ananias and Saphira, to lie to the Holy Ghost.

Let us now examine the Virgin Birth in some of its essential and most important bearings. Why did the Church formulate such a dogma? The Gospel Jesus is presented now as a human teacher sent from God, now as a man endowed with supernatural powers, now as the Word which was ever with God, and which was God, made flesh in some inexplicable manner. In the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John, he figures as the Saviour of the world, who was holy, sinless, perfect, and as God made manifest in the flesh, who loved mankind and gave himself up for them. Thus, before the New Testament closes, the man from Nazareth has evolved into a Divine Being tabernacling in human nature, who, notwithstanding this alliance, knew no sin. But human nature is in a state of depravity, the victim of original sin. The innate sinfulness of our race is a fundamental article in the Christian creed. The following is the Pauline portrayal of the natural man:—

> As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Romans iii. 10-12).

Such is the Pauline doctrine of man. Every child of Adam inherits a corrupt, debased, nature, and is doomed to everlasting perdition. There is no exception, and Nature offers no way of escape. Left to his own resources, every human being is both fallen and lost beyond all hope of recovery. But no sooner was Jesus conceived of as the Saviour of humanity than the idea of his own absolute sinlessness suggested itself. Paul declares that though born of a woman he "knew no sin," and Peter

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describes him as "a lamb without blemish and without spot," "who did no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile." The cult-makers went further still and affirmed that he was, not only without sin, but incapable of sin. Even his impeccability became an article of the growing Faith. And yet he was true man as well as true God. Now, the question was how he could share our nature without sharing our sinful inheritance? It was in order to get over this difficulty that the notion of a virgin birth was adopted. We say "adopted," because all the great Saviour-Gods of Pagan mythology were believed to be virgin born. Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, Osiris, and Mithra, were archetypes or models closely followed by the founders of the Christian religion. As a matter of fact, Christianity cannot justly lay claim to any real originality. The world had teemed with Saviour-Gods for thousands of years before Jesus was ever heard of. The problems which Christian divines were called upon to solve were of secondary importance only. For example, they had to explain *how* Jesus escaped human sin by being born of a virgin, which was by no means an easy task.

Of course, virgin birth, as such, would not secure sinlessness, much less impeccability, because a virgin is as much a human being as a man. Mr. Oldroyd says that "in normal generation the mother supplies the matter, the father the active principle, and a new human person comes into existence round which this matter forms." Since the mother is by nature impure and sinful, the matter which she supplies necessarily partakes of her constituent qualities. The first explanation of the sinlessness of Jesus was wholly inadequate. The Fathers declared that he was without sin because the Holy Ghost had contributed "the active principle" of his personality, but they forgot that his mother, though a virgin, was still a sinful human being, and could not help imparting to him her own sinfulness. Mr. Oldroyd frankly admits this, saying that "the Blessed Virgin Mary supplied the whole human nature—body, soul, and Spirit"—of Jesus Christ, which nature could have been no other than blighted by original sin, although "the active principle" was supplied by a Divine Being. Birth of a woman was unavoidable, but birth of a woman meant a sinful inheritance. During the Middle Ages, and down to the latter half of the nineteenth century, the divines utterly failed to agree on any theory that would fully account for the absolute perfection of character almost universally claimed for the God-man. The theory advocated by many was that known as the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary; that is to say, her absolute immunity from the sin of Adam as the result of the miracle of her own sinless conception in her mother's womb. Milman tells us that neither St. Bernard nor St. Thomas Aquinas accepted such an absurd theory. He says:—

> It became the subject of contention and controversy, from which the calmer Christian shrinks with intuitive repugnance. It divided the Dominicans and Franciscans into hostile camps, and was agitated with all the wrath and fury of a question in which was involved the whole moral and religious welfare of mankind. None doubted that it was within the lawful sphere of theology. Wonderful as it may seem, a doctrine rejected at the end of the twelfth century by the last Father of the Latin Church has been asserted by a Pope of the nineteenth, and a Council is now sitting in grave debate in Rome on the Immaculate Conception (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. ix., pp. 75-6).

The Pope referred to was Pius IX., who also promulgated Papal Infallibility. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed on December 8, 1854, after many centuries of fierce controversy; and after all it is but a theory which lies wholly outside the sphere of verification. We caudidly admit that the immaculate conception of Mary is not one whit more incredible than the virgin birth of Jesus, and surely those who believe in the latter ought not to boggle at the former. Again, a virgin birth is quite as unthinkable as an incarnation of God, and we can see no reason why those who firmly hold the latter should experience any difficulty in accepting the former. To us both are equally unbelievable and absurd, the Christian Saviour-God being every bit as mythical as Pagan Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, or Mithra. A glance at the state of Christendom at this moment would convince any unprejudiced, fair-minded person that the Christian Redemption is as gigantic a farce as those found in Pagan mythology. The Virgin Mary and her son belong to precisely the same category as Isis and her son Horus.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Task of Freethought.

> Rip Van Winkle fell into a stupor, and slept twenty years, to find his beard and all the world about him quite changed. —*Nuttall's Encyclopædia.*
>
> There is nothing else in history but the fight between freedom and tyranny.—*Arnold White.*

MR. J. F. RAYNER, a friendly critic, in a letter published in the *Freethinker*, says that "after thirty years' absence" he has rejoined the National Secular Society, and finds that it has made no progress "either in the extent or style of its propaganda." He adds further that if "ethical and social activities," as seen in the Churches," were associated with Secularism the cause would benefit.

It may be owing to Mr. Rayner's "thirty years' absence" that he has overlooked or forgotten the ideals aimed at by the National Secular Society, but it may be well to mention that its objects are 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.

This is a fairly lengthy and ambitious programme for any single organization, even if supported by large resources, which the National Secular Society does not possess. Freethought is a poor, struggling cause, its members are comparatively few and scattered; and it has no wealthy endowments to defray the cost of a national propaganda. Still, the Society has kept the flag flying bravely for fifty years, and it has managed to relieve its necessitous members. The Benevolent Fund has, during its existence, been well supported, and is, probably, the only fund which is administered without a single farthing of expense. Until a very 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 always in the power of the next-of-kin to invalidate the legacy on the ground that it was illegal. The famous Bowman Case altered this, but Freethought was robbed of thousands of pounds before this memorable legal victory.

During Mr. Rayner's "thirty years' absence" two Presidents of the National Secular Society have died from the overwork and anxiety inseparable with such an onerous office. Despite the undeniable fact that the Freethinkers have compelled the clergy to refrain from thrusting their more repulsive dogmas on the public, the fight between Freethought and Superstition is by no means over. We have not yet succeeded in eliminating the clergy from our national councils, nor from our schools. In both these places the clergy still wield great

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power. There are not wanting signs that Church and Chapel may yet combine their efforts against the common enemy, and a recrudescence of superstition may yet cause us need for greater vigilance and activity in the near future.

Mr. Rayner complains that, during his thirty years in the wilderness, we have "made no progress." Surely, great changes have taken place. In the stormy days of Charles Bradlaugh the Freethought audiences were almost entirely composed of men, whereas, to-day, there are as many ladies as men. The literary appeal has been broadened, as anyone may see by comparing the later issues of the *Freethinker* with the earlier, or by contrasting the present-day Freethought publications with those of the earlier period. Thanks to the courage and devotion of Freethought leaders, heterodoxy is no longer the disgrace it once was to the citizen. Thirty years has added respectability to Freethought advocacy, placed its exponents on a strong platform, organized its forces, justified its rights to equal citizenship. Through the religious prejudices of our time a breach has been made large enough for the heretic to pass through in future, and in many other directions our lives have been made easier.

The "social activity" of Christians is not always entirely benevolent. Let Mr. Rayner ponder over the case of Stephen Girard, the American Freethinker. At his death, this large-minded and large-hearted man left substantial 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 was required to instruct the pupils in secular morality, and leave them to adopt their own 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. To-day the Girard Orphanage is pointed at as a proof of Christian philanthropy.

If Freethinkers do their own thinking in religious matters, they also do it in everything else. Spiritual and temporal authority are brought under the same rules, and they must justify themselves. Freethinkers are thus social reformers, and they are almost to a man on the side of justice, freedom, and progress. To make a new world, no audacity contributes that is not in the first place intellectual. Man's great need is boldly honest minds.

As for imitating the "social activities" of the Christians, Mr. Rayner should know, as a Freethinker, that whilst charity is very good in its way, 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. Christian charity is largely a bribe to the working classes to keep them in order, and to attract them into the churches and chapels. In India and elsewhere, the missionaries bribe the natives with medical dispensaries, and at home the clergy use the lure of coals and blankets, soup kitchens, children's nurseries, Sunday-school "treats," Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, and other attractions. The cash-box and the cassock have always been on the same side, and will be to the end of the chapter. So long as wealthy men have "surplus" thousands derived from underpaid labour wherewith to found and endow churches and chapels, so long will "religion" be necessary to keep people quiet, and so long will thousands of places of worship mock the few lecture-halls devoted to Rationalism.

"Where's yer orspitals and lunatic asylums?" is a very old jibe of Christian advocates. Freethinkers need not trouble about this sneer. In common with their fellow-citizens, they contribute to their support. Maybe, Christians have a special interest in lunatic asylums. They may subscribe to them; certainly they help to fill them.

Freethought is not a religion, nor a substitute for superstition. It is not concerned chiefly with social reform as such; but it is actuated by the pure love of truth, and is justified in bending its whole energies on the destruction of delusions, ecclesiastic and supernaturalistic. Its mission is to free mankind from ancient error, and in so doing it is rendering a service to the human race. Human nature does not need a supernatural religion, does not need an other-world superstition. It needs to be freed from the shackles of clerical control, and it will then adjust itself naturally to the real conditions of life, material, physiological, and social. Although no ideal perfection may ever be reached, men will be all the happier for having escaped the control of the clerical caste. To be true to truth is man's first duty, and from it all other duties will be told. As truth-seekers, we live for the highest. This is the heroic life; and, as Meredith says finely:—

> Though few,
> We hold a promise for the race
> That was not at our rising.

MIMNERMUS.

A Search for the Soul.

XII.

(Continued from p. 497.)

IN November, 1916, the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic) appointed an Advisory Committee "to consider the condition affecting the physiological action of alcohol" on the human organism. This committee consisted of eight distinguished physicians, with Lord D'Abernon as chairman, who finished their labours in December, 1917—the conclusions given in the report representing the unanimous judgment of all the members. Among the latter were: the Principal Medical Officer to the Board of Education, the Professor of Pharmacology at University College, the Pathologist to the London County Asylums, the Professor of Physiology in the University of Oxford, and the Medical Superintendent of the Rampton State Asylum.

With regard to the matters which this committee investigated I have nothing to say here; the only point to which I wish to draw attention is that it is tacitly assumed throughout the report that the so-called "mind," which is shown to be affected by the use of alcohol, is nothing more nor less than the sum of the functioning of different parts of the brain—the lower portion of that organ being common to other members of the animal kingdom, and the higher portion, that of the frontal lobes, being found only in man. Bearing these facts in mind, I will now quote two paragraphs from the book I have referred to—*Alcohol: its Action on the Human Organism*:—

> Alcohol undoubtedly diminishes the control of the intellect and the will over the emotions, and successively weakens and suspends the hierarchy of functions of the brain, *and therefore of the mind*, in the order from above downwards; that is to say, in the inverse order of their development in the individual and in the race. For the emotional dispositions or capacities are a very ancient racial endowment and have their seats in the basal ganglia, the lowest levels of the great brain, the part which alone is represented in the brains of the lower vertebrates. The higher intellectual faculties, on the other hand, are the latest acquired, and are connected with the anatomically highest and last developed parts of the brain. Intermediate between these come, in the

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order of development, the sensory and skilled motor functions (and their nerve centres).

Now, of all the intellectual functions, that of self-criticism is the highest and latest developed, for in it are combined the functions of critical judgment and of self-consciousness, that self-knowledge which is essential to the supreme activity we call volition or deliberate will. It is the blunting of this critical side of self-awareness by alcohol, and the consequent setting free of the emotions and their instinctive impulses from its habitual control, that give to the convivial drinker the aspect and the reality of a general excitement. In the mature and well-developed mind, this interplay of thought and emotion goes on under the checking and moderating influence of self-criticism; in social intercourse, especially, it is constantly checked by the thought of the figure one cuts in the eyes of one's fellowmen. In proportion, then, as alcohol hampers the mechanism of self-control, the liberation of intellectual or emotional effects goes on at a higher rate (p. 32).

In the foregoing paragraphs it cannot fail to be perceived that the members of the Advisory Committee are all in perfect agreement upon the question of the localization of mental functions (or so-called "psychical states") in the brain—that is to say, they are firmly convinced that all mental functions are associated with definite regions of that organ, so that what is called Mind is but another name for the phenomena produced by the functioning of different parts of the brain. We thus arrive at the indubitable fact that mental functions are materialistic.

Let us now look at a typical case in which whisky affects "the mind." The first effects of this spirit is perhaps a slight giddiness or lightheadedness, after which the drinker begins to feel a sense of careless well-being or bodily and mental comfort. Soon his conversation and actions become less constrained; he has a free flow of ideas, and becomes witty, lively, or satirical. He experiences, perhaps, a revival of old feelings which had seemed to have passed away for ever. All his emotional nature is in an agreeable state of excitement; he can become angry or compassionate according to the appeal of the moment. He laughs and smiles or makes jovial remarks, and becomes careless of the impression he is making on the company. He no longer thinks of weighing his words or acts, and laughs idiotically at the mere ghost of a joke. He feels an inordinate self-satisfaction at his own sayings and doings, and likes to hear himself talk. He sometimes becomes of an argumentative frame of mind, and freely gesticulates in laying down the law. His ideas, a little later, appear to get mixed, and to follow one another without order; while his speech becomes more or less incoherent. Later on, a feeling of depression overtakes him, and he is plunged into maudlin melancholy, from which in due course he sinks into a heavy stupour, and sleeps the sleep of the blessed.

That it was the whisky which produced all the abnormal effects here described is undoubted; the only question to be considered, then, is how the so-called "mind" could be thus affected. Let us see. After a dose of alcohol has been swallowed, about one-fifth of it is absorbed into the blood from the stomach. In the uppermost part of the small intestine about one-tenth more is absorbed, leaving seven-tenths to be accounted for. Of this more than half is absorbed in the middle part of the small intestine, and the remainder in the lower portion of that alimentary organ. Unlike ordinary food-stuffs, alcohol does not require to undergo digestion; it therefore makes its way rapidly into the blood. Being now a constituent of that vital fluid, the alcohol is carried by the circulation to every part of the body; but the only organs upon which it appears to have any particular effect are those of the central nervous system—by passing from the blood into the cerebro-spinal fluid, which bathes the brain and spinal chord.

We thus arrive at the fact that the alcohol in the whisky imbibed comes into direct contact with the brain, upon whose sensitive substance its narcotic or intoxicating principle exercises more or less effect, according as the individual happens to be an occasional or a regular drinker. But how does the spirituous property of alcohol affect the Mind? If what is called "the mind" be an immaterial "entity" apart from the brain, it is not touched at all, and could not therefore be affected in any way by any amount of alcohol. That it *is* so affected, however, simply proves that Mind is *not* what Dualists represent it to be; that it is, in fact, something produced by the functioning of the brain, and that the latter process is to a certain extent impaired by the influence of alcohol upon it. The portion of the brain chiefly affected appears to be that which was latest acquired, and which is found only in man—that of the greatly developed frontal lobes. Hence, the controlling and restraining effects of the latter upon the functioning of the other regions is relaxed, and the drinker feels free to give the reins to his emotional and lower animal nature without let or hindrance, and so becomes for the time being a different creature. If the mind were an entity separate from the body, this could not occur.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

Acid Drops.

Talk about cheek! Here is the Bishop of London requesting the Lord Mayor to summon a meeting of laymen to consider how to place the finances of his diocese on a sound basis. This means, of course, a request that they will contribute more. Suppose the meeting suggests that the Bishop drops, say, nine out of his ten thousand pounds per year, just as a beginning. Will he do it? All we have heard of him is that he has invested his surplus money in War Bonds. But as this brings him in five per cent., his piety and patriotism is not of an unprofitable character. Some of the clergy, says the Bishop, hardly know how to get through the winter owing to the cost of living. We know of others who are in the same plight, and who do not believe in prayer or Providence. The Bishop pleads that he has the oversight of a million people. We think ninety-five per cent. would cheerfully dispense with his supervision.

Miss Maude Royden, the lady preacher at the City Temple, intends offering facilities for questions and discussion after the sermon. Now, that is a good step; but we doubt if it will last for long. It has been tried before, but invariably given up as being dangerous. It usually begins on the assumption that the questioner is simple-minded and uninformed. When it is discovered that the questioners have a position of their own and "make good," the policy is quickly changed. It is only the Freethought platform that maintains the policy of open discussion.

The Vicar of Heptonstall caused a mild sensation at the Parish Church on a recent Sunday by dismissing the congregation on account of talking going on in the church. In the midst of his sermon he pronounced the benediction, and brought the service to an end. That particular "benediction" must have been somewhat like the well-worn expletive of the villain of melodrama, "I love you; curse you!"

The "Holy Land" is being found out by our soldiers, and they are not all enthusiastic concerning its sacred attractions. A correspondent, writing in the *Daily News*, says:—

> Wherever the idea originated of consigning people to Jericho, no one who has been in the Jordan valley this summer will quarrel with the suitability of the selection. Day in, day out, the thermometer registers from 105 to 125 degrees in the shade. Dust, flies, and mosquitoes are terrible plagues. Very unpleasant, too, are the snakes.

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Many people laughed when they read that the London County Council was running a "school of politeness" for waiters. We should smile, too, if we heard that the Christian Evidence lecturers were compelled to attend.

Some pointed remarks on Church War-memorials appeared in the *Southend Standard*. The editor says: "I am against all sectional efforts. The sentiment of the locality demands that any monument to their memory shall be something equally pleasing to Protestant and to Catholic; to Socialist and to Conservative; something in which the whole of the community has played a part; truly a town's memorial." This is a retort courteous to all those dear clergymen everywhere who wish to add stained-glass windows, side-chapels, and ecclesiastical sculptures to their churches under the pretence of erecting War-memorials to the fallen.

The clerical wheeze, "After death, what?" has no terrors for the Government official. Mr. J. M. Hogge, M.P., speaking at Liverpool, quoted from a letter to a discharged soldier, issued by the Pensions Ministry, informing the soldier that he was to receive "19s. 6d. for life, at the expiration of which you will again be medically examined with a view to consideration of your claim for further pension."

The neglect of science in this country is extraordinary During the four week's opening of the King's College Scientific Exhibition no member of the Government nor any representative of a State Department officially visited the exhibition or referred to it. Had it been a missionary exhibition or a Bible society show the place would have been crowded with Government officials—admirals and generals.

A foot-note to Mr. Cohen's new book on *Christianity and Slavery* is to be found in Cecil Torr's *Small Talk at Wreyland*, in which, in a letter written in 1849, it is stated that farm labourers "were put up to auction by the parish authorities and hired for sixpence to ninepence per day."

What sheer nonsense some divines do write and talk these days. A Dr. Morgan, of America, "regards Germany as personally guided and directed by Satan." The barbarism into which she has lapsed is so cruel, so ruthless, so dehumanized that this godly man can only describe it as the outcome of "demoniacal possession." The Americans, too, must mend their ways, or their "win-the-War" methods will be vain, their "sins of avarice, intemperance, immorality, graft, materialism, Sabbath desecration, profanity," crying aloud for heaven's vengeance. The only hope of winning the War is by making "the day of prayer the habitual attitude of mind and heart on the part of our people." Dr. Morgan is not far behind the Bishop of London in the art of trampling under foot the Christian commandment, "Love your enemies."

The *Daily Chronicle* estimates the number of regular book-buyers in this country at 50,000. As only a portion of this number is interested in serious literature, it says little for the national intelligence. Maybe, that is one of the reasons why the country is still under the influence of an Oriental superstition and a clerical caste.

An interesting trophy from Mesopotamia is now to be seen on the Horse Guards' Parade, London. This is a bronze Persian gun, weighing about five tons, captured by the British on their entry into Baghdad. The inscription on the gun reads: "Succour is from God." This reminds us of the advice of Cromwell to his men: "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry."

According to the newspapers, the Archbishop of Canterbury has joined the National Alliance of Employers and Employed. Does this mean that organists, choristers, vergers, and other Church workers are to receive a living wage?

"A War Widow" writes to the *Leeds Mercury* commenting on the Vicar of Marsden's complaint that the value of his living has been reduced owing to the prevailing high prices. This lady points out that the wives of soldiers have had their incomes reduced owing to their husbands being in the Army, and still have to face the higher prices. She adds that, instead of the War making people less selfish, the world seems "more selfish than ever, and it begins largely at the church, the place where people expect a better example." That should make the Vicar of Marsden reflect a little.

The unsettled state of Irish affairs reminds one of a slip made by the Duke of Wellington during a House of Lords' debate on Ireland. In the course of his speech he mentioned that two clergymen had been murdered in Ireland. A noble lord on the opposite side of the House rose at once to correct him: "No, no, only one." "Only one," rejoined the Duke, "Well, *if* I am mistaken, I am sorry."

Rev. Mr. McLean, of the South Indian United Church, speaking at the annual missionary meetings at Hamilton said the War had been a great stumbling-block to religion in India. The natives there asked: "Was not the German rajah Christian also?" I am afraid the Rev. Mr. McLean will find the War has been a great stumbling-block to many at home who used to profess Christianity. The beliefs and actions of Christians don't always square with one another.

Discontent seems to be rife amongst the Scottish Churches at present, else why the numerous calls from the Lord to other spheres of labour?

Mary Mullins now knows what value to place on the charity of Holy Mother Church. Two years ago she came from Ireland to Glasgow. Lately she got into trouble, and finding her baby an embarrassment in getting employment, and she herself absolutely destitute, she placed her infant with a bottle of milk beside him on the floor of St. Andrew's Pro Cathedral, Glasgow, in the hope that some charitably disposed worshipper would take care of the child. In this she was mistaken as the baby was handed over to the parish authorities and she herself traced and sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

Priests are the same everywhere. The Archbishop of Paris officiated at a service in the Church of St. Genevieve, expressing gratitude for the preservation of the French capital from the Germans. A marble plaque has been erected to the "saint" for services rendered. Yet the saviours of Paris were live soldiers and not plaster images.

A minister had been waiting at a Scotch station for a train from the North, and looked more than usually unhappy. Suddenly a woman, one of a group of mourners on the platform, approached him and said: "Excuse me, are ye waiting for the corpse fra' Stirling?"

Writing on the fascinating subject of "hair-cuts," a contributor to the dear *Daily News* refers to the Jewish prophet Elisha. The Bible tells us that this delightful old savage was "thin on the thatch," and some children called to him: "Go up, baldhead." The prophet fetched some hungry bears, who promptly gobbled up the children. Truly a salutary lesson of the evil effects of poking fun at a "man of God"; but what stuff to retail to children in a civilized country?

A publisher's announcement states that in a new book, "Colonel Roberts gives a deeply interesting analysis of our conception of life and death from the creation to the present day. It is refreshing to find one modest man in these pushful days.

A writer in the *Daily Express* suggests that curates might go on strike for increased pay. Well, we consider they would be quite justified in doing so where they are not getting a "living wage." Those who want curates ought to pay for them. The only difficulty we see is that the public in that case might dispense with them altogether. In any case, we cannot conceive any general enthusiasm being worked up on their behalf.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—September 29, Birmingham; October 6, Leicester; October 13, Maesteg; October 20, Southampton; November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

T. C. LANGRIDGE.—You are not "worrying" us in the least. You will find some instructive pages on the colouration of animals in Dewar and Finn's *The Making of Species*. The point for a student to bear in mind is that while the general fact of evolution is demonstrably true, there is no room for dogmatism on the factors, or of their relative values. Sorry we are too busy in other ways to write at length on this subject—at least for the present.

H. ROBERTS (Christchurch, N.Z.)—There is something in what you say, and we will bear the matter in mind. *The Bible Handbook* would give what you require, but that, for the time, is out of print. We shall reprint as early as possible.

GEO. W. ROGERS.—The celebrated line in Lucretius runs thus in English: "To such vile deeds can religion persuade men"—such vile deeds as the slaughter of the modern Iphigenia on the altar of Artemis.

T. WADSWORTH.—Thanks for compliment. We have done our best.

R. BELL.—If you will send to the office, we will enclose in some of the parcels we are sending out weekly to France and other parts of the fighting line. We have every reason for believing that the discussion with Dr. Lyttelton is attracting considerable attention.

E. TRUELOVE.—Whether there is a "good round sum left in hand to meet future expenses" remains to be seen. There will certainly be something. Our readers *are* in earnest, as you will see.

J. F. AUST.—The author of the lines is Alexander Pope. Sorry your paper went astray, but the post nowadays is rather uncertain. Have sent on copy.

D. TURNBULL.—Thanks for name of new reader for paper, which is being sent. We hope the treatment will be effective; it generally is, save in the most obstinate of cases.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (September 29) Mr. Cohen opens the seasons lecturing at Southampton with two lectures in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road, morning, at 11, "The Savage in Our Midst"; evening, at 7, "The New World and the Old Religion." We hope Freethinkers will do their best to advertise these meetings among enquiring Christians.

The Birmingham Branch made a good start with its season's work last Sunday. Owing to the very heavy cost of getting posters printed and posted, these were dispensed with on this occasion, which made the meetings the more gratifying. And there was a record sale of literature, which bore witness to the interest felt by the audience. To-day (Sept. 29) Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures in the Repertory Theatre at 7, on "The Value of the Bible in National Life," a reply to Rev. Campbell Morgan. We hope to hear of the theatre being crowded.

"B. F. B.," in subscribing to our Sustentation Fund, says: "When I think that I have lived in this country fifty-three years, and am now an old man, I consider it a hard fate that I became acquainted with the existence of your paper only three years ago." It *is* a hard fate, and we believe there are many thousands in the position in which "B. F. B." was, and who would count it a favour to make the acquaintance of the *Freethinker*. Those who read this paragraph should do their best to remedy a state of things that calls for redress. Last week's printing order reached a record figure, but we can do with more readers.

Miss K. B. Kough lectures to-day (September 29) at the Secular School, Pole Lane, Failsworth. Her subject in the afternoon, 2.45, is "Are We Still Savages?" and in the evening, at 6.30, on "Marriage: As it was, As it is, and As it might be." Pole Lane, Failsworth, is to be reached by tram ride from Manchester, and no doubt many Freethinkers from there will make it a point of attending.

One of our soldier-readers gives us his experience of Army life as under:—

> I joined the National Reserve in October, 1914 (I am now fifty-five years old), and when attesting I pointed out that I was an Atheist, the regimental sergeant major, fortunately, was present, and immediately took me on one side and swore me in by affirmation; but when being transferred to other Companies I have invariably got into hot water. As an illustration I will give my experience on joining this Company at Portsmouth, where a Battalion was mobilized for Ireland. On the Sunday morning we were all on parade, and the various denominations were formed into different parties. I was alone (although I knew of three who were Freethinkers), when a Jew fell in alongside me. I told him I was an Atheist and took a few paces from him, still he wished to come with me, he evidently did not like to be made a public exhibition of, neither did I; but some must make a stand. Along came R. S. M. with the O. C., and, in a loud voice said—referring to me: "This man doesn't believe in anything." The officer asked me my religion. I said: "I am an Atheist, and, probably, believe in more things than the S.-M, only our tastes differ." I am pleased to say that I have got on very well with all the officers ever since, and the Jew corporal has stuck to me ever since, and claims me as his special friend, he is very loyal to his religion, but I think I have got him "guessing," as the Americans say, especially about souls, spirits, ghosts, etc.
>
> I am pleased to say that I have been very successful in convincing my colleagues on the absolute fallacy of religion. Many at first I could not induce to read the *Freethinker*, but now I hardly get a chance to read it myself, and then it goes on board one or other of our patrol boats here. I had a lot of back issues at home so I had them sent on to me for distribution.

A discussion is to take place to-day (September 29) at Parliament Hill, North London, between Mr. E. Burke and Mr. Muir of the C.E.S., on "Free Will and Determinism." There is room on Parliament Hill for a large audience, and we hope to hear that it was present. The discussion commences at 3.15.

There is good raw material in the intellectual and emotional make-up of a small book of verse which we have just received, *The Everlasting Quest and Other Poems*, by John Roebuck (Avery & Co., 105 King Street, Aberdeen). But, unfortunately, ideas and feelings in their raw state are not poetry; they need to be wrought into things of beauty, and this means much hard work, directed by a fine or fastidious taste. To be quite frank—Mr. Roebuck will appreciate the compliment to his talent implied in our candour—the more ambitious of the poems come considerably short of the standard by which we judge poetry. The poem that gives the title to the book, the sonnets, and the other verses in rhymed pentametric metre, are noticeably weak on the

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technical side. Mr. Roebuck has not got the hang at all of this, the stateliest of English measures. It would need more space than we have now at our disposal fully to set out our objections; but if Mr. Roebuck will study Matthew Arnold's workmanship he will, no doubt, see what we are driving at. Plain living and high thinking are all to the good, yet they alone have never made a man a poet. It is the singing quality only that counts.

It is just this singing quality that we miss in Mr. Roebuck's more ambitious work; but we do get in a few of the poems. *The Hodden-Grey* is a charming fancy adequately and originally expressed; *A Ballad of Barlinnie*, although hardly a ballad, since it is rather an impression than a story, is its own recommendation. The best poem in the book, to our thinking, is *Thochts*. The poet sees in his mind's eye the hefty crofter, his wife and daughter, and wee bit of land they work; then he sees the pretentious modern mansion which has taken the place of the "canty cottage," and in the last of the four beautiful and heart-easing stanzas he sings:—

I can see a white road windin' ower to muir and past the mill,
Past the smiddy an' the schule-house, 'cross the burnie ta the hill
Wi' the kirkie on the croon o't, an' the kirkyard on its broo:
Eh, sirse! Tae think the three of them are a' there noo!

Mr. Roebuck will understand when we say that this lovely snatch of lyric inspiration gives us the same incommunicable thrill of æsthetic pleasure as does Mr. Yeats's *Lake Isle of Innisfree*. We can hardly give greater praise.

The uncertainty of the post is responsible for our not noting last week a meeting held by Mr. Lloyd at Blaina, Mon, on September 15. We are glad to report that the gathering was successful from every point of view, and that quite a number of intelligent questions followed the lecture. No one would welcome that kind of questioning more than Mr. Lloyd.

The Secretary of the Manchester Branch asks us to call special attention to the meeting of members to be held to-day (Sept. 29) at Bakers' Hall, 56 Swan Street, at 6.30. A good attendance is requested, in order to take effective measures for the season's campaign.

We are also asked to again remind East London Freethinkers of the outing of the West Ham Branch to take place to-day. It will take the form of a "Ramble" from Upminster to Warley. The train reaches Upminster at 10.37, and tea will be provided. "Ramblers" must bring their own lunches.

Mr. C. T. Shaw, of 64 Worcester Street, Wolverhampton, has kindly undertaken to collect waste paper in his district on our behalf. Will Freethinkers in the neighbourhood be good enough to leave their paper with Mr. Shaw, who will send on to us so soon as the quantity is large enough to be dispatched.

There is to be a meeting of South Wales Freethinkers, to forward the work of organization, at the Welsh Harp Hotel, Pontypridd, to-day (Sept. 29) at 2.30. Those in the district will please note.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

WANT of space prevents us this week giving our usual citations from the many interesting letters received, and we must, therefore, content ourselves with taking this method of acknowledging the encouraging and congratulatory messages to hand. In our issue for September 1 we gave a statement concerning the need for our opening of this Fund, and there is no need to repeat what was then said. It is in the strictest sense a War Fund, since it was made necessary by the War, and that necessity will, we regret to say, remain so long as the War continues.

The situation does, in fact, grow more threatening instead of easier. We mentioned last week that the last rise in wages—compositors, machining, etc.—means an increase of about another £100 annually on the cost of production, so that our friends will perceive the strain is not getting lighter with the progress of the War. And we have now received notice from our paper merchants that paper is to be one penny per pound dearer on future orders.

We hinted a week or two ago at a projected development that would have been of importance to the *Freethinker* and to the Cause generally. Owing to the increased expenses mentioned, we do not feel justified with proceeding with that now, and must postpone its realization to some more favourable occasion. Meanwhile, we shall continue to pay attention to increasing the circulation of the *Freethinker*, which, we are pleased to say, is still proceeding. So far as our limited resources permit, we continue to advertise the paper in likely quarters, but in the main we are compelled to rely upon the kindly efforts of our readers. These will be gratified to learn that our printing order last week touched the highest figure yet reached, and we hope to soon exceed that. We are out for a *big* circulation, and mean to get it.

The following represents our Subscription List to date:—

Fourth List of Subscriptions.

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The Dark Diamonds of the Earth.

VI.

(Concluded from p. 502.)

THE development of indigo from coal tar is an outstanding triumph of modern chemistry. This dye, dating as it does from remote times, was derived exclusively until recently from the leaves of the indigo plant. Large stretches of soil were devoted to its cultivation. So late as 1896 more than one million and a half acres of indigo plantations existed, chiefly in India, and the value of the dye stuff was about £4,000,000. But familiar is the fact that the astute Germans gradually surmounted all the obstacles they encountered, and finally elaborated indigo synthetically from coal tar. In the autumn of 1897 artificial indigo appeared on the market with sad consequences to the Indian industry. The soil under indigo cultivation in 1896 (1,583,808 acres) had shrunk in 1912-3 to 214,500 acres, while the Indian export had been reduced in value from over £3,500,000 in 1896 to a meagre £60,000 in 1913. The price of indigo dropped one-half, and the industry had fallen into the hands of the Germans. Whether the Indian plantations will ever recover their former importance is doubtful now that synthetic indigo is so cheaply produced.

In the preparation of artificial indigo naphthalene, one of the commonest constituents of coal tar provided the

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basis for the succeeding processes of production. All the various transformations successively undergone by the several compounds built up during the synthesis proved easy of accomplishment save the first—the conversion of naphthalene into phthalic acid. The cost of this initial conversion threatened to prevent the commercial triumph of the undertaking when a trivial laboratory mishap served to solve the difficulty which handicapped the chemists. As Findlay states, it was due to—

> the accidental breaking of a thermometer immersed in the heated mixture of naphthalene and sulphuric acid that it was discovered that mercury acts as an efficient catalyst in the conversion of naphthalene into phthalic acid and facilitates the process to such a degree as to allow it to be carried out with commercial success.

The foregoing method arose from the researches of Karl Heumann, while another productive process based on benzene is also founded on that chemist's inquiries. In company with the indigo plant, the several species of madder have been superseded by coal tar derivatives in the manufacture of dye stuffs. Anthracene oil is evolved from coal tar, and, in 1868, two continental chemists discovered that the colouring substance of madder could be prepared from anthracene. At this date some 70,000 tons of madder were each year grown in the madder fields. British imports of this pigment were then about 16,000 tons per annum, and the price was £50 per ton. Ten years later the importation of the vegetable dye had dwindled to less than 2,000 tons, while the price had sunk to £18 per ton. The cultivation of the madder plant is now almost extinct. Yet the production of this vegetable dye, which dates from early Egyptian times, was, until fifty years ago, a flourishing industry. Millions of acres long restricted to the cultivation in the East of indigo, and in Southern Europe to that of the madder plant are now available for the production of cereal and other essential crops. Two industries originally valued at several millions sterling yearly have now practically passed from the realms of husbandry into those of chemical science.

The magnitude of the synthetic madder dye manufacture is owing to its capacity for producing splendid purple, violet, black, red, and deep brown colours. The hues depend upon the mordant employed in impregnating fabrics subjected to the dyer's treatment. The colours depending on the use of madder include the most permanent kinds. One of these is the magnificent Turkey red which imparts to cotton a brilliant colour. Anthracene, the basis of these fine colours, now rapidly rose to a position of importance from a very lowly estate. To quote Professor Meldola: "In two years a material which could have been bought for a few shillings the ton advanced at the touch of chemical magic to more than 200 times its former value."

Fahlberg, in 1879, evolved from coal tar, toluene, a substance of surprising sweetness. A few years later this material was placed on a marketable basis as a flavouring substance which could be utilized in commodities that require sweetening, but in which sugar proves injurious. This, for instance, is of prime importance with the food stuffs of sufferers from diabetes. Fahlberg's product, now known as saccharin, possesses more than 400 times the sweetening power of cane sugar. This compound is very useful for several important purposes, and its value in medical treatment has secured its recognition in the Pharmacopœia. The discovery of a white crystalline powder so greatly outdistancing sugar for sweetening purposes seemed to menace the sugar industries with ruin. State intervention, however, promptly prevented the introduction of saccharin into commerce as a substitute for sugar. Licences were required for its manufacture, and the sale of this coal tar "sugar" was restricted to the druggist. It is essential to observe, however, that while cane and beet sugar possess high nutritive properties, saccharin contains no nutritive value whatever. It is an excellent medicament, and as such it occupies a high rank.

Perfumes are prepared from coal tar. Among these are sweet woodruff, various clovers, New Mown Hay, vanillin, hawthorn blossom, meadow-sweet, and other splendidly scented compounds.

Many important drugs are now derived from coal tar. Antipyrene is elaborated from aniline, which is itself evolved from benzene. From antipyrene was subsequently derived another important antipyretic—pyramidone; while a further derivative, antifebrine, has proved itself a useful febrifuge.

From the sinister activities of a micro-organism, the *Spirochæte pallida*, the venereal disease syphilis is generated. Ever since the Middle Ages, mercury has been regarded as a specific for this malady. Mercury, however, proves detrimental to the patient. Professor Ehrlich therefore endeavoured to evolve a compound containing some toxic substance which would be absorbed by the microbe but not by the tissues of the sufferer from the disease. After a long series of experiments, Salvarsan, the famous 606, emerged. This preparation, now available in Britain under the name of Kharsivan, is a benzene derivative, and consequently a coal tar product, although arsenic is also added to the compound.

The principle of selective absorption which guided Ehrlich in his researches has led to later victories. Dr. Browning's discovery that trypa-flavine, one of the coal tar dyes, possesses the remarkable property of destroying blood-poisoning bacteria while remaining harmless to the white blood corpuscles or "warrior cells" which form the natural defences of the body when attacked by disease, has promoted the use of this compound as an antiseptic. Obviously, a germicide which selects as its foes the malign microbes alone is far superior to ordinary antiseptics that slay "with equal impartiality the pathogenic organisms and their natural enemies, the white 'warrior cells.'"

When, in 1914, the World War opened, Germany's almost complete monopoly of the production and supply of synthetic drugs became painfully apparent. In a most instructive table, Professor Findlay shows the serious rise in prices which this drug-famine occasioned. There we find that phenacetin, priced at 2s. 9d. in 1914, rose in January, 1917, to 92s. 6d. per pound. Salol, which was selling at 1s. 10d. before the War, advanced to 47s. per pound in 1916, although it has since fallen to 10s. 6d. Generally speaking, there has been a marked decline in the price of drugs since 1916, the year of highest prices. This fall is due to the labours of our chemists, seconded by increased supplies from America and elsewhere. For a time the situation was very critical, and perhaps the experience has not been in vain.

Of the services rendered by coal tar derivatives to photography and to various other arts there is no space to speak. The writer trusts that no apology is needed for this short series of papers on the apparently prosaic subject of coal. To him science and Freethought are indissolubly linked, and he earnestly subscribes to the view expressed by one of our most thoughtful chemists that—

> until the imagination of our people can be fired by the mental contemplation of great chemical achievements we shall never be able to gain for chemistry and for chemical study that measure of interest, respect, recognition, and encouragement which alone will enable this country to hold her own in the industrial competition of the world.

T. F. PALMER.

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Writers and Readers.

PROFESSOR C. H. HERFORD ON LUCRETIUS.

A FRIEND of mine with an admirable bias towards clear thinking reminds me that Lucretius, the great freethinking poet of old Rome, has always attracted strong and independent minds. A glance at the subject will be sufficient to show the justness of his remark. Those of my readers who know their Montaigne well will, no doubt, recall a passage in which he expresses his delight in the natural and sustained vigour of the Latin poets, whose manner of writing, he says, "does not so much please, as fill and ravish the strongest minds." After quoting some magnificent lines from Lucretius, he goes on: "When I behold these brave forms of expression, so vivid, so profound, I am inclined to say not that it is well said, but that it is well thought." That is the truth in a nutshell. But it was not so much the thought as the expression that appealed to Dryden, whose robust and matter-of-fact temperament found little interest in philosophical speculation. His versions of a few of the more famous passages give some of the fullness, the sonority, and dignified progress of the Latin hexameter. Yet it is hopeless to try to reproduce in English the closely packed thought of the original. Voltaire, Diderot, and Frederick the Great saw in Lucretius the impassioned opponent of religion and priestcraft. Their delight was not in the brilliant episodes, but in the firm logical texture of the great third book, in which is marshalled all the evidence for disbelief in the immortal nature of the human mind. In the last century, in that mid-Victorian period dishonoured and abused by every young criticaster nowadays, Munro published his text, commentary, and translation—a monument of sane and enthusiastic scholarship; J. A. Symonds wrote a luminous and eloquent study of the poet's ideas and style, and Goldwin Smith occupied his scholarly leisure by turning, or, rather, expanding, a few passages into excellent English stanzas. Gladstone could quote with effect the "noble and majestic lines" (Bk. ii., 646-651) in his speech on the Affirmation Bill, his commendation moving a pious member of the House to protest that the poetry of Lucretius was "only less objectionable than Mr. Bradlaugh's writings."

. . . . . .

Only a little while ago some of us were delighted to find Lord Morley checking the flow of his recollections to give us a discussion on the merits of the Roman philosopher-poet, and now Professor C. H. Herford, a man of letters, whose work reveals both vision and depth, has printed a lecture delivered in 1917 at the "John Rylands Library" in Manchester. As an introduction to Lucretius, it is well worth buying. With it and Munro's prose version—obtainable, I believe, in a cheap reprint—the English reader has some of the materials for appreciating the thought, and to a limited extent the style, of a great poet and a great Freethinker. Mr. Herford begins by noting that Lessing denied the title of poet to Lucretius because Aristotle had said that there could be no poetry worthy the name that was not the imitation of human actions. This was the eighteenth century standpoint. The Romantic Revival levelled these Aristotelian entanglements of critical barbed-wire, and extended the domain of poetry so as to embrace all human emotions. It is to Wordsworth rather than to Lessing that we turn for an adequate theory of poetry. For him poetry is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." For Lessing, as I have said, Lucretius was a mere versifier, because he did not imitate human action; yet if we dig deep enough, we shall find that "On the Nature of Things" has an epic grandeur. The characters are not men and women, it is true, but the immense forces of Universal Life. On the same ground, Lessing would have denied the name of poet to James Thomson ("B.V."), whose "City of Dreadful Night" is based, not on the interplay and clash of human actions, but on powerful and spontaneous emotions remembered in tranquillity. Goethe, Mr. Herford notes, owed much to the dry light of Lessing's admirably analytic method, and yet he rejected at once his narrow view of poetry; and, what is more to the point, he gave Lessing's theory a practical denial by writing a fine poem on "The Metamorphosis of Plants."

Mr. Herford tells us that "On the Nature of Things" is "at once a scientific treatise, a gospel of salvation, and an epic of nature and of man," and also that we are rarely conscious of one of these aims to the exclusion of the others. In none of these was Lucretius original. He got his science from Democritus, his way of salvation from Epicurus, while his master in philosophic poetry was Empedocles, the "poet-philosopher of Agrigentum, whom Matthew Arnold made the mouthpiece of his grave and lofty hymn of nineteenth century pessimism." The atomic theory of Democritus, a contemporary of Socrates, was an attempt to explain the universe by combinations of material particles, indivisible, and therefore indestructible, coming together fortuitously, and moving in a vacuum. It is a fruitful hypothesis, the possibilities of which are not by a long way exhausted. It has the advantage of leading directly to Atheism. This system was adopted by Epicurus, a philosophic and gentle recluse, who had little or no interest in its speculative aspect. For him it was valuable because it promised, as Mr. Herford says, an "effective relief from disturbing interests and cares, and especially from the fear of the gods, and a life after death." This was the gospel of salvation from superstition, which Lucretius embraced with the fervour of a disciple.

> He was not like Pope, in the *Essay on Man*, providing an elegant dress for philosophic ideas which he only half understood and abandoned in alarm when they threatened to be dangerous. He was the prophet of Epicureanism, and it is among the prophets of the faiths by which men live and die that we must seek a parallel to the passionate earnestness with which he proclaims the daring gospel of Epicurus.....What we admire unreservedly in him, declares a great French poet, who died only the other day—Sully-Prudhomme—is the breath of independence which sweeps through the entire work of this most robust and precise of poets.

. . . . . .

Epicurus, the "timid and debonnair humanitarian, the quietist of paganism" in the imagination of the Roman poet, becomes a large heroic figure—a new Prometheus—whom neither the story of gods, nor thunderbolts, nor heaven with threatening roar, could quell; who passed beyond the flaming boundaries of the world, and traversed in mind and spirit the whole unmeasurable universe, returning a conqueror to tell us what can, what cannot, come into being; under whose feet in turn foul religion lay prostrate, and whose victory has raised human nature to the skies. It is precisely this upward lift—this passionate faith in the free play of the mind that converts what might have been a didactic treatise into an epic song of the world-wide conflict between reason and religion. The great passages, moreover, are not, as some would have us think, mere pleasant oases in an arid waste of expository science. They are as much a part of the tissue of the poem as are the more emotional, the more lyrical passages of (say) *Romeo and Juliet*. And as you will get no idea of the play by merely picking out a great scene here and there, so you will get no idea of the immense intellectual and emotional cogency of the *De Rerum Natura* if you confine your reading to selections.

. . . . . .

Mr. Herford notes that most of the recognized and famous poetry of the book is connected with the negative side of the subject—the annihilating criticism of religion based on fear of the gods, fear of death, and of what may happen to us after death. How surcharged with the emotions of indignation and pity is the famous passage in which he tells of the slaughter of Iphigenia on the altar of Artemis! (I. 84-101):

> Lo! on her tresses fair for bridal tire
> The sacrificial fillet they have bound;
> Beside the altar weeping stands her sire:
> In all the crowd no tearless eye is found.
> The priests make ready for their office dire,
> Yet pitying hide the knife. When gazing round
> The Maiden sees her doom, her spirit dies,
> Her limbs sink down, speechless on earth she lies.
>
> The first born of his children she in vain
> Had brought the name of father to the king.
> In arms upborne she goes, not by a train
> Of youths that the loud hymeneal sing
> Around a happy bride in joyous strain
> Bearing her home, but a sad offering,
> There to be slain by him who gave her birth.
> Such evil hath Religion wrought on earth.

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How impressive is the magnificent close of the third book (lines 820 *ad fin.*) where he brings all he had of philosophy and science irradiated with ardent emotion to prove that the long night of the grave can be no more painful than the eternity before our birth! The personification of nature as the Eternal Mother of men who rebukes them for bemoaning an ineluctable fate is as moving as it is solemn. Its solemnity with that of other similar personifications have led critics, who could not see that Lucretius was both a poet and a man of science, to argue that he was in this way seeking after the comfort and support of a personal deity. What would they say to Meredith's rehabilitation of the Earth Goddess?

. . . . .

On the sadness of Lucretius—the sense of the "tragic pathos of sudden doom and inexorable passing away." Mr. Herford has an exquisitely phrased passage:—

> To say that he puts the "Nevermore" of romantic sensibility in the place of the dispassionate "give and take" of mechanics would do wrong to the immense vitality which animates every line of this athlete among poets. Of the cheap melancholy of discontent he knows as little as of the cheap satisfaction of complacency, or of that literary melancholy, where the sigh of Horace, or Rousard, or Herrick, over the passing of roses and all other beautiful things covers a sly diplomatic appeal to the human rosebud to be gathered while still there is time. No, the melancholy of Lucretius is like that of Durer's *Melancholia*, the sadness of strong intellect and far-reaching vision as it contemplates the setting of the sun of time and the ebbing of the tides of mortality; or, like Wordsworth's mournful music of dissolution, only to be heard by an ear emancipated from vulgar joys and fears; or, like the melancholy of Keats,—the veiled goddess who hath her shrine in the very temple of delight,—the *amari aliquid*, in Lucretius's own yet more pregnant words, which lurks in the very sweetness of the flower (p. 25).

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Correspondence.

MIND AND MATTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Professor Tyndall's difficulty in seeing how thought is to be accounted for by the action of the brain presents itself, to my mind, in this way. All material phenomena may be thought of in terms of extension and movement; they are all cases of something occupying space and moving. Extension and movement, then, are universal attributes of matter. Now, consciousness cannot be thought of at all in these terms, and being, therefore, inexplicable in terms of those attributes of matter which we derive from our experience of physical phenomena, it must, I think, be admitted that a real difficulty exists for the Materialist to face. This, however, does not, in my judgment, weaken the case for Materialism. On the contrary, I think it is strengthened by candidly recognizing difficulties which appear insuperable to its opponents.

After all, other systems have their own peculiar difficulties. The Dualists, for instance, have to account for the supposed interaction of two substances (matter and spirit) which have nothing in common but duration. This seems to me just as impossible as it is to think of spirits existing apart from matter.

There remains Idealism, the only monistic system which I regard as fundamentally opposed to Materialism. With regard to that, it seems to me that if I deny the existence of material things, except as perceptions, I should also deny the existence of people other than myself, since I only know them directly as material bodies. Their consciousness I infer from their physical manifestations, and if these exist only in my mind, so must that which is derived therefrom.

My idea is that matter has an attribute of a psychic nature that, under certain conditions, gives rise to consciousness, but that this attribute is undiscoverable from phenomena for the same reason that we can only know of the consciousness of others indirectly through physical means. In other words, I believe that not only organisms, but matter in general, has a subjective as well as an objective side.

E. J. HIRST.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "The Ethics of Post-War Finance."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval): 7.30, Special General Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Debate, Mr. Percy H. Muir, C.E.S., and Mr. E. Burke, "Freewill or Determinism?" 6, Mr. E. Burke, "Charles Bradlaugh: In Memoriam."

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 5.30, H. Brougham Doughty, "Charles Bradlaugh" (Second Address).

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Swasey, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Value of the Bible in National Life."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth): Miss K. B. Kough, 2,45, "Are we still Savages"; 6.30, "Marriage: As it is, As it was, and As it might be." Music by the Choir. Tea prepared for friends from a distance.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Shapurji Saklatvala, "Economic Conditions of Labour in India."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Meeting of Members for arrangement of Winter Work. A good attendance is earnestly requested.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 11, "The Savage in our Midst"; 7, "The New World and the Old Religion."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road): 6.30, Branch Meeting.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Christian "Corruptions."—The Editor	517
Apologetics in a Quagmire.—J. T. Lloyd	518
Christianity and Labour.—Mimnermus	519
Religion and Life.—E. Lyttelton	520
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	524
The Gods Afraid.—F. J. Gould	525
Scottish Notes.—Scotia	526

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Christian "Corruptions."

We have been reading an attack on the Roman Catholic Church by a Protestant, and a reply thereto. Each accuses the other of obstructing progress, of being bigoted, of foisting a false Christianity on the people, etc. Being a Freethinker, we sympathise with both sides. We agree with each that the other is bigoted; that each side has falsified history, distorted man's moral sense, and obstructed science. It is, indeed, curious that the only time when one gets a fair measure of truth from these controversialists is when they are showing each other up. And one is reminded of the maxim that when rogues fall out honest men are likely to get their due. For instance, each accuse the other of corrupting primitive Christian teaching. But neither appear to realize that this corrupting of primitive Christian teaching was an essential condition of its continued existence. Absurd and impracticable doctrines such as non-resistance, celibacy, etc., may remain uncorrupted so long as they are held by a small body of fanatics. Quakers may practise non-resistance while a police force is maintained by less "spiritual" Christians, or Shakers practise celibacy while others perpetuate the race. But let either dominate the State, and their teachings become corrupted or society ceases to exist.

* * *

The Meaning of "Corruption."

All sorts of Christians appear to miss this point. Had Christian doctrines been adhered to in all their primitive impracticability, Christianity would have remained of no more historic consequence than the long-haired followers of the Lost House of Israel who may be found in modern London. The corruption and secularizing of Christianity was in reality a rationalizing of it; an attempt to adapt it to contemporary needs and ideas. And, as a matter of fact, every attempt to govern society by Christian doctrines has necessarily ended in failure or corruption. Calvinism in Geneva broke down utterly after two hundred years of rule, during which period its higher intellectual life lagged behind the rest of Europe. Presbyterianism in Scotland went through a long process of secularizing in order to live. The reign of the Puritans in England, which was essentially an attempt to govern the nation according to ideas derived from the Bible, is one of the most ghastly failures recorded in history. To keep Christianity pure, therefore, is to keep it before the public in all its native absurdity and unworkability. It becomes rationalized in order to live. Its "corruptions" are the modifications forced upon it by the desire to live and rule. In this way the "corrupting" of Christianity has led to the dropping of Biblical inspiration and infallibility, eternal damnation, miracles, and the assumption of liberal thinking by various sections of the Christian Church.

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The Benefit of Accident.

Much is made by Protestants of the circumstance that Roman Catholic countries are in general backward countries. And, of course, the difference is set down to the presence or absence of Protestantism. But to make the comparison of value, cases would have to be found where Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, with their respective clergy, have an equal quantity of political power, and therefore equal power to help or injure. As it is, any careful student will find that the only benefit conferred by Protestantism is an accidental and a negative one. Protestant countries are, on the whole, more progressive than Catholic ones, not because of what Protestantism does, but because of what it does *not* do. The divisions of Protestant bodies, their never-ending rivalry, prevent any one of them from securing supreme power such as that which for centuries was enjoyed by the Catholic Church, and so leaves a larger area of civil life *outside religion*. It is that which gives us the sole benefit of Protestantism over Roman Catholicism—it does not interfere to so large an extent with social life. The Roman Catholic priest avowedly aims at dominating life as a whole. The Protestant minister is forced by political conditions to disavow any attempt to coerce the State; and it is to this negative quality that the development of countries where Protestantism is dominant is due. But with this distinction, and allowing for the difference in the social powers of the two faiths, the Protestant clergy show themselves as inimical to progress as do the Catholic clergy. If the Roman Church punished the scientific workers of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, the Protestant Churches of the *nineteenth* century showed as bitter hostility to Lyell and Darwin. Protestant Churches, in their small peddling way, are as much given to heresy-hunting as are Roman Catholics—perhaps more so. And they are quite as greedy of State help, and as fond of State patronage. The whole lesson of history is that, once you place *any* Christian Church in power, the results are disastrous. Christianity is only harmless when it is powerless.

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The Lesson of History.

Most amusing of all is it to find Protestants charging the Roman Church with intolerance. The charge is true enough, but it does not lie with Protestants to urge it. For, allowing for difference of opportunity, has Protestantism shown itself more tolerant of opinion than Roman Catholicism? We do not find that it has. On the contrary, it is to Protestantism we owe the circum-

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stance that heresy was taken out of the hands of the Church, and its suppression made the business of the State. Historically, Protestant Churches have been hotbeds of intolerance and centres of persecution. For savage intolerance, it is hard to beat the early generations of Protestants. Calvin, Luther, Beza, Knox, are names that suggest an intolerance as bitter as anything displayed in the annals of the Roman Catholic Church. Luther believed in stamping out all who denied the principles of the Christian religion, and also that Jews should be confined as lunatics. Calvin's burning of Servetus was accompanied by every desire to prolong his victim's agony for the satisfaction of his religious bigotry. Knox was intolerance incarnate, and his followers openly taught that the killing of heretics was a justifiable act. In England, heretics certainly gained no more favour from the Puritans and their successors than they did from Catholics. It was under Protestantism that men and women were sent to prison, time after time, for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*. And in New England, wholly Protestant from the first, the reign of the Puritans was accompanied by every mark of savage bigotry and brutal intolerance.

* * *

Semper Eadem.

And even to-day it is an error to speak or think of persecution as being over. People are no longer burned, and not often imprisoned; but they are banned and ostracised. Their living is filched from them, and their peace of mind, where they are of a not sufficiently stern type, destroyed. And between the church that cuts off a man's living, or severs him from social intercourse, because of his dissent, and the church that burns for the same offence, the difference is one of degree only. There is no difference in kind. It is the same spirit in both cases, but in the former it can only express itself imperfectly. There is no greater delusion than this of accepting Protestantism *per se* as more tolerant than Roman Catholicism. The one is just as intolerant as the other. In brief, every form of supernaturalism, and in particular Christian supernaturalism, is necessarily intolerant and destructive. It ceases to persecute science only when science is strong enough to cry "Hands off!" It yields to reform only when it is too weak to resist. And it is the height of folly to mistake weakness for a virtue or impotency for goodwill.

Chapman Cohen.

Apologetics in a Quagmire.

The late Professor Bruce, of Glasgow, defined Apologetics as the science of stating and explaining Christianity defensively. It is a wonderfully illuminating fact that, after being in the world for so many centuries, Christianity still needs to be so stated and explained. Indeed, theologians have always been apologists; and, strangely enough, the apologies of one age have never satisfied another. More than that, no apologist ever arose who fully met the demands of his own age. In other words, at no period in its history has the Christian religion succeeded in convincing all the people of its own truth and efficiency. Even in the Ages of Faith there were doubters not a few, when doubt was treated as a crime. To-day, the masses in almost every country in Christendom have lost all interest in religion, while multitudes of the more thoughtful and reflective not only doubt, but openly disbelieve, all its doctrines. This state of things is causing the pulpit the greatest disquietude and alarm. Sometimes a note of despair is heard, usually sounded by those clergymen whose churches and chapels are comparatively empty. It has become a habit with them to indulge in angry tirades against the ignorance, materialism, and besottedness of the working classes, and against the worldliness, luxury, and love of pleasure which blind the minds and sear the consciences of the upper and middle classes. Others, who are more generously endowed, whose churches and chapels are full, cultivate an optimism which is anything but justified by the sum total of the facts. These, too, occasionally complain of the forgetfulness of God and the neglect of religious ordinances which seem to prevail in certain quarters; but they comfort themselves and their followers by giving vigorous expression to a confident hope that the present wave of religious indifference will soon spend itself, and that almost immediately the mightiest revival ever seen will be upon us. But all preachers alike, be they optimists or pessimists, are apologists. Recognizing the existence of numerous arguments against the Faith which prevent many people from accepting it, and realizing the fact that round about them there are thousands of well-informed men and women who even glory in their unbelief, they feel bound to do all they can to rebut those arguments and to enlighten the darkened understanding of their absent opponents. In the prosecution of this defensive mission, they often make use of their own press. As a rule, the religious newspapers are seldom read by non-believers, with the result that the apologies published therein rarely reach those for whom they are primarily intended. In the *Christian World* for September 19, there was a highly suggestive article, entitled "Wanted—An Interpreter," from the pen of J. A. Patten, M.A., M.C., C.F. By "an interpreter" Mr. Patten really means an apologist who will undertake to deal with religious questions defensively. He starts with the Genesis legend of Jacob wrestling with an angel through the dark hours of the night, and asking his Divine opponent what his name was. Mr. Patten treats that ancient legend as an historical fact. The wrestler is reported to have inflicted upon Jacob a bodily injury from which he suffered to the end of his life. This is how he puts it:—

> The Divine wrestler had overcome his human opponent by a touch that meant pain and weakness and humiliation. Jacob accepted the chastisement without a murmur, but he wanted to understand the why and wherefore of the strange occurrence. He must needs go on with his shattered, weakened life, but he longed for an interpretation of the angel's touch.

Thus is Mr. Patten led to discuss the problem of suffering in general. According to him our greatest need is, not an alleviation of suffering, but an interpretation of it. We are all constitutionally "fitted to bear an incredible amount of pain," he tells us; but that is not true. Many a suicide is exclusively due to a constitutional dread of suffering. John Davidson, poet and playwright, is believed to have taken his own life through his inability to face the prospect of becoming the victim of the horrible disease of cancer. It is false to state that "in the last analysis we are stoics" in relation to suffering and sorrow. Surely, Mr. Patten cannot be ignorant of the fact that there are myriads of our fellow-beings who are hopelessly groaning under burdens which are crushing them to the earth. What they desire above everything else is release from the awful pressure. Most people are bearing burdens unjustly thrust upon them by those in power. What troubles them is the fact of the burden, not the reason for it, which they understand only too well. At this point the writer quotes the dying cry of the great Goethe: "More light, more light," though the relevancy of it is very doubtful. It is quite possible, of course, that, as a Christian Theist, Mr. Patten is more concerned about the mystery of pain than

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about pain itself, but the Atheist is under no necessity to entertain any anxiety on that score. Naturally, everybody wishes to discover why he suffers, but only in order, if possible, to be delivered from the terrible ordeal. In any case, the mystery of suffering owes its existence very largely to the belief in an over-ruling, all-good, and all-loving Deity.

This applies with peculiar pertinency to the present War. To the Atheist the War is by no means an insoluble problem. For him the full explanation of it is be found in human nature itself. On the whole, evolution is an upward movement, a progressive tendency; but, as every scientist knows, it is a process characterized by numerous zigzags or fluctuations. There are national and international, as well as individual, lapses and relapses, religiously known as backslidings; and the War is *par excellence* a case in point. But on the assumption that there lives an infinite Being, in possession of infinite power, who sitteth as King for ever, the War becomes at once a perplexing, baffling mystery, a tragedy which no one can understand and explain. The parsons are utterly helpless, and yet they dare not leave the problem alone, though they are at sixes and sevens every time they touch it. It is no wonder Mr. Patten declares that "the world needs interpreters of the mystery in which it is enshrouded," and interpreters without number there are, whose interpretations, alas, are equally without number, no two of them alike, but all of them tragically futile. It is frankly admitted in the article under review that the true interpreter has not yet arrived, and that so far the War is an inexplicable enigma, an unrelieved mystery. The Bishop of London has several times removed his coat and rolled back his sleeves, intent upon tackling the difficulty with all his might, but each time nothing but humiliating defeat has been his reward. On one occasion he went so far as to confess that the War had already resulted in the partial defeat of God himself—had, in fact, completely smashed his first design of a porcelain vase of universal peace, and compelled him to substitute for it a second design of universal service. It is silly beyond compare to call theology "the queen of the sciences," and in its name to say that God inspired Darwin to discover the origin of species, a discovery which has done more than all other discoveries put together to bow God out of the Universe, as it led Darwin to evict him from his own consciousness during the latter half of his life.

One is gratified to find that Mr. Patten does not attempt to play the part of an interpreter in his well-written article. Interpreters of the Universe in terms of Theism are at best but idle dreamers. Mr. Patten alludes to Jean Paul Richter's exquisite dream in which a man is summoned to the vestibule of heaven to contemplate the immensity of space. "Then the man sighed and stopped, shuddered and wept. His overladen heart uttered itself in tears, and he said, 'Angel, I will go no further, for the spirit of man acheth with this infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God.'" Mr. Patten imagines himself much wiser than Jean Paul Richter, who was a man of genius, and finds fault with the utterance, "Angel, I will go no further," saying:—

> Ours is a nobler part than that—to believe that God, who planted the love of truth in our hearts, will lead us to the truth, however uphill the path may be.....The questions that demand an answer are far-reaching and perplexing: the relation of God to the War; the meaning of this universal suffering; the arrest of human progress, and the uncertain progress for the future—these and many other perplexed themes.

And these are questions which Mr. Patten, an ardent believer in God, does not even try to answer, but contents himself with expressing the hope that an interpreter may soon appear who will successfully resolve them. In the course of nineteen centuries there have come and gone innumerable defenders of the Faith, and even now, far on in the second decade of the twentieth, the cry is for more, the Christian religion still standing in as much need of being defended as ever. With this fact in mind, are we not justified in concluding that the Faith is in its very nature absolutely indefensible? The all-satisfying interpreter is yet to come. The truest thing written by Mr. Patten, on the present occasion, is the title of his very interesting article: Wanted—An Interpreter.

J. T. Lloyd.

Christianity and Labour.

> We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions; and even if we abolish the House of Lords we shall still dwell in the house of bondage unless we abolish the Lord of Lords; for the evil principle will remain to develop into new forms of oppression.—*G. W. Foote.*

The Modern Labour Movement has never proclaimed, and never sought after, an alliance with the clergy. So evident is this aloofness that, whenever a Trades Union Congress is held, the clergy are certain to break out into hysterical appeals to Labour leaders to remember that God and the Churches have always been on their side. But, as an old proverb assures us, in vain is the net spread in full sight of the bird. The instinct of self-preservation on the part of the Labour leaders prompts other and safer measures than a close contact with the Black Army.

Why this feeling of estrangement should exist between the Labour Movement and Christian Orthodoxy is explained by Mr. Chapman Cohen in his masterly *Christianity and Slavery*, with a chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement (The Pioneer Press). A more powerful or opportune analysis of the Democratic indictment of Christian Orthodoxy it would be difficult to conceive. Mr. Cohen is not a writer who trusts to rhetoric and purple passages. His is the logical, judicial mind, prone to examine the present in the light of the past, that sees in the struggle between Democracy and Clericalism the efforts of priests to survive the fate of Destiny.

Stage by stage, calmly, dispassionately, the author develops his theme. Each chapter is an armoury of facts; an arsenal of argument. He shows the attitude of the Bible to slavery; compares slavery under Paganism and under Christianity; examines the institution of servitude in the Ages of Faith; outlines the history of the English Slave Trade, and of American negro slavery. Finally, the subject is rounded off with an acute and illuminative analysis of the Black and White Races, and of the attitude of Christianity to Labour. In the chapter on the attitude of Orthodoxy towards the working classes, Mr. Cohen has written some of the most telling pages of his book. Terrible as the earlier chapters on slavery are, this plain, unvarnished record of nineteenth century wage-slavery is one of the most appalling in the history of religious hypocrisy. Mr. Cohen does but recall the horrors inflicted upon women and young children by their employment in mines, collieries, and factories, but no one can read his masterly summary without a strong feeling of indignation that such things were possible in any country claiming to be civilized. Mr. Cohen's comment is well worth quotation:—

> It only remains to add that during the existence of these complicated horrors, and the systematic ill-treatment and slaughter of children for pure gain, the country was bristling with renewed religious activities, imprisoning men and women for publishing and selling Paine's *Age of Reason*, and fighting France in *defence of civilization*.

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Mr. Cohen's careful and elaborate analysis of the whole subject of Christianity and slavery should be welcomed by every social reformer, for it is the most exhaustive and painstaking work on this important subject. He has worked to save his readers the trouble he took himself, and he deserves their gratitude as well as their admiration. The wonderful industry, the honest, previous toil of the writer is a thing to marvel at. He has read a pamphlet to write a sentence; he has spent hours in a study to make a paragraph. "Mr. Bradlaugh a great lawyer?" said an honest Secularist, discussing the Freethought leader at the height of his Parliamentary struggle, "why, he always has such easy cases." To make a simple thing complicated, as is the habit of ordinary journalists, will always attract more praise than to make a complicated thing simple.

Here is Mr. Cohen's considered verdict on the Christian Church:—

> It certainly could not be for lack of power that the Christian Church did not condemn slavery. For many centuries it exercised a position of commanding influence. It claimed the power to make and unmake kings, whole nations trembled at the threat of excommunication; it could set nation fighting nation for a difference of religious belief; it could send the whole of Europe on such a madman's errand as the Crusades; it could burn and imprison hundreds of thousands for witchcraft and heresy. The Church lacked neither power nor opportunity. And yet it not only failed to destroy slavery; under its auspices there was impressed upon the world the most brutal and degraded slave system known to man.

Men's memories are short, and the clergy's new found zeal on behalf of labour may deceive numbers of people. It is better to attach more importance to what the clergy do than what they say. In their hearts they care as little for the welfare of the working-classes as the Sultan of Zanzibar for his slaves. The votes of the clergy in the House of Lords prove it beyond dispute. The bare record is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking people, and their shameful opposition to all progress shows how hopelessly the clergy are out of touch with democratic aspirations and the humanist tendencies of the age. Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of labour have been opposed by these ecclesiastics, and their record carries its own condemnation.

Mr. Cohen's judgment anticipates history. In vain does the Black Army invite the representatives of labour to reconcile themselves with the Churches. Christianity has let the mastery of the democratic movement pass to other forces. It is the orthodox priestly attitude which is unchanged through the centuries, and which is the same in all nations, which convinces the long-suffering democrat to give in the verdict of guilty.

In view of political conditions, Mr. Cohen comes forward at the right moment with the right book. Admirably arranged, this impeachment of orthodoxy is crowded with illuminating facts relating to the subject. No single pen has revealed at once so clearly and so comprehensively the hypocritical affectation of the Churches with regard to their attitude to labour, nor has helped the busy reader to visualize better the conditions which obtained when the authority of the Church was undisputed and undisturbed. The present-day hypocritical pretensions of the clergy are nauseating. They have an aroma like that of the crowded cabin of a small Channel steamer on a rough day. Mimnermus.

An honest man has nothing to fear.—*Robert Burns.*

Religion and Life.

By E. Lyttelton.

Sir,—Enjoying, as we do, the very rare opportunity of carrying on a discussion at a leisurely pace, I find it is advisable at this point to make clear what I am aiming at. For in your second column you imply that I put certain questions to you as if I were seeking a "dialectical advantage." I had no such object in view. The last thing in the world that I want to do is to prove that you are wrong. My hope is to show that in certain great convictions you are right; my only dissent from you is because you don't push those convictions on to the next stage. I will explain.

First, as to these convictions. I wanted to be sure if you held them or not. You have answered the questions rather guardedly, but I think I have ascertained with sufficient correctness how the convictions enter into your interpretation of life; but I beg you not to suppose that I wanted you to make any admission which might enable me to score a point in argument. Arguing is a pretty pastime, but on great questions is about as profitable as playing Bridge.

Next, as to your view. You draw a contrast between the two positions as follows: "Not having to marry these facts to a special theory, I am only concerned with their logical interpretation.....Dr. Lyttelton has to harmonize the facts with a theory." I am at a loss to understand the first statement. Do you not hold there is no God? If so, surely it deserves to be called a theory; and if a sincere man holds a theory, can he avoid trying to harmonize facts with it? If you say your theory is that there is a God, then we have, indeed, been writing at cross purposes. But, perhaps, you would prefer to formulate your view as a *via media*—that there may be a God, but there is no evidence to show that there is; and if there is, there is no possibility of knowing him. Even that I should call a theory—not a good one, I admit, but still a theory; and my objection to it is that it is unintelligible and self-contradictory.

It is Herbert Spencer's; but he was unable to see that in saying God is unknowable he not only postulated his existence, but also affirmed something about him. If God is unknowable we could not say or think anything about him at all.

I hope this comment on your words will not be taken as a *tu quoque*, or as it is expressed in more modern parlance a common "you're another." The only reason I say you have a theory is because it seems to me to be a fact; and yet you deny it; and I hold that the neglect of any truth brings mischief with it.

It is possible, however, that you rest your emphasis on having a theory, but on the necessity I am under of marrying the facts to mine, while you are relieved from the necessity of marrying any facts to yours. I would suggest that we cannot judge how far either of us does this thing till we each have been more explicit as to our main position. I hope very shortly to be as explicit as possible as to what Theism and Christianity are, because that is required if I am to show at all clearly where your affirmations agree with mine, and where they fall short.

But in this letter I cannot go further than to indicate in very rough outline what I am sure is the cardinal point of difference between us. It is not conceivable to me that anyone who is not mad should tilt against the Christian doctrine of God if he really understood what it is. But it is exceedingly easy to misunderstand it, especially as it has been a thousand times obscured, distorted, wrenched out of its true relations, watered

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down, and so perverted as to become almost its own opposite, even in the hands of those who are doing their best to defend it. We need not waste time in speculating who has been most to blame; but it is a plain fact that all through his whole history man has repeatedly given way to a natural tendency to try to *explain* the Infinite; and in so doing he has unconsciously turned it into the Finite, and then wondered at finding it fails to satisfy thoughtful minds.

So far as I understand your position, you are attacking a doctrine which you believe to be fundamentally superstitious and fraught with manifold mischief to mankind. I say you have been doing a service to us all, in that you have helped to show that our most central doctrine is very easy to state erroneously, so erroneously that it naturally expresses to inquiring people something incredibly different from what it really is. In other words, you have been attacking a doctrine of a finite god, which I fancy, though it has been again and again dressed up by its votaries in quite attractive colours, is such nonsense that no one really believes it except a few lunatics who are happy in worshipping either a paltry figment of man's brain or some image fashioned by the joiner's hand. (For to try to worship a finite god is the very essence of idolatry.) I must do my best to prove that this statement of the divergence between us is sound.

Meantime, it is relevant to remark that this characteristic of Christian Theism (viz., that it is very easy to state quite erroneously) is common to many other spiritual doctrines or subjects of thought—I mean those which appeal to something in us other than the five senses—which I am pretty sure you hold to be true and of vital importance to man's welfare: such as Law, Order, Progress, Patriotism, Moral Goodness, etc. These have often been wrongly stated with results disastrous in proportion to the bigness of the doctrine or subject. Thus I hope you will resist the temptation to say that Religion must be nonsense *because* it is so difficult to explain. In the long run I fancy we shall see that this fact tells immensely in its favour, but that must come later.

Sir, in younger days I have occasionally indulged in the ancient pastime known as Aunt Sally; the throwing of short, stout sticks at a figure carved into a very rough resemblance to a human face, or merely a cocoanut set on a pole. A successful shot was rewarded by a good deal of clatter, and a strange sense of satisfaction felt by most healthy minded young people of the male sex. Such, I regret to say, has often been religious controversy: a species of intellectual Aunt Sally, in which the object of attack has been a sorry counterfeit of a living thing or a grievously misused natural product; misused because wholly misunderstood. To avoid such waste of time, I will endeavour in my next letter to substantiate what I have said above, and can trust to you to pull me up if any statements are obscure or seem to be contradictory. In the course of this I hope to answer the questions you put in your last article.

For He who has denied to the most devoted psalm-makers and moral poets all beautiful thoughts and all literary reputation, lest they should be praised too much by their earthly fellow-creatures, and thereby forget heaven, where the angels have already engaged board for them in advance;—He, I say, provides us other profane, sinful, heretical authors, for whom heaven is as good as nailed up, all the more with admirable ideas of earthly fame, and this indeed from divine grace and mercy, so that the poor souls, since they are really here, be not altogether wanting, and that they may at least enjoy upon earth some of that joy which is denied to them in heaven.—*Heine.*

Acid Drops.

Commenting on our discussion with Dr. Lyttelton, the Church newspaper, the *Challenge*, says: "It is naturally vexatious to the Atheist or Agnostic to be told that his (often very great) virtues, and his (often very noble) ideals, are the work in him of the God whose existence he doubts or denies." We can assure the *Challenge* that we are not at all vexed, but rather amused, by such a statement. And is it not astonishing that the God who can produce such noble ideals and great virtues in the Atheist falls short of producing a conviction of God's existence? And we might remind the *Challenge* of the sound rule that when things can be explained by known forces, there is no need to call in unknown ones. The Naturalistic theory explains all there is to be explained. The Theistic theory explains nothing, while itself ranking as another puzzle.

Sometimes there is an amusing outcome of the War-time regulations. At Rochford Session a fine was inflicted on a Jewish minister who came to bless the crops, but had forgotten to bring with him his identity book.

A clergyman has written a book with the title, *The Hardes Part*. It does not describe the position of the clergy in the great World-War, for in this country they are engaged in consoling the girls that the soldiers have left behind them.

You can always trust the dear clergy to use their opportunities. "Harvest festivals" have been held in some of the soldiers' "huts" in France.

A man named George Moss, found wandering about the country, suffers from the delusion that he has £10,000 a year and owns the Hotel Cecil. This is almost as curious a case as that of the Bishop of London, who has £10,000 a year, and imagines he is a poor man.

Scarce a week passes but some enthusiast leaves money for the endowment of superstition. This week, by the will of the late Mr. E. C. Burton, the Manchester City Mission receives a substantial bequest in the Longfield Hall, Salford, besides other gifts.

Some time ago the Bishop of London published a balance-sheet of his income showing that the more money he received the poorer he became. According to a newspaper report, the Rev. F. Pickford, of Farncombe, near Godalming, has the same delicate sense of humour. Replying to the suggestion that he had money, he preached from the text: "Silver and gold have I none," and afterwards gave details of his own and wife's private means. It may, of course, be explained that a man who really believes the dogma of the Trinity cannot be expected to be strong in the knowledge of arithmetic.

A Day of Prayer is to be held to return thanks for the liberation of Jerusalem from the Turks. Christians will meet to thank God for taking Jerusalem from Christians to give it to the Jews. The Mohammedan, who regarded Jesus as a prophet, is turned out. The Jew, who declares him to be an impostor, is to be ushered in! And the people who attend the Day of Prayer can keep a straight face! Oh for a lively sense of humour among the people!

A good story is going the rounds concerning the late Sir Samuel Evans, the divorce court judge. After the funeral service an acquaintance said: "Poor, old Sam! He's gone to heaven, but he can't be happy there, because in that place 'there is no marrying or giving in marriage.'"

The Rev. F. C. Spurr, who was a great "infidel slayer" in the Antipodes, writes in the *Christian World* that, when addressing soldiers, he was "pelted with questions concerning the value of prayer," and that one man wanted an

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assurance that he was not "talking into space" when praying. We should like to hear Mr. Spurr's opinion as to whether prayer could shift the bullets fired from a machine-gun, and if not, why not?

Canon Ring, of Westminster Cathedral, is stated to have said his first mass in a stable at Silvertown. Curiously, the Christian religion is also said to have been started in a stable.

According to the *Evening News*, the French Government has ordered four thousand Y.M.C.A. huts for use in the Army. Apparently they have not asked for the flannel-mouthed evangelists.

The civilizing effect of Christianity is not so apparent as the meat-roasting power of the meat-jack. A symposium of readers in the *New York Herald War Magazine* on the subject, "What's to be done with the Kaiser?" evoked the caustic comment of the editor, "Most of the letters are written by persons who can think of nothing so fitting as physical torture of the most extreme kind."

The Christian Conscientious Objector who told the Tribunal that he wouldn't kill a flea ought to try a course of cheap seaside lodgings.

Mr. Gompers, the American Labour leader, it appears, does not know where he was born, and he called at Fort Street, Spitalfields, when he should have gone to Tenter Street, near by. One remembers Mark Twain's story of the two rival Gardens of Eden. Mark's own choice was the one where the trees were not fully grown.

Cardinal Bourne dedicated at the Pro-Cathedral recently a War-shrine, with crucifix, to the memory of soldiers. This War-shrine movement is a clever dodge to popularize religious emblems, and also to exploit the War for the benefit of the Churches.

The endowment of superstition still goes on merrily. A large bequest has been left for the resident canons at the Anglican Cathedral of St. George at Jerusalem. It will be noted that the endowment of the Church means the enrichment of the clergy.

"Amid all the welter of this present tragedy, the one thing not observable is any sign of Providence as ordinarily understood. 'Bill prayed to God, and Bill had his head blown off,' is a soldier's rough summary of the dilemma." So says the Rev. Arthur Pringle, in the *Christian World*, and he ought to know. Well, really, Bill's summary is not unjust. Christians believe that some people are helped by Providence, and others have therefore a reason for thinking they are neglected. Providence does its work, apparently, in fits and starts. Sometimes it looks after things; at other times it lets things go to the Devil. It is as unreliable as a politician, as variable as an opportunist parson.

So Mr. Pringle says we must "explain this with all candour," because unless it is done, "there will be a dangerous leakage of faith." An explanation set about in that spirit is not likely to be very impressive. "We must be candid because it won't pay to be otherwise." In other words, "we must find an explanation that will remove the danger fronting us." Whether it is a sound one doesn't matter so long as it satisfies. And Mr. Pringle's explanation is, baldly, things are all right so long as our immortal soul is unharmed. But "Bill's" problem was not concerned with his immortal soul, but with his mortal head. He was not concerned with what Providence was doing to his "soul," but why Providence didn't pay more attention to his body. Providence in this War seems bent on remaining neutral. All the "Great" Powers are engaged; it is only the small and negligible ones that stand apart.

The editors of the illustrated papers have keen eyes for pictorial effect. In a recent issue of a London daily two pictures showed the procession of the Mohammedan Holy Carpet at Cairo, and a portrait of the American Archbishop Hayes in full war-paint. Both were fine examples of savage survivals.

Miss Mary Macarthur holds that "the great force in politics is going to be the baby. Why not? The great force in politics to-day is men in their second childhood.

Mr. H. G. Wells may have been converted, but he wears his rue with a difference. In his new work, *Joan and Peter*, he makes the lady ask, "If there isn't a hell, what does God do?" A palpable hit!

The Rev. James Drummond, formerly incumbent of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, has died, leaving £14,164. This sum should be sufficient to prevent him handling a harp.

We see from the *Christian World* that in a discussion between teachers in theological colleges, held at Harvard, U.S.A., one of the speakers said he had found no revival of religion among the men in the ranks, but he had "seen a revival of religion among the chaplains." Now, that is decidedly rich. Putting on one side the consideration that it says little for the religion of the chaplains when they went out, a cynic might suggest that the revival of religion among Army chaplains is no more than increased business activity. Whether the enterprise will yield a fair dividend we have our doubts. It certainly has not done so up to the present.

The boys of Stoneyhurst Catholic College have sent to General Foch a list of 2,000 communions which have been offered in the school for victory. Now, we shan't be long!

A daily paper editor expresses astonishment that a London vicar was seen shopping, and adds that this is presumptive evidence of the shortage of servants. But why should a preacher of the Gospel of Poverty have servants?

"The German soul is God's soul; it shall and will rule over mankind. Verily the Bible is *our* book. It was given and assigned to *us*, and in it we read the original text of *our* destiny, which proclaims to mankind salvation or disaster, *as we will it*," so says a German Doctor of Divinity, quoted in the Ministry of Information's publications. The refining effects of God and the Bible is not very clear.

We hear much of the poverty of the clergy—from the parsons themselves—but they are not all near the casual ward. Here is a cutting from a provincial paper: "The vicarage at Grays, Essex, an old-fashioned house standing in large grounds, has been sold, and a modern up-to-date house will be erected for the incumbent."

The promised revival of religion is overdue, but there is a crudescence of barbaric Biblical habits, notably in the use of the stick in the case of juvenile offenders. At Southend six boys, charged with theft, were birched. Two of the elder boys were ordered to receive six strokes, and the four younger ones three strokes.

The Rev. J. J. Sandys, vicar of Gatacre, Liverpool, died in the parish church of Woolton whilst attending a service. There is no moral.

Church congregations are being urged by printed appeals to economize in the use of coal. Formerly congregations were frightened by appeals to avoid coal—in the next world.

The Christian religion is not the only one that is feeling the east wind of adversity caused by the World-War. The Chief Rabbi has sent a letter to all Jewish ministers protesting against the increasing number of mixed marriages between Jews and outsiders, which he regards as a grave menace to the Jewish faith. Another factor at work is the stoppage of immigration, which always helped the more orthodox party among the Jews, for most immigrants are more strict than those long resident in this country.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 6, Leicester; October 13, Maesteg; October 20, Southampton; November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

A. J. S.—We regret that our limited space prevents the insertion of your letter. But we do not say that evil comes through "Natural Law." Natural law is no more than a description of uniform processes. And as evil is the name given by man to processes which he finds unpleasant or undesirable, the Atheist has no need to ask whom it came from, or why it is here. These are Theistic, not Atheistic, questions. Nor do we see, from the standpoint of naturalism, why one form of existence should be called higher or lower than another. In nature things simply are. High and low are distinctions of our own creating.

R. H. Rosetti.—Pleased to hear from you, and to know that you are keeping well. We hardly need your assurance that your interest in Freethought is as keen as ever. We do not think you are made of the stuff that forms opinions lightly or discards them easily. Hope you will soon be back.

Mrs. B. Siger.—Your soldier son's contemptuous attitude towards "Days of Intercession" is, we have good reason for saying, that of very many thousands in the British Army. We wish him the best of good fortune.

W. E. Kerslake.—Thanks for sending on waste paper. It is urgently needed, and all helps.

Mr. F. E. Willis writes:—"I enclose cheque for my mite towards the Sustentation Fund for the best of causes. The manner in which you have kept the *Freethinker* going is itself a veritable triumph, and speaks volumes for the enthusiasm, sincerity, and intelligent discernment of your devoted admirers, and your own organizing skill. I do think, however, it would be wise to increase the price 50 per cent. to cope with some of the financial difficulties." We can only say we shall do this when we deem it necessary; but we are taking long views, and do not care to sacrifice to the ease of the moment the success of plans that will give the *Freethinker* its proper and an assured position.

M. Arthur E. Preece writes that we are wrong in saying that all religions place their golden age in the past. The Bible does not, and is quite opposed to the "superstitions" of the Church. Mr. Preece thanks the "splendid evidence for the true Christian religion," and encloses a six months' subscription to the paper. This is a pleasant way of heaping coals of fire on our head, but, all the same, we must point out that the Bible *does* place the golden age in the past, as is seen in the story of Eden.

T. Hensworth (Shrewsbury).—We do not care to make a special appeal for funds to send literature to the troops, bearing in mind that we have already to ask the help of our readers for the Sustentation. Such sums as are sent voluntarily we distribute, and, in any case, no request for literature has been refused since the opening of the War. We have supplied it ourselves when needed.

Mr. A. W. Davis writes, in forwarding cheque: "I have been a reader since 1888, and never liked it better than now." Thanks.

W. J. Wilmot.—We are very glad so warm an expression of attachment to the *Freethinker* from a reader of three years standing.

G. Grove.—Copies of the *Freethinker* are being sent to all the addresses. We are obliged to you for sending them.

C. Emwell.—We don't quite see the bearing of your question. So far as we are aware there is no difference in the original power of reproduction of somatic and germ cells. The reproductive power of somatic cells grows weaker as the cells themselves are, so to speak, allocated to other duties. This is what one would expect from what is known of the laws of evolution.

Hugh Higgins.—Yours is a very practical way of showing your appreciation. The ready response you received is also very gratifying.

Sapper Walder.—A man on joining the Army has the right to demand that he shall be entered as a Freethinker or an Atheist, or by under any other title. That being so, we imagine that few officers would decline to re-classify a man for any adequate reason. But we are not sure that re-classification can be demanded. Exemption from Church Parade is getting very common, and the more it is asked for the easier it will be to get. Thanks for what you have done.

T. Cresswell.—It is not only among Christians that prejudice is encountered, unfortunately. Your instance is a case in point. We imagine that the fear of religion is often only another name for fear of Mrs. Grundy. We are pleased to have your appreciation of the work of Bradlaugh and Foote.

W. H. Briden.—The cutting, as you say, quite bears out what we have said concerning the influence of the literature we are distributing among the troops. We are keeping it up. The full results will be seen when the War is over.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

There must have been something in what we said last week, in connection with the Sustentation Fund, to lead to the belief that we were losing heart in the continued and growing severity of the struggle. We are judging from a couple of letters to hand from the very warm friends of this journal. But we can assure them, and others, that this is not the case. The struggle is hard, and when it is recognized that the increased cost of paper, wages, and machining, leaving out other odds and ends, represents an advance of over £800 a year on pre-War cost, it will be seen that the task of carrying on is no light one. But in spite of this we were never more confident of pulling through, and of giving the *Freethinker* a better position than it has yet held in the country. We are so confident that we are already working at plans, which, although they may take several years to mature, *will* mature, unless something wholly unexpected occurs. What these plans are will appear as soon as the proper time arrives. Meanwhile we are not at all downhearted, or doubtful of our pulling through. We have too many sincere friends and well-wishers for disaster to occur. Our only concern is with the methods that must be adopted to overcome the ever-growing expenses and other difficulties. On that we may have to make a public statement in the course of the next two or three months.

The North London Branch opens its indoor work to-day (October 6) with a debate between Mr. Palmer and Mr. Muir, of the C.E.S., on "That the Evil in the Universe is Reconcilable with an All-knowing and Beneficent Creator." The discussion commences at 7.30.

Mr. T. C. Longridge writes:—

> Having just finished the reading of your *Christianity and Slavery*, I feel I must congratulate you on having produced a splendid propagandist work. The case you set forth is overwhelming in its completeness. But my object in writing is not to pay compliments, but to say that in my opinion the chapter on "Christianity and Labour" would make a capital pamphlet by itself, and if it could be reprinted would gladly take 500 copies for distribution. In any case, I enclose cheque for 50 copies of *Christianity and Slavery*, to be sent to soldiers at the Front. It will supply them with ammunition for many an engagement.

Another friend also sends us £2 for the same purpose. Needless to say, we shall be pleased to undertake the distribution of these copies if our readers will send on names and addresses. Particulars, please.

The Manchester Branch opens its session to-day with two lectures by Mr. Cohen in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwick. The afternoon subject at 3 is "God and the State"; evening at 6.30, "The Old Religion and the New

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World." Both subjects should give rise to plenty of discussion. In order to give the lectures a good "send off" it has been arranged that on this occasion admission is to be quite free, with, of course, a collection towards expenses. We hope those who do attend will bear this in mind, as otherwise the experiment is apt to bear adversely on the Branch funds, which are already sufficiently low. In any case, we hope that all Freethinkers, attached and unattached, will do their best to see that the hall is crowded on both occasions. It is a good opportunity for introducing new-comers.

As further evidence that our circulation of Freethought literature in the Army and Navy is telling, we observe a letter in the *Daily Mail* from a Mr. C. F. Wollouth, asking the Admiralty and the Army Council to "take action in the matter and issue such instructions to the authorities.....as will have the effect of safeguarding our men from the malign influences which are being brought to bear upon them." We feel quite flattered by this testimony to our "malign influence," and are strengthened in the resolve to pursue our evil course.

The weather was vile all over the country on Sunday last. It prevented Mr. Cohen's meetings at Southampton being as good as they would have been otherwise, but it didn't damp either the enthusiasm of those present or of those responsible for the work. The Branch Committee is full of energy, and intend to make things hum. At Birmingham, Mr. Lloyd, we are pleased to say, had a splendid meeting, with a rapid fire of questions at the close of the lecture. That always adds interest to the meeting.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (October 6) at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The lecture commences at 6.30, and Freethinkers should make it a special point to introduce new-comers to the meeting. The hall is a fine one, and ought to be crowded.

We have been much struck by the number of women who have contributed to our Sustentation Fund. This is not observable to readers, as names do not always carry an indication of sex. But a very palpable feature in the list is the number of joint contributions from husband and wife. These are both features to be proud of. We are getting the women, we are getting the family. This represents an advance of great significance. We are forcing one of the great strongholds of the Churches.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Fifth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £308 17s. 9d. A Few Dundee Friends, 15s. G. Dixon, 5s. Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Kerslake, 10s. C. F. Barker, 10s. W. H. Hicks, £1 1s. W. Hopper, £1 1s. A. W. Davis, £2 2s. W. J. Wilmot, 10s. J. Burrell, 2s. 6d. G. F. Dixon, £5. Per Hugh Higgins, £2 5s. T. H. Elstob, £1. Duncan Stewart, 5s. E. J. Jones, 5s. Alexandra Hall, 2s. Miss Palphreyman, 1s. J. Boston, 1s. S. E. Carvell, 10s. A. O. Warley, 5s. J. Irving, 10s. T. Cresswell, £1. Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Browne, 5s. Arthur Baker, 5s. The Misses Black, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. Gorrie, £1 1s. Per Sapper W. Walder, 5s. T. C. Riglin (second subscription), 2s. 6d. E. Lechmere (second subscription), 2s. 6d. F. E. Willis, 10s. J. V., £5. A. Radley, 4s. E. Rickard, 2s. 6d. S. Clowes (second subscription), 4s. T. M. Mosley, 2s. J. H. English, 2s. 6d. T. O'Neil, 5s. Capt. J. Latham, £5. H. A. Lupton, 10s. Mr. Eichert, 10s. S. D. V. W., 5s. E. Broad, 3s.

Per Secretary Manchester Branch:—Mr. and Mrs. Pulman, £1 1s. Mr. and Mrs. Hollins, £1. Mr. H. Black, 10s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Willis, 5s. Mr. and Mrs. Rosetti, 10s. 6d. "S.," 2s. Mr. and Mrs. Monks, 10s. 6d. T. F. G., 2s. Mr. O'Neill, 2s. 6d. L. E. Owen, 10s. Mr. J. Smith, 2s. 6d. J. H. Langford, 10s. St. Rhone, 3s. Mr. Thornley, 5s. G. Bailey, 10s. And Mr. and Mrs. Batt, 2s. Total, £348 3s. 9d.

A Search for the Soul.

XIII.

(Continued from p. 509.)

In the *Weekly Dispatch* of August 27, 1916, there appeared two articles by different writers, both dealing with the same subject. In introducing them to his readers, the Editor said: "While Sir Oliver Lodge deals with the *purely scientific* aspect of survival after death, Miss Estelle Stead deals with what she describes as actual experiences of spirit conversations between the living and the so-called dead." The words I have italicized plainly indicate how any writings of Sir Oliver Lodge are regarded by the press: they are all "purely scientific." It is mainly for this reason that I selected Sir Oliver's *Man and the Universe* as perhaps the most rational and scientific book on the Dualistic side of the question; for it professes to speak in the name of science without discussing Spiritism. I now make another extract from that remarkable work; in this the writer says:—

> Superficially, nothing is easier than to claim that just as when the brain is damaged the memory fails, so when the brain is destroyed the memory ceases. The reasoning is so plausible and obvious, so within the reach of the meanest capacity, that those who use it against adversaries of any but the lowest intelligence might surely assume that it had already occurred to them and exhibited its weak point. The weak point in the argument is its tacit assumption that whatever is non-manifest is non-existent; and that by destroying the mechanism of interaction between the spiritual and the material aspects of existence you must necessarily be destroying one or other of those aspects themselves (p. 92).

This argument, Sir Oliver says, is "so plausible and obvious, so within the reach of the meanest capacity," that it is fitted only to be employed against "adversaries of the lowest intelligence." If this be so, then the argument is not at all unsuitable; for in Christian countries the "lowest intelligence," at least upon this subject, will be found among church and chapel-goers and Spiritists, who believe in the survival of the soul after death, and who throw common sense, discrimination, and rational judgment to the winds. I can therefore quite understand why Dualists do not like to see it used. As an argument, however, it is perfectly sound; for it is simply a statement of fact.

Now, in the first place, it is not memory only that is affected, but all the mental faculties. The whole mind, during the period when the body is unconscious, appears to be absolutely non-existent, and unless the brain can be restored to its normal condition, the mental faculties *will never be able to manifest themselves again.* The significance of the latter fact is conveniently ignored. It is quite true that in this case a "tacit assumption" is made that what is non-manifest is non-existent; but this is perfectly legitimate, because the action of what is called "the mind" is known to be dependent in some way upon the molecular activity of the cerebral organ—a fact which is admitted even by Sir Oliver himself. Could it be shown that the mind, soul, or spirit is an entity distinct from the brain, its non-manifestation when the latter organ was damaged would not matter a scrap; it might then be admitted to be in existence,

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though quiescent. But this is not the case: the soul and mind are assumed to constitute an entity apart from the brain without a scintilla of corroborative evidence, and even in the face of the strongest evidence to the contrary. Hence, the fact that mental activities are non-manifest whenever the cerebral organ is unable to function is a clear proof that they are dependent entirely upon that organ for their existence. This is the main point of the argument which Sir Oliver says is "so within the reach of the meanest capacity," and it should be specially noted; for if the qualities or activities attributed to the Mind are always non-manifest when the brain is too damaged to function, it should become obvious even to the Christians and Spiritists of the "meanest capacity" that those mental attributes are really produced by the cerebral organ itself.

Let us consider this matter for a moment. Consciousness and thought are only found in connection with a living brain; and just as physical exercise exhausts the muscles of the body, so continuous thought exhausts the nervous substance of the brain. Long-sustained intellectual work is also accompanied by a loss of substance of the brain, which loss has to be made good—as in the case of the muscles—by suitable food. Again, arterial blood is absolutely necessary for repairing the waste tissues of the brain, without which mental activity ceases. Complete rest, especially by dreamless sleep, is to the brain what needful repose is to the fatigued limbs—the necessary condition of health.

In cases of the fracture of the skull or a blow on the head, by which a portion of the cranium is made to press upon the brain, the person stricken remains unconscious, and the mind is a blank, until the depressed portion has been removed, however long the period may be. When this has been done and consciousness returns, the man can remember everything that happened to him up to the moment of receiving the blow, but nothing whatever during the weeks he lay unconscious until the moment the pressure upon his brain was removed. This return to consciousness then appears to him to immediately follow the time he received the blow, and if he happened to be talking to any one at that time, he continues what he had been saying the moment he regains his lost consciousness. The latter fact proves that his mental faculties were non-existent during the time he lay unconscious; so that non-manifestation *does* mean non-existence.

Now, during the time he lay unconscious his brain was still a living organ; but consciousness and thought had ceased. Why was this? Simply because the brain which produced those sensations had not, by reason of the pressure upon it, the freedom to continue its molecular activities. It is thus perfectly clear that Mind, or so-called "spirit," is dependent solely upon the brain, and could have no independent existence apart from it; it is, in fact, something which is produced by the functioning of the cerebral organ, and is, therefore, continually changing; it is only the memory of what has gone before that makes it appear continuous. As a simple matter of fact, the latter theory is the only one which explains the complete absence of "mind" during a long period of unconsciousness. As already stated, we have no evidence that there exists in the human organism a mental faculty separate from the cerebral organ, and that is why we hear such nonsense as "the mechanism of the *interaction* between the spiritual and the material aspects of existence." We may admit the words "psychic" or "spiritual" as being synonymous with "mental"; but we have no reason for admitting a psychic or a spiritual "entity"; the latter is purely imaginary.

Dr. Maudsley, in his work on *Body and Mind* says:—

> When a blow on the head has paralysed sensibility and movement, in consequence of the disease in the brain which it has initiated, the patient is sent to the hospital; but when a blow on the head has caused mental derangement, in consequence of the disease of the brain which it has initiated, the patient is sent to an asylum.....When two persons undergo a similar moral shock, or a similar prolonged anxiety, and one of them goes mad in consequence, while the other goes to sleep and recovers his equanimity, it is plain that all the co-operating conditions have not been the same. In a great many cases there is something in the nervous organization of the person, some native peculiarity, which predisposes him to an outbreak of insanity (pp. 41, 42).

Here we see, as the physiological effect of a blow on the head, that whether the brain is rendered unable to function at all (*i.e.*, total unconsciousness), or to function in some abnormal manner (*i.e.*, mental derangement), the result is due solely to the condition of the cerebral organ itself, and has no relation whatever to an imaginary entity called "the mind."

(*To be continued.*) Abracadabra.

The Gods Afraid.

In a recent article, I traced the progress of the Hebrew Fire-and-storm God Yahweh from his visibility in the days of the Patriarchs to his disappearance behind a cloud in the first or second Christian century. The subject recurred to my mind when I read the interesting chapters of a book on *The Lau Islands, and their Fairy-tales and Folklore*, by T. R. St. Johnston,[1] British Commissioner. The islands are adjacent to the Fiji group. Mr. Johnston picked up folk-lore and myths from old inhabitants.

One day, he visited an old widow, whom he found seated on native grass-mats, and, while she smoked, she chatted, and told him stories of the times previous to the arrival of the Wesleyan *lotu*, or religion.

"Before the foreign ships came to Lau," she said, "there lived in an island yonder a God named Rasikilau."

She went on to describe how when Rasikilau walked, the hills trembled, and his head reached as high as the tallest palm-trees. A canoe from the mysterious North brought a Goddess, whom he married, and the divine offspring was two handsome and extremely robust boys. A favourite sport of the boys was to pull up big Mamekara trees by the roots. Another recreation was to stand, one at each end of the island and pelt each other with pebbles. But when they quarrelled over a catch of fish, and hurled enormous boulders at each other, their father reflected that two such strong youths would be powerful enough to turn him out of his possessions, and he endeavoured to restore peace. This he did by rushing in between, and knocking their heads together, with the result that they both fell dead. He broke the news—or part of it—to their mother by saying they had killed each other by throwing stones.

Not long afterwards, a God named Koroibo, who reigned over a neighbouring island, crossed the intervening lagoon, and brought gifts of friendship to Rasikilau, and he much enjoyed dining with his host under a shady Mamekara tree.

"I like these Mamekaras," he said, "and I have a proposal to make. I hear that accidents occasionally happen here through young people throwing stones. Now in my own island, the juveniles throw the soft

[1] Pub. in 1918 by the Times Book Company.

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fruits of the Dawa tree. Give me your Mamekaras to plant in my territory, and I will give you Dawa trees in exchange."

They agreed, drank out of a bowl together, and parted politely.

The Goddess died of grief.

No good came of the tree transactions, for the transplanted specimens all died.

When the old lady got thus far in her tale, Mr. Johnston asked her—

"But are these Gods never seen nowadays?"

She looked a little confused, and replied—

"No; not since the missionaries brought the light of the good *lotu* to us; but"——

"But?"——

"Well," she added, "of course, there was Adi Mailagi, who used to appear till a few years ago. And then there is Daucina, who lives *a little way down the coast*."

The old lady was really revealing one of the secrets of the Evolution of Gods, when she made this simple observation! And she wound up with another.

"All the other Gods now," she said, "only show themselves in their *waqawaqa* [earthly shapes] as birds, or animals, or fishes. They are the people of the dark times, and they *fear the missionaries*."

That was another way of saying that an inferior culture gives place to a superior. The missionaries would readily accept such a theory. They would not be so ready to accept the further conclusion that, in precisely the same manner, their own system of theology would have to yield before the advance of a humanist conception of the universe.

The reader may be edified by another anecdote drawn from Mr. Johnston's entertaining pages, though it has no relevance to the theme I have just discussed. It relates to the remarkable fashion in which the people of the village of Mabula (in the Lau Islands group) were persuaded to accept the Christian faith.

A native magistrate, named Samani, had himself become Christian under the more or less efficient instruction of the missionaries; and, hearing that, though Mabula possessed a church, many of the villagers were still unbelievers, he obeyed the call of duty and summoned a meeting. He ascended the pulpit and discoursed, but was vexed when his remarks were greeted with laughter.

Next Sunday, he returned, climbed the pulpit, and began again. The laughter began again. Mr. Johnston heard the following account of what happened next:—

> Great, then, was his anger, and he pulled off his white shirt (for he had on a foreign shirt which a missionary had given him), and stood upright in the pulpit, very fierce, and holding aloft his club:—
>
> "Men of Mabula," he cried, scornfully, "if ye will not listen to my Bible—the Bible of the *lotu*—ye shall at least listen to the Bible of Tui Lakeba" (the God of Lakeba).
>
> And he banged the club on the pulpit, so that he almost broke the desk.
>
> Then were the men of Mabula much afraid, and remained silent, and listened to his words, and never again did they mock in the church; for he warned them that he would return and beat them, should such a report reach him.

One cannot suppose that the zealous Samani had ever read a translation of Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, otherwise it might be thought he had taken a hint from Butler's description of the Church Militant:—

> Such as do build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun,
> Decide all controversies by
> Infallible artillery,
> And prove their doctrine orthodox
> By apostolic blows and knocks.

At anyrate, it shows that philosophers speak truly when they say that the laws of human psychology act similarly in the most widely separated parts of the world.

F. J. Gould.

Scottish Notes.

The "Wee Frees" have passed a resolution at the Edinburgh Presbytery meeting proposing that the new Education Bill should contain provisions which would prevent the use and exhibition of religious symbolism in the transferred schools during school hours; yet they are in favour of the amendment, which was lost in Scottish Grand Committee, that use and wont should be secured in the provisions of the Bill itself, and should not be left even to the option of the education authorities. What idealic notions of liberty these reverend Fathers in God possess! They want to keep their Church free from the State, yet they want the State to enforce their doctrine on the people through the teaching in public schools.

The Rev. Professor Kennedy Cameron says if they had been taught anything in connection with this War, he thought the importance that attached to religious teaching in a community had been forced upon them more than any other question. His own belief was that at the very root of all this conflict was the want of religion among the German people. How long are such men to be allowed to make such statements? Is Germany not the most religious nation on earth? The Kaiser is constantly thanking God for past favours, and invoking his help for those to come. Is not religion taught in all the schools of Germany?

The Rev. Hugh Armstrong, Winchburgh, says they want to take away from "careless" School Boards the power of determining the place of religious instruction in the school curriculum, and to make it a statutory duty on teachers to teach religion in the school. What proportion of the community does the Rev. Hugh represent, and who cares what he wants?

The Rev. A. Robb, Lauriston, says he is curious to know how it came about that the Roman Catholic and Episcopal bodies in Scotland had succeeded in gaining the ear of the Government to obtain public grants for the teaching of religion on a denominational basis in their schools while this was not conceded to the Presbyterian Churches. What we want to know is how long any privileges are to be given to religious denominations at the expense of Secularists.

What are the Secularists in Scotland doing to prevent compulsory religious education being thrust upon them? Are they making their voices to be heard in the matter? If not why not? Surely with so much squabbling amongst the various sects, the secular solution is the only logical position.

Dr. John Strong, Royal High School, Edinburgh, in his presidential address at the Educational Institute of Scotland, said as a profession the teachers held a strong and abiding belief in the value and necessity of religious instruction in schools. Does Dr. Strong think it would be in the interests of morality if he and his colleagues were compelled by law to teach the Bible from cover to cover, and to explain to children of tender years all the immoral practices of the ancient Jews? How would he like his female assistants to explain to a class of boys Numbers xxxi. 13, or the story of Boaz and Ruth? Does Dr. Strong draw no distinction between Bible teaching and ethical instruction?

Scotia.

Some ideas there are that lie beyond the reach of any catastrophe. He will be far less exposed to disaster who cherishes ideas within him that soar high above the indifference, selfishness, vanities of every-day life. And, therefore, come happiness or sorrow, the happiest man will be he within whom the gteatest idea shall burn most ardently.

—*Maeterlinck.*

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Correspondence.

"THE TASK OF FREETHOUGHT."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My few and casual remarks on the present condition of Freethought advocacy have drawn a rather lengthy, very able and interesting article, under the above heading, from the pen of "Mimnermus." With much that he says no Secularist will disagree, but some will hardly appreciate his (and Mr. Cohen's) satisfaction with the merely critical work of Freethought, and their repudiation of Secularism as a sect. In my hot youth, "when George the Third was King," we used to talk of the "Secular Party," and looked forward to the time when it should assume the reins of government. Now it seems we must be content to remain for ever in "the cold shades of opposition."

J. F. RAYNER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 26.

The President occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Brandes, Davidson Eager, Gorniot, Heaford, Kelf, Lazarnick, Leat, Neate, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Miss Pitcher, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for Coventry, Garw Valley, Maesteg, Regent's Park, and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a new Branch at Garw Valley, and for the title "South Wales Divisional Council" to be used, conditionally, in connection with other Branches in that locality.

Mr. Cohen consented to allow his recent article, *God and Man*, to be reprinted for use as a propagandist tract.

It was reported that Branch secretaries had now received the printed report of the Special Committee on Re-organization.

The President ruled that any discussion by the Executive of this report was out of order, but all resolutions or amendments would be remitted to the Agenda Committee, which was then elected. November 17 was suggested as the date of the Conference meeting, and the Secretary was instructed to fix the meeting-place in a town that could be considered central.

Branch Secretaries are reminded that meetings of their members should be called as speedily as possible for the discussion of the Special Committee's report, as all notices of motion for the Conference Agenda must reach this office not later than October 12. Individual members can be supplied with copies on application.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Sonnet "Nature."

DEAR FRIEND: no man knows anything of God.
All men are Atheists, though they know it not,
Nature includes the All from star to sod,
And none can soar beyond her range one jot.
Being infinite she shall for ever be,
She knoweth no beginning and no end;
Revealing no design in earth, sky, sea,
In life or death; is neither foe nor friend.
She knoweth naught of evil nor of good,
She knoweth naught of darkness nor of light,
Of beauty or repose; earthquake and flood
Are all the same to her as truth and right.
She is one vast and self-existent whole,
And careth nothing for the human soul.

A. J. WILLETTS.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Mazzini and the New Nationalism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): "That the Evil in the Universe is reconcilable with an all-knowing and beneficent Creator." Affirmative, Mr. Percy H. Muir; Negative, Mr. T. F. Palmer.

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Kells, Ratcliffe, Dales, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Value of the Bible in National Life." (A reply to Dr. Campbell Morgan's Lecture, with particular reference to Reconstruction after the War.)

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-Operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mr. C. Cohen, 3, "God and the State"; 6.30, "The Old Religion and the New World."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, First Floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, "Charles Bradlaugh: Appreciation": 7, Important Business, Special Committee Reports, etc.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
God.—The Editor	529
An Avenging Deity.—J. T. Lloyd	530
Keeping Hell Alight.—Mimnermus	531
Rationalism in Ireland.—Rev. H. G. Ingersoll, P.P.	533
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund	536
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	536
Intellectual Dishonesty.—Robert Arch	537

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

God.

In last week's *Freethinker* Dr. Lyttelton remarks that to say "There may be a God, but there is no evidence to show that there is; and if there is, there is no possibility of knowing him," is "unintelligible and contradictory." I have said so many times in these columns, and on that point we are in complete agreement. Unknowableness is not a property or quality of existence, and if there is anything unknowable, we can only prove it to be so by knowing nothing about it—not even that we know nothing about it. This, again, is a contradiction; but one can't help being contradictory when one gets into the region of the absurd. The fault committed by those who talk about "God" in the way condemned by Dr. Lyttelton is, I think, precisely the fault he himself commits. That fault lies in speaking of "God" as though it stood for some understood thing such as gravitation or natural selection. But "God" in the abstract stands for—what? To me, nothing. It is simply unintelligible. I no more know what is meant by "God," apart from particular gods, or defined conceptions of God, than I know what whiteness is apart from some object that is white. One can believe or disbelieve in the god of this or that tribe, or the god of this or that religion, as it is expounded in official creeds. Personally, I believe in none of these. More; I say unhesitatingly that, so far as they are defined and understood, they are pure myth. And I really think that Dr. Lyttelton agrees with me here—that is, if I have not misunderstood his repudiation of the gods in which other people believe, which he describes as "nonsense." If every god that the world has worshipped is a myth, if any god that man can conceive is false, what is meant by "God" used simply as an abstract term? Is it any better than the "unknowable" which we are rightly told is "unintelligible and contradictory"?

* * *

The Decadence of Deity.

The progress of scientific thought is from the indefinite to the definite. The more a particular subject is investigated by science, the more precise and definite become the accepted formulæ. In religion, we have quite the opposite process. "God" commences as a definite concept; it proceeds to a vague abstraction that means either nothing or anything. The scientific student feels himself baffled unless he is able to say definitely such-and-such is the case, and to submit a formula that will give birth to a definite conception. The religious student shrinks from a definite formula, and prides himself on producing something which he says baffles human mind to grasp intelligently. If Dr. Lyttelton will take the "God" of any primitive people he will find no abstract thing, no attempt to grasp the infinite; what he will find will be a perfectly clear and concrete deity built in the image of man himself. The indefinite deity comes later. He is born of the disintegrating effect of later knowledge on primitive ideas. Philosophy and criticism set to work. One by one the more intrusive human qualities are discarded, the less obvious ones are retained. The God who possessed mind and body becomes a God possessing mind and minus body—itself an impossible conception. Philosophical abstractions, such as "substance," get grafted on to the God-idea. Things originally give rise to names, afterwards names are taken as the equivalent of things. But throughout all, I am unable to see any other basis for the belief in God other than that born of the primitive savage—a belief which we know was based upon a mistaken interpretation of the facts. To me the God of philosophy, or of the most advanced Christian, is no more than the ghost of the God born of the fear-stricken ignorance of the savage. And I do not believe in ghosts.

* * *

Outgrowing God.

Dr. Lyttelton says that both of us have a theory concerning the world or nature. And I suppose that is true. To anyone who really thinks, a theory is almost indispensable. But when I said that not having to marry facts to a theory I was only concerned with their logical interpretation, while Dr. Lyttelton has to harmonize his facts with a special theory, I was proceeding on the assumption that he believed in a God before he examined the facts on which that belief is supposed to rest. If I am wrong in this I apologize, but it is certainly true of every other Theist I have met. And if the apology is unnecessary, then it follows that my theory succeeded an appreciation of the facts while his preceded it. And it surely needs little proof that facts examined in the light of a preconceived and strongly held theory are very likely to yield all they are expected to yield, while a theory which follows an appreciation of the facts and displaces a theory previously held, is far more likely to be nearer the truth. Let me say, in passing, that I did not for a moment believe that Dr. Lyttelton was asking questions with a view to scoring debating points. That is an interesting occupation for groundlings, but not for those who have attained maturity of years or of mind. I took it that he was desirous of finding out my real position, not because it was mine, but because in this matter I happen to represent others, and so proceeded to answer the questions put. And this leads me to add that the significance of the fact of so many being brought up to believe in Theism, with all kinds of social and other

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inducements to continue believing, who yet reject it, is often ignored. Yet, surely, the evidential value of the rejection of Theism under such conditions is much greater than its retention, which, on the face of it, may be no more than persistence along a path marked out by tradition, early training, and love of ease. And we have further to bear in mind that the case of individuals is here only a representation of the world of thought. That tends more and more to the rejection of the Theistic idea. Dr. Lyttelton may reply that it is the rejection of a grosser form of Theism in favour of a purer form. In that case, I can only retort that the purification is by way of attenuation, and a continuation of the process threatens complete dissipation.

* * *

The Theory of God.

Naturally, I am at a loss as to the meaning of that "Christian doctrine of God," which Dr. Lyttelton says all who are not mad will accept, once it is understood. All I can say is, that I do reject all the Christian conceptions of God I have ever come across, and find that a great number of my fellow-rejectors call themselves Christians. So far as I am aware, there is no Christian doctrine of God, although there are doctrines of God held by Christians. Naturally, then, I ask Dr. Lyttelton for his conception of what is the Christian doctrine of God, and I await its exposition with considerable interest. But if I may be rash enough to hazard a guess, I fancy it will consist in an interpretation of certain things in terms of God, which, personally, I find myself quite able to explain, so far as our present knowledge admits of an explanation—without reference to God at all. To me, so far as "God" carries any meaning at all, it stands as an hypothesis intended to explain certain things. But what are the things explained by this hypothesis I have never been able to discover. So far as I can discern, it throws no light into dark places, it solves no problems, it unties no knots. Man is left to find his way through the world as best he can, and not a few of the troubles he encounters are bequeathed to him by his less enlightened ancestors. Among the greatest blunders made by unenlightened humanity, I cannot but place that of the belief in "God."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

An Avenging Deity.

THE Rev. R. J. Campbell, during his sensational ministry at the City Temple, London, fell from the grace of theological orthodoxy, a lapse into the causes and motives of which it would not now be profitable to pry. The whole affair is rapidly fading into a dim, distant memory. The short-lived aberration is remembered chiefly for the vehement attacks that were made upon certain portions of the Bible, for the bitter denunciation of various forms of supernaturalism indulged in, and by the notorious volume, entitled *The New Theology*, written in feverish haste, and extravagantly "boomed" when published, but now long since withdrawn from circulation. Our excuse for recalling that religiously exciting time is the fact that several sermons were preached and published in which the Old Theologians were angrily addressed as "Liars," and the ancient Hebrew Deity was fiercely condemned on account of the cruel, brutal conduct attributed to him. No Atheist ever employed terms more contemptuous, satirical, and flamboyant than those which habitually dropped from Mr. Campbell's lips when the New Theology campaign was at its height. To him then Jehovah was a hateful monster who could send bears out of a wood to slay forty-two harmless little children because they playfully mocked a bald-headed prophet, who could deliberately visit Israel with a horrible pestilence which in a few hours killed seventy thousand men, or who could despatch an angel to cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of Assyria. There were many other counts, some of them considerably worse than those just mentioned, in the reverend gentleman's case against the God who figures so conspicuously in the historical books of the Old Testament. The New Theology campaign came to a speedy end, and the Churches of to-day, though much less prosperous in the main, are even more orthodox, than they have been for some years. At any rate, journals like the *British Weekly* champion the Old Theology with renewed zeal and energy, and seem to have entirely forgotten that such a movement as the Higher Criticism was ever on foot. In its issue of September 22, the *British Weekly* has its Correspondence Column graced by one of Professor David Smith's typically Old School articles. This article was written in response to "A. S.," who made the following request: "Will you please say what you regard as the precise force of our Lord's question in Luke xviii. 8: 'Howbeit when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'" Now, far be it from us to blame Dr. Smith for his orthodox views, or for his constant advocacy thereof. This journal has never shown any greater leaning or leniency towards the New Theology than towards the Old, for it is the sworn and uncompromising opponent of all theologies, of whatever age; but it may be admitted that if a man must be a theologian at all, he had better adhere to that which has naturally grown out of Biblical teachings. To this theology Dr. Smith is consistently and heroically loyal. He begins his article thus:—

> The Son of Man is the Judge of men (cf. St. John v. 22, 27); and every historical *denoument* which vindicates the righteousness of God and confounds the insolence of human iniquity is a "Coming of the Son of Man." The constitution of the Universe is a moral order, and therefore every unrighteous thing is doomed. It may flourish long, but there is a canker at the heart of it, and soon or late it decays and falls.

That is an ingenious introduction to a series of most astounding statements, for every one of which there is ample Biblical authority. Dr. Smith offers a firm defence of the very Deity whom Mr. Campbell so furiously assailed; and this defence is rendered in the name and by the authority of the Saviour of the world. The moral order is "an inexorable law" which Jesus is said to have enunciated "in two picturesque epigrams." That is at once well put and exceedingly plausible. The Gospel Jesus did undoubtedly believe in the reality of such a law of the Universe, and that his Father was its author. Did he also realize that a recognition of that law carried with it an irrefutable argument against the absolute and invincible sovereignty of God? But let that pass for the moment. Jesus said: "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." On that passage the Professor wisely makes no comment. The question that naturally arises is, Why should the human garden contain a single plant for which the Divine Gardener is not responsible? *Who* planted that which needs to be rooted up? Who made possible the existence of wicked people? Surely, the whole responsibility for an imperfect creation must lie at the door of its creator. It is only by having recourse to strange inventions of their own that theologians imagine they get over this insuperable difficulty. The second "picturesque epigram" is like unto the first: "Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Here, at any rate, we are in touch with a natural law that is in constant operation. Eastern

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travellers require no formal demonstration of its existence. Wherever the carcase lies, thither the vultures unfailingly flock, and soon nothing remains but white bones. The following is Dr. Smith's application :—

> This is a picture of the moral order. Iniquity is a rotting carcase; and wheresoever the carcase is, thither will God's vultures gather to their work. History is a long succession of examples. The aborigines of Canaan polluted the land with their nameless abominations; and the destruction of the Cities of the Plain was a premonition of the inevitable end. But it was only a premonition. God was patient, "long suffering and slow to anger," and he granted centuries of respite; and then when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, he let loose his vultures; Joshua and his army invaded the land and exterminated the foul breed. In turn Israel grew corrupt, and after centuries of warning and long-suffering the Roman eagles, the army of Titus, cleared away the carcase.

We are sorry to find the Professor in such a ferocious mood, and we are bound to add that he looks at history through shockingly coloured spectacles. Let us consult the records as they stand on the Biblical pages. Speaking generally, Dr. Smith's allusion to the aboriginal tribes of Palestine is as inaccurate as was his description of the Greeks, which appeared in the *British Weekly* several years ago, as a people who knew not the meaning of love as distinguished from lust. Students of Robertson-Smith's *Religion of the Semites* cannot possibly agree with the view that the original inhabitants were in any sense much, if at all, inferior to the invaders under Joshua. The truth is that Joshua's war of conquest in Palestine was, on its scale, quite as ruthless and brutal, and attended with as many atrocities as is the World-War now in progress. Take the siege of Jericho as a sample. The record says that "Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in." The account is largely legendary; but when the city fell, there was no mercy shown, no quarters given, no prisoners taken :—

> They took the city, and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword (Joshua vi. 21).

Nothing more horrible than that has been perpetrated by the Germans in Belgium or Serbia. All that lived in Jericho was utterly destroyed with one solitary exception —*the entire family of Rahab, the notorious prostitute, was graciously spared, by the order of the general of the army* (vi. 22, 23). The same doom befell Lachish, Eglon, Debir, and numerous other cities. The soldier of the Lord "smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the King thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her King" (x. 39).

The destruction of the cities of the plain is another sample. What geological disturbances may have occurred, in ancient times, in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, we do not know; but there is no doubt whatever as to the purely legendary character of the narrative in Genesis xviii. and xix.; and, in any case, absolutely nothing is known concerning a primitive population that may possibly have been destroyed by a volcanic or some other geological activity. Assuming the actuality of a catastrophy of that nature, it is sheer superstition to imagine that it took place in order to punish the inhabitants for their wickedness. The absurdity of Dr. Smith's theory reaches a farcical climax when he comes to the clearing away of the Jewish carcase by the Roman eagles. We hold no brief to defend the Jews whom the Professor seems to vilify whenever it suits his convenience; but we cannot refrain from saying that on his own showing in multitudes of his *British Weekly* essays, the Jews at their very worst could not have been so low down in the moral scale as Pagan Greece and Rome must have been. He certainly forgets or deliberately ignores the fact that Rome perished long after it had suppressed Paganism and become a thoroughly Christianized State. His allusion to the French Revolution also is equally misleading. Does he not know that the Royalists—the Chouans as they were called in Brittany—fought against the Revolution with great heroism, because they regarded it as a movement against God and religion? We admit that France had suffered terribly from the oppression of her licentious and tyrannical kings and nobles, but to speak of the Revolution as "the red rush of God's avengers" is the very height of theological folly.

Dr. Smith loses himself completely whenever he refers to the present War. Exactly ten years ago Germany was described, by not a few leading evangelical divines in our land, as an exemplary Christian country; but this is how our war mad Professor now speaks of her :—

> For a century Germany has been filling the cup of her iniquity, and now God is letting his vultures loose upon her and her accomplices.

Dr. Smith's avenging Deity is very fond of his vultures, and never tires of employing them. The work they perform is most horrible and disgusting, the very thought of which fills one with unspeakable loathing; and standing face to face with it, at its very worst, we humbly venture to ask, would it not have been an infinitely worthier action on the part of God, if God there be, to have entrusted his angels of light and grace, for the century mentioned, with the mission of preventing Germany from filling that cup of iniquity, and of inducing her rather to fill to the very brim the cup of kindness and brotherly love? *Does the Professor really believe that his Christ died utterly in vain for Germany?*

J. T. Lloyd.

Keeping Hell Alight.

> If all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of one being certainly right?—*G. W. Foote.*

Christians are not all selfish, but they have an extraordinary passion for monopoly with regard to their religion. To associate with them is like dining with a man who has all the pudding and two spoons. In the present War they have done their best to transform the battle-fields into mission fields, and still sigh, like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. Bible Societies have distributed sufficient copies of the Scriptures to build a garden city; the British and Foreign Bible Society alone boasting openly of a distribution of forty million copies. Tracts by the hundred tons have been circulated. Hosts of athletic young clergymen are acting as Army chaplains, and are drawing officers' salaries; whilst their clerical colleagues at home are exempted from military service, and are free to further their propaganda there. Thousands of pious laymen and women hand out tea and tracts at a safe distance from the fighting lines. With the object of winning the troops to religion, the clerical pill has been well covered with sugar. Cinemas, concert parties, and even chorus ladies and comedians have been used as lures for the religion of the Man of Sorrows. There is, however, a fly in the ointment. Despite all these blandishments, the fighting men do not display any great anxiety for their eternal welfare. Even compulsory church parades, and the persuasive powers of leather-lunged evangelists, have failed to penetrate the cheerful stoicism of the troops.

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Finding that their propaganda produced but barren results, Christians have sought to mend matters by attempting to boycott all literature antagonistic to their Faith. To this end letters have been published in the newspapers, all bearing a strong family likeness. Here is a specimen printed in a recent issue of the *Daily Mail*:—

ANTI-CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

Sir,—Several of the rationalist societies are making a great effort to circulate among our sailors and soldiers all kinds of anti-Christian literature.

In a recent letter a chaplain writes: "In every big military centre the reading rooms have been almost flooded with anti-Christian literature." These reading rooms, as we should expect, are not those of the Church Army or the Y.M.C.A., which are doing so much for the true welfare of our men both at home and at the front. Nor has the Camps Library been at fault.

But there are the regimental institutes and on board ship and at the naval ports the corresponding organisations for the men in their hours of leisure. These are not under the control of the chaplains.

Commanding officers are fully aware of the importance of maintaining a high spiritual and moral tone among their men. Is it too much to hope that the Board of Admiralty and the Army Council may see fit to take action in this matter and issue such instructions to the authorities concerned as will have the effect of safeguarding our men from the malign influences which are being brought to bear upon them?

Oxford. C. F. Nolloth.

This is a characteristic letter, and it will be well to examine the literature which Christians consider will maintain "a high spiritual and moral tone among their men." One religious tract, of which 50,000 copies have been distributed, bears the title, *What is there after Death?* and it preaches a hell of literal fire. Here is a passage which shows how far religion is in harmony with civilization:—

I wonder if you die unsaved whether you will see your believing wife after death? She, afar off, and happy with her Saviour; and you with the curse of unforgiven sin upon you in hell. And some of your children are in heaven, and others are on their way. And when you die your Christless death, will you for a moment see afar off your little ones with the light of heaven on their faces, and the peace of God upon their heads? Oh! these eternal separations! Families broken up for all eternity. Some in light and some in darkness.

Another tract, issued by the Central Bible Truth Depot, and sold in quantities for distribution, bates no jot of this fiery damnation. It bears the title, *Is Death in Battle a Passport to Heaven?* and has an illustrated cover. This is how it ministers to the "high spiritual and moral tone" among the sailors and soldiers:—

It is only through Him (Christ) you can be saved. You may go over the top and make the great sacrifice, or perish in some naval scrap, but if you die without Christ as your personal Saviour, you will die without mercy and without hope, and everlasting hell must be your portion. It is only true kindness to tell you so.

These tracts, which are selected at random from a large collection, raises once more the question not only of the value of the "high spiritual and moral tone" of the Christian religion, but also of the conduct of Christians themselves. These tracts voice emphatically very different views to those apologetic and invertebrate views put forward by artful defenders of the Faith in their contests with Rationalists. In controversy it is the fashion for the champions of Orthodoxy to explain smilingly that, in attacking the barbaric doctrine of hell-fire, the intellectuals are but flogging a dead horse. That horse, however, has a distressing habit of resurrecting, and that there is plenty of kick left in that ancient animal is demonstrated by the literature issued for the benefit of the fighting men, and also in that issued for the instruction of the unsuspecting young.

Away from the fighting lines the clergy are daily endeavouring to put back the clock of civilization. High Churchmen are as reactionary as Catholics and Salvationists. In a booklet, bearing the imprint of Mowbray & Co., and entitled *The Blessed Sacrament; Drawn from the Writings of the Saints*, the old barbaric views are stated with frank realism. This publication, it should be borne in mind, is used for young people who are preparing for their first communion, and these ideas are forced upon them at the most impressionable time of their lives. This is the kind of thing the clergy still teach privately, while, in public, they flatter the "intellectuals" by a pretended retreat:—

We have about us, or, to speak more truly, we are ourselves immortal souls. We are beings who have once been born, but who now can never die. We came out of nothing, but we cannot go into nothing again. O God forbid, the merciful great God forbid, we should pass into nothing! When they who have led lives of pleasure, of covetousness, of self-willed sin—where such, I say, come to be upon their death-beds, they may perhaps feel that awful, impossible wish that they could pass into nothing; for to be nothing were better than to be in the strong grip of Satan, and the intolerable heats of hell. Dying sinners may feel that their immortality is to be an unendingness of pain, of remorse, of despair; and the deadness and the dumbness of passing into nothing, though it surely would make even a dying sinner shudder, would be more bearable than to think of than the life in hell—the living in fire, the feeding on fire, the breathing fire, the being clothed in fire, the thirsting for cool water where all, all is fire—above, beneath, on this side, on that side, a far-stretching country of burning fire.

Rationalists who imagine that one of the oldest and most barbarous religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind because the clergy appear to be giving the old savage ideas faint support in their public utterances will do well to remember that, while the objectionable dogmas are still taught throughout the Christian world, the protests of the humanitarians are sought to be boycotted. Wherever the clergy retain their power they still preach a hell of literal fire. In the Great Republic of the West, Billy Sunday, and other cultured evangelists, flame the fires of hell over a continent. Roman Catholics everywhere have never damped a solitary spark of their fiery damnation. The Church of England, particularly the High Churchmen, who form sixty per cent. of that body, hold forth on brimstone; and the Salvation Army, which caters for the least-educated of the community, includes hell in its trademark, "Blood and Fire." It is worthy of the followers of a creed, who, outraging the spirit of the age, pray for rain, and that bullets may not hit our soldiers on the battlefield.

How small, mean, and contemptible such a creed as Christianity appears, after all, in comparison with a great Pagan religion like Buddhism. Were Gotama Buddha to reappear upon the earth and see great nations believing in hell, devils, and eternal torture, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect after the lapse of twenty-five centuries. Hear what the wise old Pagan said, as rendered by Edwin Arnold:—

Pray not! the darkness will not brighten! Ask
Nought from the silence, for it cannot speak!
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!
Ah! Brothers, Sisters! seek.

Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes.

Mimnermus.

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Rationalism in Ireland.

Friday evening last I was just about to dine when my maid handed me some very foul writings—genuine excrescences of the human mind. They were an old copy of the *Freethinker* and a couple of *brochures* superstitiously entitled *Religion and the Child* and *The Mother of God*, all conceived in the most malignant spirit. I am quite unable to understand how such dangerous explosives found their way into this obscure little village of Ballybacktown. At first I determined to burn the lot; but, after reflection, it appeared to me that others less impregnable than myself might have been recipients as well. In these circumstances, it behoves me, who am blued and starched and stiffened with the blood of Jesus Christ Our Lord, which copiously squirts from the daily sacrifice and the sevenfold prayer of the Breviary, to throttle the serpent of infidelity and preserve the souls of my parishioners from being blasted. One oration at next Sunday's oblation will be quite sufficient. But let me illustrate to you the absolute unassailability of the Rock of Saint Peter in Ireland.

The first article in the copy of the *Freethinker* dogmatically states that every civilized country in the world is growing steadily less religious. Dogmatism is the hall-mark of insanity and falsehood. Here it proclaims falsehood. For the sons and daughters of Ireland are, simultaneously, contemporaneously, and at one and the same time, the most enlightened, virtuous, and progressive, and withal the most religious, people of Christendom at the present day. For authority higher and more axiomatic than my own, see Plutarch's *Lives of the Saints*. Permit me to take another choice specimen of unspiritualism; this time from *Religion and the Child*: "The priest hovers round the cradle like a needy Chancellor of the Exchequer speculating on the taxable capacity of a developing industry." What do you think Irish mothers will think of that? All I have to do is to quote that single passage at the next women's confraternity; it will refute itself most beautifully. But the choicest of the lot is the suggestion in *The Mother of God* (written by a fellow the name of Foote; now dead, and probably not in heaven, I thank the Lord!) that the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through the instrumentality of Gabriel, who is represented as having blown into the bosom of her shift, and the carbonic acid gas of his breath, reaching her womb, caused the conception! This is the divinest blasphemy, Good God! how ill hast thou fashioned England. But all Protestant peoples exhale the aroma of damnation, as the *Leader*, an Irish broad-minded political journal, pointed out some time ago. I think I now understand more clearly the reason of the terrible moral depravity of you in Britain. As well as being absolute, however, it is comparative. It is set directly against the awful chastity of the Irish people, whom, no doubt, you ridicule as being squashed by our thumb and the Pope's great toe. Do you expect such immoral writings will sow perversion? No, no, no! You have to reckon with us, the *unquestioned* spiritual guides, who have only to motion our tongue a little, a very little, and—what do you think? Why, of course, *your papers won't be read*. In Ireland, God has his back up against the wall, while we, his appointed seconds, stand ready by with towels, basins, water, etc., whereby we add direction and perpetuity to his energy. Subject to our Principal's approval, your reign in Ireland is immeasurably remote. Just as Nano Nagle's knees were found at her death to be inflamed and ulcerated as a result of her almost perpetual kneeling to Mary, Bridget, and God, so will the knuckles of Ireland's soul and the souls of her children be found to be inflamed and ulcerated with an antagonistic passion of terrible significance when the chariots of infidelity pierce the Catholic bodyguard of the Lord, and inflict defeat upon the rewarder of victory.

The gentle readers of this twelve-page-for-twopence journal, without doubt, sneer at us in their self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency! nurtured on stuff that must render their intellectual stomach like a peacock's! Absurd. Even granted, however, that we are unacquainted with the mechanism of the heavens; that we still regard the stars as candles, the moon as an oil-lamp, the sun as an incandescent burner. What then? Does it matter? there is no perfectability of knowledge. On the other hand, there is perfection within the wing of the Catholic Church. The only perfect thing in the whole world is the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass. During its offering we are spellbound; if, as the Cure d'Ars so learnedly pointed out, we were to realize its sublimity we should die. Do secular scraps of art attain to such beauty?

One other point. We in Ireland are, in our consanguinity with God, bound by the fetters of the same Communion to each other. Politically it may seem otherwise. In this connection I may mention that at present a great number of shops are displaying a post-card depicting a dozen men rowing a boat against the threatening swell of conscription. The rowers represent the various labour and political parties in Ireland; they are all pulling well together—why? *because the man at the rudder is a bishop*. And so in everything. Enter any house you please; you are confronted with a cheap impression of the Holy Face. Look round when the Angelus is ringing; people are doffing their hats and blessing themselves. Stand outside a chapel; you will see men on bicycles, in trams, cars, etc., invariably raise their hats. Enter our foremost colleges; all are supplied with chapels; the bedrooms are not without their saintly effigies—oh, I could go on recounting our many pieties *ad infinitum*. There are not many Catholic Irish in hell, I'll be bound; and any there are have crosses over their hearts.

At the beginning I mentioned a maid. She is a girl of forty-six, such being a reasonable age of innocence according to the Canon law. I think it as well to mention this fact in view of the minds of the readers of this paper.

Rev. R. G. Ingersoll, P.P.

Acid Drops.

We are used to the police acting in many capacities, and some of them very useful ones, but when they set themselves up as art censors it is time to call a halt. The Chief Constable of Huddersfield summoned a shopkeeper the other day for exhibiting "obscene" prints for sale. These "obscene" prints turned out to be copies of famous pictures, many of them in London and provincial public galleries. In support of the prosecution it was said that a policeman heard some youths making "improper remarks" about the pictures. The magistrate properly dismissed the case. We suggest that such delicate-minded policemen should seek some other occupation. They can hardly avoid running the risk of having their susceptible ears offended in their present one.

The Bishop of London laments that some of his clergy have to resign their benefices because they cannot face the winter. They have, he says, struggled along on £300 a year, and can do so no longer. Poor things! All we can say is that we should consider ourselves very lucky if *our* job brought us in anything like £300 a year. But we shall face the winter undismayed, and have no intention of "chucking it." But, then, we are only a freethinking journalist and lecturer, not a follower of Jesus and a preacher of "Blessed be ye poor."

"Sobriety has brought about family happiness all over the country," says the Bishop of London. The bachelor bishop ought to an authority on "family happiness."

Premises at Aldershot are to be opened as an hostel for soldiers' wives by the ubiquitous Salvation Army. Presumably, at the usual charges.

Poor old Providence was so busy counting the hair's of people's heads, and watching the fall of the sparrows, that he overlooked the entry of thieves into a Chesterfield church. The annexationists made off with a haul of silver plate.

Some of the German generals are almost as pious as the home-grown variety. A daily paper quotes General von Liebert as saying: "Let us pray to Heave that the winter

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may be long and bitter, so that the opposition shall be robbed of the joy of waging war." What an excellent thing it is that prayer is not answered!

There is to be a new religious order for women called "The Order of Evangelist Women." It appears to be an attenuated copy of some of the Roman Catholic orders, and it may even be engineered by Catholics, for there is a deal of subterranean work being done by Roman Catholics just now. But it is a thousand pities that these women cannot find a better outlet for their energies than this apeing of mediæval folly.

The New York *Truthseeker* has a smart hit at the Catholics in the following: "There is considerable talk about the Pope's charities. The Pope receives more charity than he dispenses."

Christ said, "Swear not at all," but Christians swear habitually. The latest form of oath is one imposed on Civil Servants. Does it not lend point to the ironical remark that Christ was the only Christian?

The clergy have a keen eye for finance. When they go into the Army as chaplains they get officers' pay; but when they want laymen to help them, the boot is on the other leg. An advertisement, asking "Churchmen to do their bit," contains the careful statement, "Adequate allowances where necessary." No sum is mentioned, but let us hope it is on a more generous scale than that accorded to vergers, bell-ringers, choirboys, organ-blowers, church-cleaners, and other workers in the Lord's vineyard.

The bigots in Wolverhampton have scored a victory by preventing cinema houses being opened on Sunday. The Chief Constable said that there was need for some form of entertainment to take the young people off the streets, but the Sabbatarians, led by the Rev. J. H. Veal, had their way, and licences were granted only for such places as were opened for helping in the prosecution of the War. Thus, so long as a Sunday concert is held to carry on a war, the conscience of the Wolverhampton bigots approves. If it is intended to give an evening's entertainment, and with no thought of war, the Wolverhampton Christian conscience disapproves. Of all the fungoid moral growths the world possesses, commend us to the modern Christian conscience.

And now let us point out that the action of the Wolverhampton Mayor and magistrates is quite arbitrary. They have no power to grant a licence, or to refuse one, for any entertainment, admission to which is by money or by tickets sold by moneys. Anyone can apply for a summons against those concerts "licenced" by the magistrates. They are illegal. Their illegality is determined by Statute, and it is ridiculous to think that a peddling mayor and a few chapel-ridden J.P.'s can override a Statute. They can ignore it, and that is what usually occurs. But if the picture-house folk in Wolverhampton wish to test the matter, we advise them to take one of two courses—either apply for summonses against all places opened on Sunday, or open their own places and tell the mayor and the justices to do their best—or worst.

Harry Lauder, the comedian, is rapidly becoming a pillar of the Kirk. He has presented an organ to a Glasgow Church in memory of his son.

Hero-worship is a wonderful thing. £94 was paid at an auction in Peterborough for a letter written by Robert Burns. This sum of money paid to Burns during his life would have eased his anxieties and prolonged his life.

A newspaper headline: "Archangel Advance." It has nothing to do with the reappearance of the angels who mobilized at Mons.

James McGranahan, Moderator, writes to the *Belfast News Letter* that he has been much distressed on observing the amount of crops beaten down by heavy rains, and thinks there is urgent need for a day of prayer for more favourable weather, so that the harvest may be garnered. But if God controls the weather, what is the use of praying to him to alter his arrangements? Of course, one petitions a Cabinet Minister, but that is because we assume that he is acting in ignorance, and the purpose of the petition is to enlighten him. Is that what this Presbyterian Moderator means by his day of prayer? Are we to remind God Almighty that he is making a sad hash of the weather? If so, why not say as much honestly and boldly?

While on the subject of prayer, we note that the Bishop of London says it is remarkable that the Allied successes should have occurred after the Members of Parliament had marched to church to pray. Anyone but Bishop Ingram would have reflected that ever since the War opened all the Churches have been praying for victory. And on the opening day of this year there was a National Day of Prayer—followed by the German advance on Paris. Seeing that we have had a succession of days of prayer, it is pretty safe to say that peace will follow. One can always get an answer to prayers for peace or war, or rain or sunshine—if one waits long enough. But the Bishop of London is evidently determined to retain his reputation for stupidity.

The Temperance Council of the Christian Churches, which includes representatives of the Government and Fancy religions, is launching a new crusade against the use of alcohol, and there are no less than nine points in its programme. Not any of the nine deals with the use of "Communion port" in places of worship.

Writing on "Young Padres," a contributor to the *Daily Mail* declares that soldiers do not want young chaplains, and that people at home do not want them either. This is not a compliment to the hefty young parsons who are too proud to fight, and of whom there are many thousands in the country.

Bishop Mitchinson, who died recently at the age of eighty-five, was formerly Bishop of the Windward Isles. It is a pity that the rest of the Bench of Bishops cannot be shipped to the vacant See.

Religious folk have a way of understanding one another. Charged as an Army absentee, Frederick Cooting told the Bristol Bench that he did not belong to this country, but to a heavenly country where Jesus was; his sister maintained him, as it was God's will. The Christian Bench fined Cooting £2, and handed him over to a military escort. Before this, a Christian Tribunal refused the man exemption on the ground that his conscientious objection was not real.

Two massive crosses have been smashed to pieces in St. Mary's Churchyard, Slough. Providence seems powerless against robust Protestants.

"It has pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to grant increasing victory to the cause of right." This is how the *Daily Mail* preaches primitive superstition in the form of leading articles.

According to the *Daily News* of October 4, Judge Rentoul has called down the wrath of the City Corporation on his head for saying, among other things, "how much the clergy had drunk" at a dinner given by the Lord Mayor. We quite see that is a very awkward revelation. We wonder how much they did drink! And who were the clergy in question?

Some impose upon the world that they believe that which they do not; others more in number make themselves believe that they believe, not being able to penetrate into what it is to believe.—*Montaigne.*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 13, Swansea; October 27, Nuneaton.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 13, Maesteg; October 20, Southampton; November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

W. H. Hicks.—Thanks for contribution to Fund. We are flattered by your thinking that "few could have undertaken what you have done and are doing." On that we can only repeat we have done our best. But the new rise in wages and in the price of paper looks as though it will prove the "last strain." It will be disappointing to have to alter the price of the *Freethinker* after having held out so long, but we can see that possibility coming nearer, unless a more promising outlook reveals itself during the next two or three months.

J. W. D.—A most interesting communication, but we do not see how we can comment on it publicly without disclosing the whereabouts of our informant. We shall find it useful nevertheless.

E. Lane.—Sorry we have no figures to hand on the matter. We presume Prison Chaplains are appointed by the Home Office.

G. Grove.—No doubt the text, "There was war in heaven," will prove pleasant reading to some of our khaki parsons. When the present War is over, they will then be able to sing "There is a happy land" with some amount of feeling.

F. Griffiths.—You say if the Freethinkers who attend your meetings were "strictly veracious," they would endorse your views. That strikes us as rather "tall." The Freethinkers might retort if you were less credulous and more critical, you would endorse theirs. We hope to visit Merthyr soon.

J. H. B.—Thanks for reminder. Will use at an early date.

L. Campbell.—Presumably the book you refer to is Dadson's *Evolution and Religion*. The only way a copy could be obtained would be through some second-hand dealer. Yes, we are proud of the way in which our readers are supporting the paper.

A. Atherton.—Your appreciative letter is encouraging reading. We do not suppose *any* of our present readers would object to an extra penny on the paper, but we desire to avoid, so long as is possible, any obstacle to our getting new ones. And they are coming along splendidly.

Mrs. M. Rupp.—We still think leisure is essential to well-being, but what is one to do? There is so much to be done, and these are not the times when one can get all the help obtainable under other conditions. So we must just peg away. We shall last long enough to see something done, and that is a consolation.

H. Organ.—Pleased you find our present staff of writers so acceptable. We are also proud of them, and we have many more in reserve.

North London Reader.—Pleased to know you so much enjoyed the discussion between Mr. Palmer and Mr. Muir at the St. Pancras Reform Club. We are informed that these meetings now commence at 7.30. This evening the discussion is between Mr. A. Eager and Mr. Friedberg.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The Manchester Branch made a good start with its winter's work on Sunday last, and at the close of the afternoon lecture the Secretary reported the accession of five new members. Unfortunately, the parcel of literature ordered for the day was delayed in transit, and had not reached Manchester in time for the meetings. This was one of the consequences of the War. Letters and parcels arrive nowadays any time, and anyhow. The Secretary, Mr. H. Black, of 446 Great Cheetham Street East, Higher Broughton, Salford, announced his intention to double the Branch membership, and we hope he will succeed. A pleasing feature of the meetings was the large number of ladies present, who followed the lectures with keenness and appreciation.

—

To-day (Oct. 13) Mr. Cohen pays another visit to South Wales, and lectures at Swansea. The meetings will be held in the Dockers' Hall; afternoon at 3, evening at 7 o'clock. Swansea was the starting point of the present South Wales campaign, and we have no doubt the audiences will be quite up to the usual excellent level.

—

"The Poisoning of Our Troops" is the heading to a letter in the *Church Times*. At first we thought it had to do with another "German atrocity," but, on reading the letter, we found the troops were being "poisoned" by Freethought literature. Thus a corporal writes from France:—

> A lot of sceptical literature has been knocking about lately. I can't quite make out where it comes from, but the chaps get hold of it and pass it on. As a rule they are only too glad to get something to read, and one can't be for ever reading stories. The result is a lot of argument against Christianity and the Bible. One fellow told me that everything in Christianity had been picked up from other religions and put together by the Church to exploit people's credulity. Another told me it was proved there never was any such person as Christ.

We feel awfully guilty, and wonder whether Dora has any application here. There is something about coming disaffection among the troops, but, curiously, nothing about poisoning them. So we shall keep on our poisonous course. And if our readers will send more soldiers' addresses we shall continue sending out our free parcels of "Poison" all warranted to kill—something.

—

Owing to delay in the post (the report did not reach this office until Wednesday morning) we were unable to report last week a gathering of the Newcastle Branch on "Bradlaugh Sunday." Mr. Martin Weatherburn, a sturdy old veteran of the Bradlaugh era, read a paper on "Charles Bradlaugh," which was much appreciated by both the older and newer members. We remember Mr. Weatherburn ourselves some twenty-five years ago, when he was then an "old hand," and we are pleased to see him as interested as ever in the cause. A new member was made, who, being in the Navy, took away with him a supply of literature for the benefit of his comrades.

—

We have received a number of addresses of soldiers to which to send free copies of *Christianity and Slavery* (paid for by two of our readers), and these have been sent. But we have still copies available for this purpose.

—

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (October 13) in the Gem Cinema Palace, Maesteg. We hope to hear that the hall is crowded both afternoon and evening. This Branch is putting its back into the work, and deserves all encouragement.

—

A meeting of the Glasgow Branch will be held in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street, to-day (Oct. 13), at 12 noon. The business is important, and a good attendance is requested.

—

Mr. F. E. Willis lectures at the Repertory Theatre to-day (October 13), at 7 p.m., on the subject of "The Theory of Immortality." We hope that Birmingham friends will make it a point of being present, and, if possible, bring a Christian with them.

—

We are asked to announce that the *Freethinker* and all Freethought literature can be obtained in Glasgow at the Herald League Rooms, 94 George Street, and at Jail Square, on Sundays. Glasgow readers are also asked to note that the *Freethinker* can now be obtained from the "Popular" newsshop in St. Enoch Square—a very central position.

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As an example of what can be done, take the following. Our old friend, Mr. T. Robertson, writes:—

> I induced a little shop, the busiest for its size in Glasgow, to take two dozen copies last week and display them. They were displayed to such purpose that they were sold out in little more than a day. I have ordered three dozen this week, and will go on increasing the order until it finds equilibrium.

That is the kind of letter that makes one face all difficulties with a cheerful face.

The Pioneer Press has been unable to discharge all the orders received for the editor's photograph owing to their being out of print. A fresh supply has now been received, but those who have already ordered will understand the cause of the delay.

We have in the Press, and hope to soon publish a small volume on *Woman and Christianity*, by Mr. Cohen, a companion work to his *Christianity and Slavery*. This will be followed by a new pamphlet from the pen of Mr. Mann, which will, we are sure, be welcome to our readers. We cannot give a date for their issue, as the shortage of labour is more acute than ever, and one can be certain only of disappointments. But we shall hurry them on as much as possible.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

The purpose of this Fund was fully explained in our issue for September 1. It is essentially a War Fund, designed to meet a part of the very heavy extra expenses incurred by increase in the cost of paper, rise in wages, and extra cost of production generally. It is not anticipated that the need for financial help of this kind will continue beyond the War period, but under prevailing conditions help is inevitable. A consolatory and encouraging feature of the situation is the generosity and readiness with which that help has been given.

Sixth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £348 8s. 3d. W. Bailey, £1. D. Watt, 2s. 6d. J. G., 10s. F. Greyton, 10s. R. B. Harrison, 5s. Gamaliel Serviar, 2s. 3d. J. H. Gastrell, 10s. G. Scott, 10s. J. H. B. (Glasgow), £1. J. Hammond, £1. J. G. Newton, £1 1s. A. Beale, 5s. K. Palmer (Ipswich), 2s. G. Grove, 3s. R. Terroni, 12s. 6d. A. Atherton (second sub.), 4s. 9d. Sir Thomas Wentworth, £1. J. C. (Manchester), £2. Elsie Organ, 2s. A Socialist, 2s. Dogo, 5s. J. W. Lloyd (Portsmouth), £1. C. Heaton, 2s. 6d. A. W. B., £5. A. K. Kemp, 5s. C. F. Simpson, £1 1s. H. Wheate, 5s. Anti-Mythology, 10s. H. Silverstein, 10s. J. Capon, 5s. F. C., 5s. Blackburn, 3s. A. C. Bell, £2. R. Moore, 5s. T. S. Roberts, 2s. 6d. A. H. Deacon, 5s. G. West, 1s. W. Ambrose, 2s. A. Jones, 5s. "Leeds," 10s. A. Penny, 3s.

Per Secretary, Manchester Branch:—Mr. and Mrs. Mountain. 2s. 6d. Mr. W. H. Harrap, 5s. Mrs. Bayfield, 5s. Mr. D. Mapp, 5s. Mr. W. C. Maurice, £1. Mr. J. W. Shaw, 2s. Mr. Tom Taylor, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, 10s. Mr. J. Booth, 5s. "Manchester," 5s. Mr. and Mrs. Emery, 4s. "Unattached," 2s. 6d.

Per R. Chapman (South Shields):—J. Hanson, 2s. J. H. Carr, 5s. J. Fothergill, 2s. J. Richards, 2s. J. W. Arnett, 5s. J. W. F., 2s. 6d. J. Chapman, 2s. 6d. Total, £373 11s. 6d.

A three shilling Postal Order in the above list was received without name of sender. We have, therefore, gone by the postmark and acknowledged it under "Blackburn."

A Search for the Soul.

XIV.

(Continued from p. 525.)

From the somewhat misleading work, entitled *Man and the Universe*, I make two or three more extracts before consigning it to oblivion. In the first of these the writer, Sir Oliver Lodge, says:—

> To suppose that we know and understand the universe, to suppose that we have grasped its main outlines, that we realize pretty completely not only what is in it, but the still more stupendous problem of what is not and cannot be in it—as do some of our gnostic (self styled "agnostic") friends—is a presumptuous exercise of limited intelligence, only possible to a certain very practical and useful order of brain, which has good solid work of a common-place kind to do in the world, and has been restricted in its outlook, let us say by Providence, in order that it may do that one thing and do it well (p. 102).

This choice sample of "high-falutin" is not very complimentary to Sir Oliver's friends whose work lies in other departments of science, but whose labours have not led them into the Christian or Spiritistic folds. With regard, however, to the problems as to what is in the Universe and what is not in it, Sir Oliver appears to have solved those problems himself. Not being an Agnostic "of limited intelligence," nor restricted by Providence in his outlook, he has settled the matter offhand, once for all. In the first category he has placed Life (which he calls a Vital principle) and Mind, as together forming an immaterial entity called the soul, the latter being quite distinct from the brain and endowed with immortality. In the same category he has placed the brain as the material organ which carries out the behests of the soul and acts as its "servant"; but the brain as an organ that generates thought he has relegated to the second category—"what is *not* in the Universe." Having settled these matters to his own satisfaction, he may, perhaps, think it "presumptuous" that the justness of his classification should ever be called in question. But whether this be so or not, he certainly knows what organ must be employed to carry out such a purpose, for he speaks of "a certain very practical *order of brain*." This is an admission, though perhaps made inadvertently, that it is the cerebral organ which actually thinks, and simple common sense tells us that a phantom without material organs could not possibly do so. Sir Oliver says again:—

> A purely spiritual agency may be active.....but the only evidence of its existence that can be adduced is the manifestation of that activity through matter..... Dreams, visions, thoughts, are enabled to enter our present consciousness solely by some action on, or action in, the brain.....It by no means follows that mind is itself dependent on matter, as we know it (pp. 160, 161).

Here we have such intangible things as impalpable moving pictures (assumed to have been generated by an imaginary indwelling Soul or Spirit) which are declared to possess the power of acting *on* or *in* the brain, and so entering our consciousness. One can conceive many kinds of abnormal things, but one cannot conceive a thought or an idea as having to act in some way upon the brain which produced it before it becomes known to the person to whom the brain belongs. A new or a definite thought, once it has arisen, may in a logical brain give rise to other thoughts; but the so-called "mind" is only a name for every kind of thought which arises from the action of the cerebral organ. One can

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imagine vibrations of luminiferous ether, say from a picture hanging in a room, to impinge on the retina of the eye, be transmitted along the optic nerve to the visual sensorium of the brain, and there become known to consciousness as a reflection of the real picture; but no rational person can conceive an immaterial nonentity, even if called a "soul" or "spirit," as creating or originating a picture of anything whatever.

It is not at all suprising, then, that Sir Oliver says (p. 94): "We have no glimmering conception of *the process* by which *mental activity operates on the matter of the brain.*" Of course we have not, and we never shall have; for "mental activity" can no more operate on the brain than the chimes of a clock can operate on the striking apparatus which produced them. Mental activity is but another name for the thoughts or ideas generated by the cerebral energy and the brain-cells, whose combined action gives rise to all the states of consciousness which collectively are called the Mind. The Dualistic statement that thoughts or ideas cannot enter our consciousness unless they first "interact" with the brain is really a tacit admission that these thoughts or ideas were brought into being by the cerebral organ itself.

Leaving Sir Oliver and his book, I turn once more to Dr. Maudsley's lectures on "Body and Mind." Speaking of the influence of the blood in the production of insanity, that eminent physiologist says:—

> Poverty and vitiation of blood may certainly play a weighty part in producing mental, as they do in producing other nervous disorders. Lower the supply of blood to the brain below a certain level, and *the power of thinking is abolished;* the brain will then no more do mental work than a water-wheel will move the machinery of the mill when the water is lowered so as not to touch it.....If the state of the blood be vitiated by reason of some poison bred in the body, or introduced into it from without, *the mental functions may be seriously deranged.* We are able, indeed, by means of the drugs at our command, to perform all sorts of experiments on what is called the mind: we can *suspend its action* for a time by chloral or chloroform, we can exalt its functions by small doses of opium or moderate doses of alcohol; we can pervert them, producing an artificial delirium, by the administration of large enough doses of belladonna and Indian hemp. We can positively do more experimentally with the functions of the mind-centres in the brain than we can do with those of any other organ of the body. When these centres are exalted in consequence of a foreign substance introduced into the blood, it cannot be doubted that some *physical* effect is produced on the nerve-element, which is the condition of the increased activity.

To realize the full significance of the foregoing statements, we have but to assume for the moment that there is in the human organism a mental entity quite distinct from the brain. When opium or alcohol is taken, the stimulant passes from the stomach and intestine into the blood, and in the course of circulation enters the brain; the same is the case with belladonna and other drugs, which all produce well-known effects upon the cerebral organ. The point to be remembered, however, is that the blood does not, and cannot, come into contact with the mental entity, supposing such an entity to exist; for, not containing material blood vessels, the circulation cannot reach it; yet it is asserted by all Dualists that it is this mental entity—that is to say, the "mind"—which is affected by the drugs. As a simple matter of fact, the only organ acted upon is the brain; the mind, as already stated, being merely a collective name for the phenomena resulting from its various functions. Here we have a clear proof that the Soul or Mind, as an "entity," is purely imaginary.

In his work, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, 1886, Dr. Maudsley says:—

> One of the effects of opium is the pleasing state of exaltation of thought and feeling which it engenders. .....It seems to impart a genial vital warmth to the whole being, suffusing the mind with expansive sentiments, stimulating the imagination to ethereal flights, giving large and lofty sweep to the projects of the intellect, and even expanding the natural forms of thought. .....A still more acute sense of intense mental illumination is produced in some minds by the inhalation of nitrous oxide gas, commonly known as laughing gas. This stimulating effect was experienced by Sir Humphrey Davy, who, when he first inhaled it, was astonished at the apparent exaltation of his mental powers, whereby difficulties of thought seemed to vanish as by magic, and no subject seemed too difficult of comprehension.

Here the reference to the mind is, of course, to the brain and nerve element. The nitrous oxide gas, mentioned in the last paragraph, entered the blood through the lungs, in which twofold organ the capillaries containing blood are separated from the air-cells by such thin and delicate walls that oxygen contained in the air within those cells passes into the blood, and waste matters in the blood pass into the air about to be exhaled. The process is the same in the case of chloroform, which produces temporary unconsciousness by stopping for a time the functioning of the brain. The poison gas now in use on the Western Front enters the blood in the same way.

Abracadabra.

(To be concluded.)

Intellectual Dishonesty.

Many of us who either grew up as Freethinkers, or became so at an early period of our lives, have probably been puzzled by the spectacle of apparently clever people adhering to orthodox Christian dogmas which seem to us manifestly absurd. I do not refer to conscious hypocrisy, such as is shown by those who continue to profess religion, though they do not believe in it, for the sake of livelihood or advancement. That is common enough, and needs no explanation. But many of us must have been acquainted with persons of known integrity, perhaps relations or friends of our own, who were distinctly above the average intellectual level, and yet who accepted in the religious sphere, without apparent hesitation, contradictions and absurdities which they would have laughed at in any other department of life. In our youth, the spectacle of such people puzzles us, and may even lead us, if we are ultra-sceptical, to ask ourselves if possibly they are right and we are wrong after all, and if there is not perhaps some grand, final, conclusive reason for religious belief which we are too dense to see. As we grow a little older, we begin to find the real solution, which is nothing nearly so sensational.

Love of truth is not the only motive by which human beings are actuated; and in most of us it is not even the chief motive. All are gifted with a certain degree of curiosity, which awakens on appropriate occasions; but with most, those occasions are rare, and become rarer as life goes on, and as the motive of curiosity is stifled by the successful competition of other motives, such as love of ease, love of gain, and so forth. It follows that most people end by "minding their own business," in the narrowest sense, and accepting religion as they accept the Bank of England—as something not worth their attacking or defending; something which presumably has a reason, because it is there, and which only fools and fanatics excite themselves about. There remains that minority of the human race who are cursed with an incapacity for merely "minding their

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own business"—the idealists, who cannot divest themselves of an interest in beauty, goodness, and truth. Here, at least, you might think would be found intellectual honesty. Not at all! It is precisely among idealists that the love of truth meets with its last and most insidious competitors. They are, on the one hand, Puritanism, and on the other, the artistic temperament.

By Puritanism I mean the intrusion of moral criteria into the non-moral sphere—the resort to conceptions of what *ought* to be to answer questions of what *is*. It is exemplified in the epigram of that otherwise most un-Puritan personage, Voltaire: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him"; in Rousseau's proscription of Atheism as dangerous to the State; in Kant's insistence on the necessity of believing in God, free-will, and immortality as postulates of ethics, in spite of their admitted undemonstrability by pure reason. It is at the bottom of much modern opposition to Freethought. It amounts to saying, "If there is no God, if all my actions are predetermined, and if death is the end of me, why should I behave well?" Those who use such arguments would probably be annoyed if one were to ask them if it was true that they only behaved well for the sake of future reward, or for fear of future punishment. To tell the truth, they are generally, when they reason thus, thinking not of their own conduct, but of other people's. *They*, no doubt, can be trusted to be virtuous for virtue's sake; but the other fellow round the corner? Their poorer neighbours? The ignorant working-classes? No, it really will not do to tell *them* there is no hell; you don't know what they will be up to! The attitude is one of unconscious Pharisaism.

Opposed in one sense to Puritanism, but in another sense allied with it against genuine Freethought, is the artistic temperament. As Puritanism intrudes moral criteria, so this intrudes æsthetic criteria into the decision of questions of mere matter-of-fact. The artist, by the nature of his calling, is accustomed to regard only the surface, the appearance of things. Unless he is also more than an artist, that is what he will regard. The world for him is a colour-scheme, a pattern, a play of sounds; the interpretation of it is more or less indifferent. This is more particularly the case with that development of art called Impressionism, with its corollaries, Post-Impressionism and Futurism. It is the aim of this school to reproduce impressions, or appearances, in such a way as to suggest as little else as possible; if any reality is suggested, it is better that it should be as absurd, as remote from common sense, as it can be. This, at least, seems to be the maxim of the later exponents of this development. So long as the effect is picturesque, what does truth matter?

So long as the Post-Impressionist confines himself to painting pictures or producing other forms of art, he need not detain us. It is otherwise when we are offered a Post-Impressionist philosophy as a serious answer to Freethought. This is, in effect, what Mr. G. K. Chesterton has done. To those who read his writings with an eye for their motive and meaning, it is evident that he suffers to excess from the artistic temperament. That, for one thing, is why Mr. Chesterton is chronically incapable of telling the truth about his opponents, whether in religion or politics. The world for him is primarily a picturesque pageant or spectacle. To explain it, or anything in it, rationally is to spoil the pageant. To seek to order it more rationally is equally to spoil the pageant. If you do either of these things, you are a spoil-sport, and he revenges himself by caricaturing you as a clown or a booby. Thomas Hardy is a "village atheist, brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." Reformers of all sorts are wealthy and corrupt Jews, who aim at adding to the oppression of the poor, and taking away beer and battles and other amusements.

The disease from which Mr. Chesterton suffers is very well epitomized in one of his slighter works—the novel, *The Man who was Thursday*. This book exhibits the Post-Impressionist view of the world in an extreme form. Even the descriptions show it: sunset skies "full of feathers, and of feathers that almost brushed the face"; the Thames "like a stream of literal fire winding under the vast caverns of a subterranean country"; animals in the Zoo "like devils laughing and sneezing and blowing their devilish noses"—all this is the merest decadence. But there is more in it than this. The story as appears from its finish, is meant to be an allegory; and the point of the allegory, if words have any meaning is that God and the Devil are one and the same person, and that what we call evil was created on purpose that men might have the fun (as Mr. Chesterton thinks) of fighting and conflict. The world is full of suffering and agony, purposely staged by a God who eggs on the combatants to mutual slaughter; and Mr. Chesterton finds it very jolly.

I do not suppose he believes this, though it is what he seems to say in this book. He is probably enough of a sceptic at bottom to believe anything by an effort of will. Well, scepticism is all very well, and belief in some things is necessary if we are ever to act. If a man told me that he knew nothing at all, not even that two and two were four, I should call him over-modest. But if he told me that, though he knew nothing at all, yet, as he must believe something, he had decided to believe that two and two were five, I should put him down as a joker or a liar. Such is really the position of those who try to rear a superstructure of theology on a basis of scepticism.

Those only have complete intellectual honesty who are prepared to apply the same criteria of truth or falsehood to religious beliefs as they apply to their beliefs about everyday affairs. It is remarkable how few are prepared to do so.

Robert Arch.

Correspondence.

MERCURY AND SALVARSAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I was amazed to read in Mr. Palmer's article, "The Dark Diamonds of the Earth," the statement that mercury, as a treatment for venereal disease, "proves detrimental to the patient," and that therefore the German arsenical preparation, salvarsan, had been substituted as a "toxic substance which would be absorbed by the microbe, but not by the tissues of the sufferer from the disease." Mr. Palmer adds a reference to "this preparation, now available in Britain under the name of Kharsivan."

Now, apart from the fact that, salvarsan being a German secret, Kharsivan cannot possibly be described as the same thing, Mr. Palmer appears to have transferred the admitted element of danger from salvarsan to mercury. Many doctors fight shy of salvarsan, Kharsivan, and all the other imitations on account of their danger, and practically every member of the profession has now returned to the old mercury treatment. Where salvarsan is used, mercury is used as well, doubtless so that a smaller quantity of the more dangerous item may be used, and also because mercury is recognized as a far surer remedy, if slower. In fact, salvarsan only appears to clear up the symptoms suddenly and superficially, but to be able to effect no permanent cure.

Major J. E. Lane, a well-known syphilitic expert, after experience of several hundred cases, wrote to the *Lancet* on November 11, 1916, that he had decided to abandon the use of Kharsivan "for ever." He had experience of its causing

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toxic symptoms and death. As to salvarsan itself, several hundred fatal cases have been recorded by Gaucher and Mentberger.

B. E. Kidd,
Secretary British Union for Abolition of Vivisection, 32 Charing Cross Road, S.W.

The Vanished Fairies.

In France the woods are green and gold,
The sun smiles on the hills,
And flowers open as of old
By little twinkling rills.
All birds sing sweetly in the dell—
And other things I cannot tell.

There are no fairies to be seen,
In bush, or brake, or field.
I've searched the land where'r I've been
But none have been revealed.
Through woods the rabbits run pell-mell—
And other things I cannot tell.

A fairy banquet I have found,
No fairies there I spied,
The tiny cups lay on the ground,
And dishes tossed aside,
I wonder what had there befel—
And other things I cannot tell.

Yet still I hope, a day will break
When they will all return,
And all will then their pleasure take
For which I'm sure they yearn.
Their song will ring out like a bell—
Of other things I cannot tell.

In France the woods are green and gold,
The sun smiles on the hills,
And flowers open as of old
By little twinkling rills
Come fairies soon, let music swell—
To drown the things I cannot tell.

William Repton.

OUR ORIENTAL BIBLE.

This oriental Bible is at utter variance w ifh the vita beliefs, the political and social tendencies, and the ethical aspirations, of the present age. Science has destroyed its naive supernaturalism; reason has placed its personal God —the magnified, non-natural man—in his own niche in the world's Pantheon; philosophy has carried us far beyond its primitive conceptions of human society; our morality has outgrown its hardness and insularity, however we may still appreciate its finer ejaculations; even the most pious Christians, with the exception of a few "peculiar" people, only pay a hypocritical homage to its clearest injunctions; and the higher development of decency and propriety makes us turn from its crude expressions with a growing sense of disgust, while the progress of humanity fills us more and more with a loathing of its frightful wars and ruthless massacres, its tales of barbaric cruelty, and its crowning infamy of an everlasting hell.—*G. W. Foote, "The Book of God."*

Obituary.

Manchester Branch N.S.S.—It is with regret I have to announce the death of Mr. Richard Hollins, which took place, after only two days' illness, on September 28. He was with us on the previous Sunday Ramble, apparently in the best of health, and his death caused quite a shock to our members, amongst whom he was highly respected. His special request for a Secular Service was duly carried out at the Manchester Crematorium on Thursday, October 3.—H. Black, Hon. Sec.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Laurence Housman, "The Salt of the Earth."

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): "Rationalists have everything to gain and nothing to lose from the Victory of the Socialist and Labour Movement." Affirmative, Percy Friedberg; Negative, A. Eagar.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval): 7.30, Adjourned General Meeting.

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Shaller, Dales Swasey, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. F. E. Willis, "The Theory of Immortality."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Important Business.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, M. Camille Huysmans, "The International."

Maesteg Branch N. S. S. (The Gem Cinema, Maesteg): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 2.30, "The Fight for Freedom"; 7, "The Value of the Bible in National Life."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. Stewart.

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, Swansea): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "God and the State"; 7, "The New World and the Old Faith."

GENTLEMAN desires to spend a day or two in December with a Freethinking Family, in or near London, to avoid the usual Christian Orgies.—Reply, stating terms, to X. J. Z., c/o Editor, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Harassing the Enemy.—The Editor	541
"Ignorant Worship."—J. T. Lloyd	542
How the Clergy Starve.—Mimnermus	543
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	544
Religion and Life.—E. Lyttelton	548
A Naturalist's Paradise.—T. F. Palmer	549
Notes From Scotland.—Scotia	550

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Harassing the Enemy.

We have several times lately reprinted complaints from the general press as to the quantity of Freethought literature being circulated in both the Army and Navy. We are not alone in pleading guilty for responsibility for this, but we believe we are the oldest of the offenders. So soon as the War started, we saw a chance of propaganda; and as propaganda is our business, there was nothing surprising in that. But we saw in this War a unique opportunity. Our forces are recruited from everywhere, and when the War is over they will return to everywhere. Here, then, was a splendid audience collected for us by the Government. We deeply regretted the occasion for its assembly, but it would have been folly not to have availed one's self of its presence. So, in the Autumn of 1914, we set to work, sending out free parcels of literature to soldiers whose addresses we had received. The results have more than justified the expenditure. Thousands of men, who would not otherwise have come into contact with Freethought, have made its acquaintance. Hundreds will go back home, missionaries for their new cause. The casualties on the religious front have been many; and we pride ourselves on having, with the help of our readers, supplied many of the shells.

* * *

Cant.

Some religious organizations are shrieking out for ammunition to repel the attack. On the other hand, there is a demand, from those who realize what "duds" are the religious shells, that the authorities shall stop the circulation of this "poisonous literature" among the men. This last policy is characteristically Christian, eminently British. For, as it is Christian to suppress opinion, so it is British to do it in the name of morality. There is nothing in which the British Christian takes a keener interest than the task of moralizing someone. The old Biblical command was, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." The Christian loves his neighbour better than himself—at least, he is trying to bring him up to a standard of excellence seldom illustrated in his own character. The neighbour pursues the same policy, and thus both are provided with employment—without either being seriously affected. So it is suggested that a ban should be placed upon the circulation of Freethought literature on the score of morals. The *Freethinker* will undermine the soldier's character, sap his moral health. He can stand against poison gas and shells, the filth of the trench, and the de-socialization of warfare. But to a Freethought paper or pamphlet he succumbs. What a power we must wield! How interesting it would be to find the soldier debarred the *Freethinker*, with the commanding officer serving out religious tracts—and standing over the men while they read them.

* * *

"Good" and "Bad" Books.

But we are chiefly concerned with the suggestion because of the light it throws on the mental make-up of the average Christian. Suppression is the hall-mark of the tribe. And with literature there has been the dual policy of suppression and expurgation—sometimes assisted by falsification. When books were few, suppression was an easy method for a powerful Church to adopt. When they became more numerous, the task became difficult, and if they were at all popular the next best policy was to issue them Bowdlerized. The displeasing parts were left out or toned down. And all on the ground that these works were not good for people to read. And who were those who said they were not good to read? Notoriously such as were least qualified to form an opinion. Personally, we have little faith in books being either good or bad, save in an artistic sense. People will usually get from a book what they bring to it; and a book may be easily made, through suggestion, to appear indecent when it is not really so. But in the direction of suggesting indecency, a sermon on "The Social Evil," by Father Vaughan, or F. B. Meyer, or the Bishop of London, will be more effective than any book we have ever come across. As guides to the indecent, some of our clergy hold easily a front place. A really bad book suppresses itself. Time sees to that. It is only a good book that lives, and therefore it is only good books on which these moral ghouls have a chance of operating.

* * *

Books and the Young.

But there are the young people who need guarding. Oh, these young peoole! Perhaps a little less guarding might be to their benefit. It is certainly to be questioned whether adults are always the best judges as to what is suitable or unsuitable for young people to read. May it not be that the young people themselves might decide fairly well for themselves? No one will accuse Ruskin of a desire to place unclean or debasing literature within the reach of young people; and yet here is his advice, deliberately given, as to the choice of books for girls:—

> Whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen not for their freedom from evil, but for their possession of good. The chance and scattered evil that may haunt or hide itself in a powerful book never does harm to a noble girl, but the emptiness of an author depresses her, and his amiable folly degrades her. And if she can have access to a good library of old and classical books, there need be no

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> choosing at all.....Turn her loose into the old library every wet day and let her alone. She will find what is good for her.....Let her loose in the library, I say, as you would do a fawn in the field. It knows the bad weeds twenty times better than you; and the good ones too; and will eat some bitter and prickly ones, good for it, which you had not the slightest thought would have been so.

The censorship of books is, at bottom, a product of a conception of education which is summed up in prohibition. Don't do this! don't do that! A child is some one to be restrained, not an organism to be developed. Does not the Christian habitually illustrate the same thing in his reference to moral "restraints"? And it quite follows, so far as he is able to control social affairs, he has no other guiding principle save that of prohibition or suppression.

* * *

Christian Heredity.

So quite naturally, and in accordance with his history, the Christian takes to a policy of suppression as comfortably as a duck to water. And as soldiers are regulated as to their eating, sleeping, dressing, and washing, why not as to their reading? The soldier must be guarded against the poisonous influence of the *Freethinker*, etc., by an Army order prohibiting their circulation! And if not the soldier, why not the civilian? If this could be done then we might witness something of the revival of religion about which we have heard so much during the past four years. The genuine Christian is the Peter Pan of history. He never grows up. He has no desire to grow up. In leading strings himself he cannot appreciate the desire of others for freedom. Above all, he is supremely oblivious of the fact that where opinion is censored, and its discussion prohibited, an environment is created fatal to even genuine moral growth. The rising generation suffers because no genuine appeal is ever made to the better part of their nature. The one lesson fronting us is that if they do form opinions at variance with those of the crowd, the wisest policy is to hide them. They are trained to cowardice, and invited to become liars as a matter of policy. This has been one of the practical consequences of the establishment of Christianity. And the present state of Europe may fairly be taken as one indication of its influence.

Chapman Cohen.

"Ignorant Worship."

I.

The Rev. W. Garrett Horder, minister for many years of the Ealing Congregational Church, is deservedly held in high esteem by all who know him. He enjoys the reputation of being one of the sanest members of the clerical profession. In the *Middlesex County Times* for September 21, one of his sermons was published, bearing the title at the head of this article. Naturally, the text is Paul's oft-quoted words, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts xviii. 23). We do not doubt Mr. Horder's sincerity, but after carefully reading and re-reading this specimen of his pulpit oratory, we are left no choice but to charge him with gross ignorance or hopelessly blind prejudice. Fully aware of the seriousness of such a charge, we at once set out to prove it. The text is taken from Paul's famous speech at Athens, and its first significance is said to lie in the fact that the Athenians "did worship at all"; but this is affirmed to be "suggestive of a still greater fact that men everywhere do worship." The reverend gentleman waxes bolder, and asserts that "the tribe, the people, the nation has yet to be discovered in which worship in some form or other is not found." "In other words—so far as our knowledge goes—worship is universal." Has Mr. Horder forgotten that several explorers have testified that they came across savages who entertained no religious beliefs, who even ridiculed the idea of a Supreme Being and a future life? Herbert Spencer quotes several testimonies of that import; and he also furnishes evidences not a few to show that deaf and dumb people are completely destitute of religion until they receive definite instruction therein. He cites the case of a deaf-mute American woman who had reached mature years before a missionary approached her, who found her to be absolutely devoid of belief in or sense of a God. The universality of worship is by no means a well-attested fact. In that false assumption, however, Mr. Horder discerns several tremendous implications. "First of all," he tells us, "it implies a human craving. Men feel that they want something, or they would not worship." But is it not indisputable that worship owes its origin to what has been called "the primal stupidity" of human nature? Primitive man felt that he was at the mercy of the strange forces by which he was surrounded. The storm destroyed his crops, the lightning killed his children as they played in front of the hut, the earth quaked and swallowed up his neighbours, and in utter desperation he wildly appealed to he knew not what for protection. The first form of worship, doubtless, was the frantic cry of helpless fear in the presence of Natural Laws, concerning which the densest ignorance prevailed.

Mr. Horder sneers at the people who say that "the priest gives birth to religion," dubbing them "people who do not think"; but will he be good enough to inform us what the mission of the priest really is, and how it arrived at the present stage in its development? As a matter of simple fact, is not the priest a functionary who slipped into existence on the back of that "primal stupidity" just mentioned? In a supercilious fashion the reverend gentleman exclaims:—

> Religion made by priests—No! It is the feeling out of which religion springs that makes the priest. Back of all religion lies a human craving for something which the world does not give—a craving found not only in those who worship in temple or church, but in all men everywhere.....Get at the heart of men and you will find this craving which is the germ of all religion.

Is not this really an unwitting giving away of the preacher's whole case? We readily concede, it is our fundamental contention, that "it is the feeling out of which religion springs that makes the priest"; but is it not equally true that the priest, playing upon the existence of that initial feeling, fear, or stupidity, is the author of religion—the maker of every deity, the shaper of every worship? What other purpose has he ever served, or is capable of serving? In order to make this clearer, we will take Mr. Horder's next point, namely, that the universality of a craving implies that there is something to meet it. With something like triumphant pride he cries out: "If you ask me for proof of God—it is here—that I crave him." Well, after his long career as a teacher of religion, no doubt the reverend gentleman does crave him; it would be a miracle if he did not; but that is no proof whatever that the craving is a human instinct, or is in any sense a part of our constitutional inheritance, like the eye, the ear, or the palate. We maintain that the craving for God is at best but an illusion. "The craving for God," Mr. Horder adds, "if it be universal, implies a God to meet it." We unhesitatingly deny the universality of the craving, and declare it to be nothing but a sheer illusion where it exists—artificially produced by the priest and his satellites. A moment's thought will convince any unbiased person of

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the truth of this statement. You say: "There is the eye, and there is the light to meet it." But you do not have to devote months and years to the task of convincing a child of the existence of light before it can see. Without any teaching at all vision becomes a reality. But it often takes many years of laborious instruction to instil into the young mind a veritable belief in God; and in numerous instances total failure is the only reward.

Surely, Mr. Horder cannot be blind to the fact that in so-called Christian Britain to-day there are tens of thousands of men and women who are absolutely without belief in a Divine Being, and who as certainly experience not the slightest craving for him. Among these are multitudes who, as children, received no religious instruction, and who, in consequence, have been all their lives entire strangers to divine worship. In America psychologists are devoting considerable attention to this subject, and have already issued statistics which show that among young men and maidens at colleges, as well as among educated people generally, the belief in God is possessed only by a minority. Scientific investigations have been made "in which the usual fatal defects of statistical researches have been avoided." In a most interesting work, entitled *The Belief in God and Immortality*, James H. Leuba, Professor of Psychology at Bryn Mawr College, describing these studies, says:—

> These inquiries have yielded results of considerable significance; and we are now for the first time in a position to make certain definite statements, valid for *entire groups* of influential persons, namely, college students, physical scientists, biologists, historians, sociologists and economists, and psychologists. We have been able not only to compare these groups with each other but also, among the students, the lower classes with the higher; and among the other groups, the more eminent persons with the less eminent. It appears, with incontrovertible evidence, that in each group the more distinguished fraction includes by far the smaller number of believers (pp. vi. vii.).

With reference to the scientists Professor Leuba says:

> The biologists produce a much smaller number of believers in God and in immortality than the physicists. The figures are, for the believers in God: physicists, 43·9 per cent.; biologists, 30·5 per cent. There are fewer believers among the greater men, whether physicists or biologists. The smallest percentage of believers is found among the greater biologists; they count only 16·9 per cent. of believers in God.....As many as 59·3 per cent. of greater biologists express disbelief in God (p. 254).

Mr. Horder's assertion of the universality of worship, and of the secure place of religion in the hearts of men thus falls to the ground; an assertion he must have made either in total ignorance of the facts or in wilful defiance of them. Our claim is that all worship is founded upon ignorance, and that the spread of knowledge is steadily uprooting it.

J. T. Lloyd.

Rondel: The Priest.

When Love, and all of priceless worth,
Are violate and flung away,
And War's gory plough rapes the Earth:
The Priest shall pray!

The Priest shall pray,—when murd'rous fray
Proclaims the Reign of Hate, the dearth
Of Sanity;.....*he would allay!*

And yet, 'tis he who aids the Birth
Of War, and flames the Brand to stay
The Dawn of Peace! Fade, stricken Earth,
The Priest shall pray!

C. B. Warwick.

How the Clergy Starve.

> If I had been a bishop, with an income of five to fifteen thousand a year, I should have had an inexhaustible source of rejoicing and merriment in the generosity, if not in the credulity, of my countrymen.—*John Bright.*

The Bishop of London is in low spirits, not because the dear clergy are on strike, but from a feverish apprehension of what may never happen at all. The fashionable churches still display the latest and most expensive show of millinery in their pews; coins still rattle in the collection-plates; but to watch his lordship's face it would seem as though the end of all things was at hand. The bishop is in the dumps concerning the shocking poverty of the poor clergy. Speaking at an excellent lunch given by the Lord Mayor of London, he said he did not know how some of the clergy were going to get through this winter at all. There were, he added, amid the awed silence of his hearers, no less than 143 benefices in his own diocese where the income was below "£300 a year and a house." Some of the clergy contemplated resignation; they could not face the future. A rural dean said, "I just manage. I see that no meal for myself, wife, and children exceeds 6½d."

Is it not "too deep for tears"? Who in that gay assembly of lunchers ever thought of the dire distress of that poor "rural dean," who had to feed five human beings (for deans are always expected to have one servant) on sixpence-halfpenny? It reads like a romance, written by a magician, an idealist, and a eugenist, who could only have been bred in the wild and woolly West, where men's imaginations are as wide and untrammelled as the rivers. Here, in the old country, the parson with his big and expensive vicarage too often is a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palace too large for him and for the times.

The mystery remains how that "rural dean" manages to provide food for his family, so that "no meal exceeds 6½d." Do they, like Nebuchadnezzar, eat grass? Or, do the ravens who fed the prophet Elijah bring them sandwiches? One cannot dine *a la carte*, or even *a la Lockhart*, on a beggarly sixpence. Perhaps the Bishop of London will explain. So skilful is he with figures, that he has already proved to an admiring world that the more money he receives the poorer he becomes.

There is a way of providing money for the poorer clergy which will, doubtless, find favour in the eyes of the Bishop of London and his ecclesiastical colleagues. It is to act on the advice of Shakespeare, as adapted from the lines in *King Lear*:—

> Take physic, pomp,
> Expose thyself to feel what deans do feel;
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
> And show the heavens more just.

The higher clergy could afford easily to "show the heavens more just." Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops receive, between them, no less than £180,700 yearly, with emoluments in the shape of palaces and palatial residences. The Bishop of London is a bachelor, with an income of £200 weekly, and he could, if he wished, prevent that "rural dean's" family from watering their war-bread with their tears. Perhaps an innate sense of modesty alone prevents him from depriving wealthy laymen of an opportunity for disbursing charity in so sad and distressing a case. As for the bishops themselves, they could so easily mitigate the Spartan fare of the rural dean and his dependents. One cannot think for a moment that these descendants of the apostles would act like the selfish boy with an apple, who, when his young brother asked him for the core, replied, "Get away! There ain't going to be no core."

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A former canon of St. Paul's Cathedral once said that some of the reasons why men remained in the Established Church were "purple, palaces, patronage, profit and power." 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 medicine. The clergy pretend, professionally, to be entirely uninfluenced by financial motives. Yet many of them manage to evade the blessings of poverty, and to leave large sums of money. The late Bishop of Colchester left estate valued at £60,848. Bishop Creighton, who used to talk of the fearful struggles of the wretched ecclesiastics to keep out of debt, left £29,500. Archbishop Benson left £35,000, and Archbishop Tait a similar sum. The biggest episcopal estate of recent years was that of Bishop Walsham How, who left £72,240. A good second to this was Bishop Tuffnell's £65,800, and Bishop Phillpot left £60,000 whilst Archbishop Thomson left £55,000, and Bishop Trollope £50,790. Compared with these sums, the £19,361 of Bishop Harvey Godwin, the £10,000 of Bishop Tozer, and the £12,605 of Bishop Pelham seem quite modest.

It was at a Mansion House banquet that the Bishop of London made his sad remarks concerning the rural dean who fed his family on sixpence halfpenny a meal. It must have startled his auditors as much as Banquo's ghost scared the amazed Macbeth. For Judge Rentoul has stated that at the annual banquets given to the clergy at the Mansion House seventy-four bottles of champagne were drunk which would cost about £40. He added that he actually saw those figures in black and white one year, and he was told that the figures were every year about the same.

Maybe, the plaint of clerical poverty is, after all, only a trick of trade. The Bishop of London may be only practising the arts of his profession, and probably laughs in his dainty lawn sleeve at his public performances. Perhaps he is merely seeking to excite the generosity of devoted Churchmen who have balances at the bank. Clerical performances such as this will only last so long as they produce the desired result. Some day the democracy of this country will turn to the clergy and say, echoing the words of Cromwell: "Be gone and make place for better men."

Sincerity makes respectable even absurd and wrong-headed causes; but sincerity is not a shining Christian virtue. The God of the Christians is no longer the sad-faced figure of the poor and despised Nazarene, but the rubicund, self-satisfied form of Mammon, with the leer of the miser. Gone are the crown of thorns, and the spear-wounds in his side, but in the bejewelled hands of the new deity are held the money-bag and the bribe. The purple robe covers the huge imposture of an organized hypocrisy. Could the pale shade of Christ that slinks past the gilt altar-rails but speak it would bewail an agony of spirit deadlier than that which drenched Gethsemane in blood. Mohammed has a direct influence over his professed disciples; Gotama Buddha still colours and controls human life; the teachings of Brahmanism still affects the lives of millions. Even Joseph Smith's revelations are held in honour by the Mormons, but where, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, are the Christians who are faithful to the ideals and aspirations of the "Gospel of Poverty"?

MIMNERMUS.

GOD AND MAN.

An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.

BY CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE THREEPENCE. POSTAGE ½D.

A Search for the Soul.

XV.

(*Concluded from p. 537.*)

IN his *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity*, Mr. Flinders Petrie devotes a chapter to a comparison of "Body and Mind," based upon a work by Professor W. James in his Gifford Lectures. Commencing with the body, he draws attention to the following facts:—

1. That all the internal functions of the body are carried on without our consciousness, and that it is only where these come in touch with the external world that we have any control over them.

2. That all functional action is carried on by two opposing mechanisms—one of excitation and the other of inhibition.

3. That natural form and function are both due to heredity, and are determined in different parts by different hereditary sources.

Coming next to the mechanism of the mind, the same processes are found, thus plainly indicating that the mind is compelled to act through the same mechanical conditions as those relating to the body. These are:—

1. That processes of mind are mainly unconscious.

> Our normal waking consciousness is but one special type of consciousness, while all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.

2. That all mental action is performed by two opposing mechanisms.

> Our moral and practical attitude, at any given time, is always a resultant of two sets of forces within us, impulses pushing us one way, and obstructions and inhibitions holding us back.

3. That natural form and function of mind are both due to heredity, and descend from various hereditary sources. The persistence of mental tendencies, though much obscured by education, is so marked that the hereditary descent of mind cannot be doubted.

> Of the unconscious mind a very important part is the accumulation of experiences, the details of which have been entirely lost to memory or consciousness, but the effect of which is stored. This is the source of unconscious anticipation.....which forms the unseen framework and guiding lines of our actions; and we only become aware of it when it is obstructed.....The routine of life is a part of anticipation. Each daily event as it arrives prepares us for the next unconsciously, and much is thus done without calling up Will, or even consciousness, to direct our actions.

Looking now at the analogy between the processes of body and mind, the fact that these are practically identical is proof that both are carried on by the same influence of heredity, and that there is a manifest unity in the functioning of every part of the human organism. The alimentary organs convert the nutritious portions of the food into chyle, the liver secretes bile, the organs of respiration assist in the oxidation of the blood, the heart propels the vital fluid through every part of the body, and the brain with its energy generates consciousness and thought. Though the function in each case is of a different nature, the same methods are more or less employed throughout. If the function of the brain may appear to be of a less material character than that of any of the others, this circumstance does not alter the fact that that organ is alone responsible for the production of thought. An immaterial nonentity like the "soul" would be powerless to produce anything. As Buchner says:—

> A soul without a body, a spirit without physique, a thought without substance, can no more be realized or

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> exist than electricity, magnetism, gravity, can exist without those bodies or materials by the activity of which the phenomena designated by those names are produced.

Needless to say, this statement is undoubtedly true; a so-called "soul" without material organs, though it might perhaps be imagined, could not exist.

Now, if we consider that there was a time when every individual body and mind first came into existence, we shall also perceive that there must certainly come a time when each individual body and mind shall cease to exist. That which had a beginning will most assuredly have an end. This is, of course, admitted by all so far as the body is concerned, but not in the case of the soul or mind. With regard to the latter, however, it should be remembered that each man begins his individual existence at the moment when the two parental sexual cells meet and coalesce for the formation of a single simple cell—the individual stem-cell—with the formation of which the existence of the personality of the individual commences. Through this cell man, like all other complex animals, inherits all his personal characteristics, *both bodily and mental*, from his parents. Hence, the new personality which arises can lay no claim to immortality. All these characteristics are contained, in a latent state, in the stem-cell, and after birth, should the conditions be unfavourable, the mental faculties may never be developed. We have thus a proof that the so-called "soul" is not an indwelling entity of the body, and if circumstances prevent its development it remains through life not only non-manifest but non-existent.

Again, the individual stem-cell from which man is formed is undoubtedly a particle of matter; it follows therefore that what is called mind is, at the most, merely a property of living matter, or something that results from the activity of that matter, which, in the case of man, has been evolved far beyond that of any of the higher animals.

If, again, we go back through the ages we find that matter was in existence long before what is called mind had arisen, and that both must have been contained, either potentially or in capacity, in the primal world-mist, out of which our solar system has been gradually evolved. Says Buchner:—

> The development of mind from matter is the product of a protracted toil, rising step by step, through countless centuries, till reaching the height of humanity..... What is called "spirit" is a manifestation of life, and life, by the law of its being, is subject to change and therefore to death. Spirit is perishable, for it is absolutely indivisible from the perishable forms of matter, and it is a wholly natural force.....The spirit which resides in man is indissolubly bound up with a living organised brain. According to our experience, spirit is without exception found only in conjunction with a brain.

The foregoing statement is, of course, in perfect agreement with science; but opposed to it we have that of the great physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge, who says:—

> It does not follow that the brain generates or secretes thought, or that every thinking creature in the universe must possess a brain.....The manifold activities [of the mind] did not arise with us: they never did spring into being; they are as eternal as the Godhead itself, and in the eternal Being they shall endure for ever.

This, no doubt, is a grand theory; but science tells us that the most primitive forms of animal life were of a nature that cannot be credited with mental faculties, and though in the course of time higher animals possessing rudimentary brains came into being, many long ages elapsed before the highest parts of the human brain—those concerned with reason, reflection, and judgment—became fully developed. Again, when a child is born, it comes into the world without any psychical faculty whatever. Though possessing a brain, that organ is almost as smooth as a bagatelle ball, no impressions from the outer world having been registered upon it—without which there can be no thought. It should also be borne in mind that every kind of force or energy active upon this planet—including that of mental activity—ultimately arises from the sun, and takes its origin in the form of light and heat, which come to us by vibrations of ether particles.

Here I will leave this subject for the present—to return to it, later on, in a more irrational form, miscalled Spiritualism.

Abracadabra.

Acid Drops.

The Salvation Army advertised for October 9 and 10 "Two Days with God" at the Congress Hall, Clapton, and then thoughtfully added "General Booth and Mrs. Booth will also be present." That "also" is delightful. Perhaps they were there as a kind of understudy, in case the advertised guest of the evening was engaged elsewhere.

The Bishop of Hull says that 2,000 men at the Front have expressed a desire to enter the ministry. Some men in the trenches are far more eager to enter the ministry than the men in the ministry are to enter the trenches. The Bishop says £500,000 will be needed for their education. Perhaps lack of it is a cause of their desire to mount the pulpit.

The Bishop of Peterborough is alarmed at the "snaky selfishness which still lifts its head among us." Yet his Church has been fighting that reptile for twenty centuries.

Religion is a costly business. The first stage of the restoration of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, has cost £40,000, and a further sum of £60,000 is required to finish the work.

The Rev. E. F. Nicholas, a Congregationalist minister, has been selected Labour candidate for Aberdeen. "Woe unto ye rich" and "Blessed be ye poor" should be excellent election cries.

The Bishop of London is hostile to the idea of Sunday baseball. Presumably, the heavier the "gate" at baseball matches, the lighter the "gate" at the churches.

Dr. Biggs, Bishop of Worcester, has accepted the bishopric of Coventry, which has been carved from the diocese of Worcester. The income of the new bishopric is £3,200, but the newspapers state that Dr. Biggs has a large private income. "Blessed be ye poor."

The Church no longer commands the obedience of people as in the Ages of Faith. She forbids divorce—but the Divorce Court is busy. No less than forty-four *decrees nisi* were made absolute in the Vacation Court recently.

At the Guns' Exhibition and cardboard village display at Trafalgar Square, the opening service was conducted by the Bishop of Kensington, and choirs from Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, and other churches sang. It is pleasant to find priests of the Government religion justifying their position.

It is an open question whether the proposed Hyde Park War-shrine will be "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." According to the Church Crafts' League the design submitted for that shrine is "out of harmony with its surroundings and ugly in itself." In short, there is more craft than art in the design.

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In view of the near possibility of a General Election, the Sabbatarians have issued a manifesto to secure the support of candidates "to the right of the people to retain their Sunday freedom for family life and religious worship." This rigmarole means that the Sabbatarians wish for a continuance of the Christian monopoly of Sunday.

Under the pressure of adversity, Church and Chapel are becoming quite friendly. At the City Temple, London, a Congregationalist place of worship, the Rev. G. W. H. Shaw, Rector of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, preached recently in the place of Miss Royden, the lady pastor.

"God must have been waiting to give a blessing to our arms," says Bishop Taylor Smith. What exquisite humility on the part of the bishop!

Not so long ago religious folk frowned at novels; but a great change has taken place. At the Sunday School Union's shop in Ludgate Hill a new novel is boldly advertised, and a profusion of light literature fills the windows. A cynic might add that this was commercialism, and not Christianity.

The London correspondent of the *Glasgow Herald* says there is a widespread demand in Scotland for the insertion of a provision in the Education Bill making the teaching of religious instruction mandatory in the public, elementary, and secondary schools. Quite a number of public men have made statements to the same effect, but were unable to substantiate their statements when challenged. Is he aware that the paper he represents has received dozens of letters against the proposed religious clauses, but has not published them? With a prejudiced press, how is it possible to know the will of the public apart from a General Election?

A correspondent to the Daily Press makes an appeal to the authorities in Glasgow to provide Sunday entertainment, in the form of concerts or cinema shows, to the many soldiers and sailors staying over the week-end in town. He says if it is good enough for them to fight for us on Sunday, it cannot be bad for them to get some form of healthy entertainment on that day as well. Quite a good idea.

A puff in a daily paper asks for the gift of a portable organ for a chaplain going out with the troops to Northern Russia. Might we suggest that a concertina would be easier to carry such a great distance. It would also be less expensive.

I have ever looked on mankind in the lump to be nothing better than a foolish, headstrong, credulous, unthinking mob; and their universal belief has ever had extremely little weight with me.—*Robert Burns.*

The following is from the *Times of Ceylon* for July 20:—

> Cook-Appu. Must be able make good bread and pastry; energetic, registered, married man whose wife lives on estate essential; healthy climate. Salary Rs. 30, half-bushel. *No old men, drunkards or Christians need apply.* Bachelor. —D. 6094, c/o *Times of Ceylon.*

The italics are ours. It is quite a commentary on the elevating influence of Christianity.

The Chaplain of Pentonville Prison says that a prisoner once said to him: "Nobody who comes into this place and hears you preach, sir, can ever want to come here again." We have, no doubt, many outside prison have felt the same after hearing some sermons.

It appears that before the War some Anglican clergymen were passing poor on £300 a year, and now, everything being double cost, the poor dears are starving. The Bishop of London is now making a public appeal on their behalf, and wonders they have not gone on strike. His lordship forgets his Master's words, "Blessed are ye poor."

The Bishop of Glasgow, in a letter to the clergy of his diocese, says, that during these weary years the Church has never put forth her full strength in prayer. To prepare for this, quiet afternoons and evenings have been arranged in certain parts of the diocese. It is also proposed to make a special missionary effect throughout the Scottish Church to deepen a sense of responsibility for carrying out our "Lord's will." Is it not now nearly time the various sects were coming to an agreement to determine what they think the "Lord's will" to be. Secularists have no doubt in the matter.

The Vicar of St. Woollos, Newport, calls those who attend church on a rainy Sunday A1 Christians, while those who remain at home belong to Grade 3. After all, how simple and easy a thing it is to be a Christian, and how amazingly cheap heaven is!

Dr. Jowett says that "there has never been a period in the history of the world when there were so many people nestling in the Lord." Other clergymen complain that religion is at a lower ebb to-day than it has been for many ages. Perhaps Dr. Jowett makes his own popularity his standard of judgment.

Mr. Silas Hocking, the Methodist novelist, claims that the League of Nations "has its roots in the Sermon on the Mount." What an unspeakably poor soil that famous discourse must be when the roots of such a desirable institution have lain therein for nineteen centuries without giving any signs of their presence; and even now we have only the word of a writer of fiction that they are there at all.

According to the Dean of Exeter, God "gradually unveiled himself as the people could bear it." This is quite interesting, and reminds one of the plot of a good old-fashioned Adelphi drama. Everything is "wropt" in mystery until the last scene, and meanwhile the audience have to follow the plot as it best can. Only, as the Aristophanes of Germany said to the Aristophanes of the skies, the joke, or plot, is rather long-drawn out and threatens to become monotonous.

CHANGING RELIGION.

Human nature remains the same; but religion alters. Christianity has taken many forms. In the early Church it had the hues of a hundred heresies. It developed in the successive councils. It has been Roman, it has been Greek, it has been Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian. It has adjusted itself to national characteristics; it has grown with the growth of general knowledge.—*J. A. Froude.*

MY MADONNA.

I haled me a woman from the street,
Shameless, but, oh, so fair!
I bade her sit in the model's seat,
And I painted her sitting there.

I hid all trace of her heart unclean;
I painted a babe at her breast;
I painted her as she might have been
If the Worst had been the Best.

She laughed at my picture, and went away.
Then came, with a knowing nod,
A connoisseur, and I heard him say:
"'Tis Mary, the Mother of God."

So I painted a halo round her hair,
And I sold her, and took my fee,
And she hangs in the church of Saint Hilaire,
Where you and all may see.

—*Robert W. Service, "Songs of a Sourdough."*

Think not that any good act is contemptible, though it be your brother's coming to you with an open countenance and good humour.—*Mohammed.*

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IN MEMORIAM.

George William Foote.
Jan. 11, 1850—Oct. 17, 1915.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 10, Liverpool; November 24, Leeds; November 27 to December 1, South Wales; December 8, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 20, Southampton; November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

J. Capon.—We hope we deserve some of the things you are kind enough to say. At any rate, we appreciate them from so old a Freethinker as yourself.

N. S. S.—The *Freethinker* can be obtained from Mr. F. Henderson, "The Bomb Shop," Charing Cross Road, W.C.

R. Thomas.—We would rather do anything than increase the price of the *Freethinker* if we can possibly avoid it. It is not a question of our present readers objecting to an extra penny per copy—we think very few of them would; it is a question of what is ultimately best for the Cause. It may, as you say, require courage to keep the price unchanged; but timidity is fatal to anyone who is entrusted with the Freethought standard. We nevertheless appreciate the kindness of your offer.

W. J.—The "cheap seaside lodgings" had no personal application. The best reply to your friend would be to ask him what is the use of praying without belief? No, we have never engaged in prayer for anything—at least not since we attained years of discretion.

Mr. T. Mozley writes that, having induced his newsagent to show a copy of the *Freethinker*, the result has been five new subscribers up to date. Good news, but not, we are glad to say, unusual.

A. D.—Pleased you found the *Freethinker* "a treat."

E. May.—Both of Barratt's books, *Physical Metempiric* and *Physical Ethics*, are full of meat, but marked by an awkward terminology. Still, he will repay close study. You will find the other matter discussed in *Critical Realism*, by R. W. Sellars (chapters iii. and iv.); New York, 1916.

E. Mills.—Thanks for contribution to Fund. We can assure you we do *not* feel discouraged. Why should we? We never went in for Freethought on account of its being a bed of roses, and the respect, confidence, and support of Freethinkers all over the country gives us every encouragement to push on. Shall be glad to see you when you are in town.

E. K.—No apology is necessary. You are doing what you can, and if all do that we can face the future without serious misgiving.

F. S. Kebble.—The spirit of your letter is quite enough to prevent our estimating your interest by the size of the contribution. But we are not inclined to do that in any case, and, certainly, not in yours.

A. Boyd.—Not at all a congenial occupation; but if it must be done, it is as well it were done well.

H. Cajrney.—Thanks for second subscription to Fund. Pleased to have your warm appreciation of what is being done.

The members of the Kingsland Branch of the N. S. S., in sending subscriptions to Fund, desire to say they are "very proud of the manner in which the cause is upheld and its principles disseminated by our chief and his colleagues." We return thanks on their and our own behalf.

F. Betts.—There is no legal right, but an application to the C.O. might be successful. Parcel of "poisonous literature" being sent to address given in France.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A very successful commencement of the season's work was made by the Swansea Branch on Sunday last with two lectures from Mr. Cohen. The hall was well filled in the afternoon, and quite inconveniently crowded in the evening. A pleasing feature of the meeting was the large number of ladies present, and the keen interest with which the lectures were followed was both a compliment and an inspiration to the speaker. At the afternoon meeting, Mr. D. Morgan also spoke, and his speech on the need for Freethought work, was well phrased and well delivered. It made a capital impression, and contributed to the success of the day's proceedings.

Mr. Cohen has deferred his visit to Nuneaton—fixed for October 27—until a date later in the year. He is remaining in London for the next two or three weeks, and this will enable him to clear up some arrears of work that have accumulated. Week-end trips, under prevailing conditions, make a serious inroad into one's time, and as War conditions necessitate his doing everything connected with the paper single-handed, to say nothing of other work in connection with the Movement, a little break will be agreeable.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (October 20) in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road, Southampton. The meetings are held in the morning at 11 and evening at 7. We hope that local "saints" will do their best to see that the hall is crowded on both occasions.

We are again receiving complaints from readers who are unable to get their copies regularly from their newsagents. We shall be obliged if, in addition to writing us, they will insist upon being supplied with what they order. No excuse should be entertained. The copies *can* be obtained, and it is the fault of either the newsagent or the wholesale agent when they are not forthcoming.

We believe we have partly to thank our growing sales for this. Newsagents find their sales increasing, and the wholesale man is careless of increasing his order, and so some are left without enough copies. We trust our readers will help us to overcome this difficulty. They will be pleased to learn that the circulation of the *Freethinker* steadily grows. We have made substantial progress towards adding a second thousand increase to our weekly circulation, and we have some hopes, with the help of our friends, of starting on the third thousand early in the New Year. Considering this is War time, we have every reason to feel gratified. But we can always do with more readers.

The Barnsley Branch of the N. S. S. is holding a meeting on Wednesday evening, October 23, at Irving's Studio, for a discussion on "The Principles of Secularism." The meeting

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opens at 7.30 p.m., and we hope that all Freethinkers in Barnsley and district will make an effort to attend, as one purpose of the gathering is to organize the work in the district. All who can co-operate to this end should write Mr. H. Irving, 48 Sheffield Road, Barnsley, Yorks.

Freethought is developing well in England, there has been quite an outburst in South Wales, and now we have signs of movement in Ireland. We have had several letters lately from Ireland from correspondents saying they have recently "made the acquaintance" of the *Freethinker*, and how pleased they are with it. Meeting the *Freethinker* is not quite such an accident as these correspondents assume, as we naturally included Ireland in our general plan of operations for advancing the interests of the cause. When the War is over we hope to see a very definite Freethought advance in Ireland. Meanwhile we are glad to see signs of an awakening.

We are asked to announce that our contributor, "Keridon," lectures to-day (Oct. 20) before the Sheffield Ethical Society on "Theology; the Art of Squaring the Circle, or Solving the Insoluble." The lecture will be delivered at 6.30 in the Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street. Sheffield Freethinkers will please note.

The *Manchester City News* of October 12 devotes a leading article to a review of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and Slavery*. It calls it "a powerful and poignant work," containing an "overwhelming mass of facts," and adds that the whole forms "a terrible indictment" supplied "from history." *Christianity and Slavery* is evidently a work that was wanted. It is selling more rapidly than anything that has been published for years.

There is a new regulation that all Civil Servants must take the oath of allegiance. We have had some inquiries on the matter, and desire to say that the right to affirm holds in every case where an oath is required by law. Freethinkers in the Civil Service may therefore insist upon their right under the Oaths Act of 1888.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Seventh List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged:—£373 11s. 6d. R. Daniel, 5s. A. D. (Edinburgh), 10s. Collette Jones, £2 2s. E. Mills, £1. S. Kerble, 2s. J. Stanway, 10s. E. K., 5s. J. Peacock, 2s. 6d. Miss H. Baker (second subscription), 4s. J. A. B. Mitchell, 2s. 6d. X. Y. Z., 10s. A. Boyd, 2s. 6d. A. J. Marriott, 5s. E. Williams, 10s. Kingsland Branch, N.S.S., £1 1s. Andrew Harvey, 10s. Alfred Harvey, 10s. J. Morris (per Mrs. H. Rosetti), 10s. J. Shipp, 10s. H. Cairney (2nd sub.), £1 1s. E. Blakeman, 2s. 6d. W. R. Edwards, 2s. 6d. H. Jarmaine, 2s. 6d. S. Getrals, 2s. 6d. E. Jones, 10s. T. Scott (Glasgow), £1 3s. A Freethinker, 2s. 6d. F. M. Greig, 2s. A. Hawkyard, 10s. G. W. R., 2s. 6d. J. Stringer, 2s. 9d. D. Bonvoni, 4s. R. Reid, 2s. 6d. W. Morgan, 1s. E. E. Slate, 1s. R. Montgomery, 1s. J. Boway, 1s. F. Cure, 1s. P. S., 1s. F. Bargeege, 1s. L. J. Box, 1s. H. Atkinson, 1s. H. Densham, 1s. W. Heath, 1s. Mr. and Mrs. Knott, 2s. 6d. Milodon, £1. Lonicera, £1. J. Glassbrook, 5s. William Bell, 2s. 6d. O. B., 3s. 6d.

Per Sec. Manchester Branch:—H. Everson, 10s. L. H. Everson, 2s. 6d. E. Johnson, 10s. Total, £392 0s. 3d.

What is real and universal cannot be confined to the circle of those who sympathize strictly with his (Swedenborg's) genius, but will pass forth into the common stock of wise and just thinking. The world has a sure chemistry, by which it extracts what is excellent in its children, and lets fall the infirmities and limitations of the grandest mind.—*Emerson.*

Religion and Life.

BY E. LYTTELTON.

SIR,—What you have written about our each holding a theory explains that part of the position sufficiently, and I will pass on to your challenge as to my repudiation of other gods as nonsense, and the use of the word "myth." Your last paragraph shows quite clearly where we stand, but I am doubtful if I can reach it in the present letter.

Yes, I should agree that the early statements made in the childhood of nations generally took the form of myths. But the word does not mean simply untrue and therefore worthless, but a story expressing an idea more or less valuable. You have read Homer's *Iliad* containing some immortal passages about the Trojan War? How much of the framework of the story is true? Nobody knows and very few care much. The historical truth of the framework is the least important question concerning it. Again, suppose you want to teach a child a moral lesson and construct a really good allegory skilfully, enforcing just the principle you want to convey, are you to call that allegory *true* or not? You would have to distinguish between the view of life presented and the framework or setting—much the least important part of the whole. Thus, the early chapters of Genesis are mythical; but if the principles or deep views of life taught by them are lofty, I should not like to dub them as untrue. A myth appears to be a way of expressing an idea natural to childhood.

Your challenge takes the following form: Dr. Lyttelton's fault lies in speaking of "God" as though it stood for some understood thing such as gravitation or natural selection. But "God" in the abstract is to me nothing. This criticism assumes that the word God expresses no more to me than it does to you. But supposing it means nothing to you that is surely no proof that it means nothing to everybody else.

Again, supposing my idea, or conception, or impression of God is real, does it follow that it would be explicable to another? In other words, there is no warrant for saying that A's knowledge of everything must be transferable to B or else be an hallucination. More than once you have implied the contrary, if I mistake not; anyhow, many writers do. Let us examine this point.

I presume you would agree that you and I have knowledge of other persons C, D, E, F, and so on. Supposing C and D are my friends, E and F are yours, and that for some reason I were anxious to convey to you my knowledge of C and D in return for your conveying to me your knowledge of E and F. Nothing either of us could say or do would go more than a very little way towards accomplishing the object. Nay, more: if C and D were people of what we call great personality, I might know them for years, and yet feel perfectly certain that there is much in them which remains to be discovered, but which I never shall discover in this world. If it were not so they would not be in the least interesting. As it is they are interesting as persons chiefly because there is a good deal, quite undefinable in amount, which is mysterious in them. Do you remember George Eliot's story called "Lifting the Veil" which turns on this fact, and I never heard that anyone disputed it.

Therefore, if you asked me to explain what I meant when I spoke of C and D, I should say I really cannot tell you unless you first make their acquaintance. Then we might have some interesting talk about them, but always as explorers.

Now, if that is true about great human personalities,

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and even of lesser ones, what can we say of an Infinite Person?

At this point I can imagine your saying, "Now he is talking about what he does not and cannot understand." Well, let us be careful how we use that word understand. Does a child of six understand his father? I doubt it. He certainly doesn't *comprehend* him, but equally certain he *knows* him, and that his knowledge is ever growing, especially if his relation to him is filial and affectionate. If he understands anything of him, it is very little, and if he were to sit in judgment on any of his father's actions, he would be a little monster, and not a child. If this is so, can we not know God, though He be infinitely beyond our comprehension?

But perhaps you bar the idea of Infinity. You may say it conveys nothing to you, and you may be right; but I fancy it conveys as much to you as to anyone. What do you conceive of the region on which your eye falls between the stars? Is it bounded or not? At any rate, if it is nothing to you, does that prove it does not represent a truth when a man of the colossal intellectual power of Pascal or Paul of Tarsus and a host of others were full of it?

Let me tell you a story about a great man whom I feel sure you hold in high honour, T. H. Huxley. He was once walking with an eminent Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, a man of acute brain power, and a Christian; and Huxley suddenly asked him a question in some such words as these: You are a clear thinking man, and well worth talking to on deep topics. Tell me how it is that all these religious notions which to me are nothing, are all the world to you? The answer was: Don't you think it is possible that in matters beyond the evidence of the senses, it may be that some people are afflicted with spiritual colour-blindness? Huxley's answer was nobly candid and true: Yes, he said, I suppose that is possible; and if I were afflicted in that way, I shouldn't know it.

Now, Sir, I do not mean to say that these words apply to those who think with you, because there are obviously spiritual truths which you not only believe, but live and move in them; and what I hope to go on to next time is to show that intellectual consistency forbids you to stop where you do stop, or rather try to stop; but beckon you on to certain beliefs which at present seem to you nonsensical, but which I firmly believe are wrapped up in the convictions you already hold and acknowledge. It is not a matter of trying to prove you wrong; but what I shall ask is that you attentively consider whether you are right in saying that the belief in the existence of God is to you unmeaning; further, whether, if so, that gives you the warrant for supposing that it must be unmeaning for every other thoughtful mind, or will be before long.

It will be necessary, too, for me to anticipate a misgiving which will have occurred to you already. You are expecting me to say something about faith being above reason: the kind of talk that galls some people sadly. I will therefore explain what I mean by faith before bringing it into the discussion. It is not what a schoolboy is supposed to have said about it. "Faith is a power of believing what you know is not true." The same authority tackled Hope and Charity in a similar strain. "Hope is the power of expecting what you know won't happen. Charity is giving away what you don't want." At present I will only say these definitions are not adequate, but that I have something better to talk about.

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is said or done returns at last to me.
—*Walt Whitman.*

A Naturalist's Paradise.

Those favoured islands of the far eastern seas, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, and Celebes, were revealed to the Western World as biological treasure regions by Alfred Russel Wallace in his fascinating *Malay Archipelago.* Borneo is not only the largest island in the Malay region, but is one of the greatest islands on our globe, and has about five times the area of England and Wales. Yet, although encircled by isles of volcanic origin, Borneo betrays meagre evidence of volcanic commotion, and its deposits consist of ancient accumulations of igneous substances and of water-laid strata.

In 1912 two handsome and well-illustrated volumes from the pens of Dr. C. Hose and Professor McDougall were published under the title of *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo.* Still later, in 1916, the posthumous fragment of Robert Shelford, *A Naturalist in Borneo*, was presented to the reading public by Professor E. B. Poulton, the distinguished Oxford biologist.

At the early age of three, Shelford met with an accident which led to tubercular disease of the hip-joint, and the boy was doomed to lie on his back for several years. When ten years old, a painful operation was conducted, and he afterwards left his couch. Despite his lameness, he led an active life, and lived long enough to be esteemed as one of the most promising naturalists of the day. Born at Singapore in 1872, he died after an agonizing illness at the age of forty in 1912. Shelford's premature death was deplored, writes Professor Poulton,

> by a wide circle of friends interested in the most varied sides of natural history, all of whom felt not only a keen sense of personal loss, but also the loss to the science to which they had devoted their lives. We in Oxford retain grateful memories of pleasant years spent in hard work and constant friendly intercourse, and his efficient control of the Sarawak Museum, and bright and attractive, many-sided personality, will be long remembered in Borneo.

Shelford enjoyed special advantages during his sojourn in Borneo for acquiring knowledge of the flora and fauna of that earthly paradise. As Curator of the Museum at Kuching, Sarawak, he was afforded the fullest facilities for collecting specimens from distant parts of the State. The white Rajah then ruling British Borneo—Sir Charles Brooke the second—was ably supported by the other officials at Sarawak in his ambition to secure a valuable and important Museum of Natural History. Moreover, Rajah Brooke ordained the restriction of the exhibits to the plants, animals, and ethnography of Borneo. Overlapping and confusion were thus avoided, and a splendid collection of permanent interest both to Europeans and natives has been established. Yet this praiseworthy achievement has met with characteristic national disregard. As Shelford mordantly notes:—

> Although foreign countries have been quick in expressing gratitude for the services he (Sir Charles Brooke) has rendered to naturalists visiting his country, the debt has never been acknowledged by a single English learned society.

Kinabalu, Borneo's principal mountain, rises to an altitude of 14,000 feet. This is a solitary eminence, and the remaining mountainous masses form ranges whose peaks sometimes attain an elevation of 10,000 feet above ocean level. With a copious rainfall, the island's river systems are extensive, and the largest stream of all, the Kapuas, flows from its source in Central Borneo for about 700 miles to the sea. The leading watercourses rise from the central highlands, and run north, south, east, and west towards the coast. As they wander to the ocean, the streams transport

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immense quantities of alluvium, which forms a marshy belt that almost everywhere surrounds the island.

Until recent geological times, the present island of Borneo was attached to the continent of Asia, and constituted its south-eastern extremity. In addition to geological proofs of this, the faunal kinships between Borneo and the adjacent continent provide powerful testimony to this truth. The quite modern separation of Borneo from the Asiatic mainland is indicated by the large array of Asiatic organisms still dwelling there. These include, among numerous others, the elephant, rhinoceros, wild cattle, swine and deer, various cats such as the civet and tiger cats, porcupine, little black bear, the flying lemur, several monkeys, and two manlike apes. Some of these mammals are also found in Sumatra, and the evidence supplied by their distribution clearly indicates the recent isolation of both Borneo and Sumatra from the neighbouring land mass, and the still later division of one original island into two.

The climate of Borneo is hot and moist. Rain descends very freely throughout the year, but the wettest season extends from October to February, while the finest period is that of April and May. Speaking from a quarter of a century's experience, Dr. Hose states that the *average* annual rainfall in Kuching totals 160 inches. But 225 inches fell in one year, while, in another, 102 inches only were recorded:—

> The greatest rainfall recorded in one day was 15 inches. The temperature hardly, if ever, reaches 100° F.; it ranges normally between 70° and 90° F. The highest reading in one year (1906) at Kuching was 94°, the lowest 69°. Snow and frost are unknown, except occasionally on the summits of the highest mountains.

The whole of this great island forms one vast forest. The mountains are mantled with diminutive trees and masses of moss. In the dense forests of the plains and valleys tall and majestic trees soar to a height of 150 or even 200 feet. Below these giants there flourishes a luxuriant undergrowth of smaller trees which await their turn to replace the older ones when these fall, while creepers, palms, and ferns of almost infinite variety strive and struggle for existence in their sylvan environment. Nearly 500 species of forest trees furnish superior timber, and yield most nourishing fruits, such as the mango, many varieties of bananas, the durian, and numerous others. The rattan and bamboo, however, provide the native peoples with the main materials for their habitations and arts. Several forest plants yield gutta-percha. Wild sago is usually abundant; rubber is extracted from the sap of a creeping plant, while some of the orchids excel in beauty those even of South America. The Bornean pitcher plants are justly celebrated for their splendour, and the gigantic Raffiesia found in the island is the largest flower in the world.

The birds of Borneo are extremely rich in species, and volumes would prove necessary for their detailed description. Many remarkable forms are special to the island, and this is also true of several mammals, including three species of our relatives, the apes and monkeys.

Reptile life is strongly represented by huge ferocious crocodiles, various lizards and tortoises, and over seventy species of snakes, the thirty-foot long python among them. The streams teem with edible fish. The insect order contains countless genera and species, and all observers have noted that at sunset the Bornean forest becomes clamorous when the ever noisy cicadas are joined by the croaking of frogs, and the humming, droning, whirring, and other sounds of innumerable insects which combine to make the evening hideous to all but the most hardened listener.

(To be continued). T. F. Palmer.

Notes From Scotland.

The Rev. G. S. Peebles, Uddingston, says if we are to have Sunday Evening Services at all, then they ought to be better attended. Is this another testimony to the intense religious fervour in Scotland, of which we heard from the House of Commons, or is it a common wail all over the country?

We have been having quite a number of harvest thanksgiving services of late. If we thank God for the bountiful crops, who should we curse for the rain that has spoiled them?

Scotch farmers are now becoming sensible. A good many of them took advantage of the fine weather last Sunday to secure their crops.

Are the religious clauses in the Scottish Education Bill to be the means of the whole Bill being dropp d? It looks very much like it at present; and perhaps that would not be the worst fate that could befall it.

"The Whigamore bullets ken unco little discretion, and will just as sune knock oot the harns o' a psalm-singing auld wife as a swearing dragoon."—Cuddie at Drunclog, in *Old Mortality*.

Why do our teachers, as a body, not let their opinions be known regarding the teaching of the Bible and Shorter Catechism in school. I have never yet met a teacher who approves of the latter, yet they go on teaching it. Are they afraid to offend the clergy, who are generally to be found as members of the Board? Fancy teaching children of seven years of age "Thou shalt not commit adultery"!

Is it not now time the Secularists in Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen were forming themselves into Branches of the N. S. S.? I am sure they are numerous enough in each of these towns. Perhaps next time our President comes North, meetings might be arranged for the purpose of forming new Branches.

Scotia.

Correspondence.

MIND AND MATTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I think (judging from your "Answers to Correspondents") in the September 29 issue that one of your correspondents, Mr. T. C. Langridge, has been raising the point that the distinctive colouration on some species of animals, *e.g.*, butterflies, so far from making them invisible, makes them prominent, and that this involves a refutation of some evolutionary theories. If he has you might bring the following to his notice, or, in any case, it would be worth printing.

In *Science Progress* for July there is an essay on the colouration of animals, and the author shows that all the so-called prominent colourations of animals are not at all prominent to animals, as their colour-vision is extremely different from our own. In fact, most of the markings are such as render the animal invisible to others.

May I say a few words on the subject of the "Mind and Matter" correspondence. I entirely approve of what Mr. E. J. Hirst has to say on this subject, save that he seems to make the difficulties in the way of a Materialist explanation of mind on the same level as those in other explanations.

It is true that Materialism has not explained what consciousness is, but those who believe in a soul can draw no comfort from this, for, beyond assuming something else to experience things, it can no more explain the process of experiencing than Materialism. Indeed, it is the triumph of Materialism that it recognizes that consciousness is a process.

However, the soul theory has to face difficulties that are

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not present in Materialism. Suppose we grant that there is a soul, and that it has "made up its mind" to do an action. For that action to be done certain material actions have to take place in the nerves. Hence, at some point the soul has to make matter move in a way that it would not do before, *i.e.*, it has to perform an exceedingly clever and complex miracle without knowing that it is doing so, and without being aware of the particles it has set in motion.

The behaviour of the particles of matter would also be directly against the laws of nature.

Sir Oliver Lodge has seen this difficulty, and has shown that it would be possible for a miracle to take place without breaking the laws of conservation of momentum and energy, but he quite ignored the fact that these are not the only laws of nature, and that a miracle must of necessity break at least one law.

R. H. Nisbet.

THE TASK OF FREETHOUGHT.

Sir,—Like your correspondent, "J. F. Rayner," I am also of opinion that it would be better if the N. S. S. had a constructive as well as a destructive policy. The objects of Secularism and the beliefs of Freethinkers are so often contorted by Christians that it is sometimes difficult to convince those who are seeking after truth that Secularism is superior to Christianity.

There is really a want of ceremony about the opening and closing of our meetings. This may not appeal to some, but there are others who, I think, would appreciate a little ceremony. Many people go to church solely for their love of music. Were nothing more than a sermon to be heard there, I am afraid the attendance would be meagre in the extreme. If this be an admitted fact, why should the N. S. S. not adopt means to draw this section of the community to its fold?

I think every meeting of the N. S. S. should be opened by the recitation of a creed on something like the following lines: "I believe that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. I know nothing of divine guidance or interference. I regard happiness as man's proper aim and utility as his moral guide. I believe that progress is only possible through liberty, and I believe in equal freedom of thought, speech, and action to all."

Crux Corticorum.

Suggestions for Hymns and Their Singers.

And when they had sung a hymn they went out.
And it was night.

Caradoc Evans.—Tune: "Calvary."

"There is a green hill far away,"
"My people" there do dwell,
And on the cross of ignorance
Worship—the Lord of hell.

Rev. F. B. Meyer.—Tune: "Upsala."

"I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth hath smiled,"
And kept me, midst this *heathen* band
A Christian—undefiled.

Father Vaughan.—Tune: "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Slay, "as if on that alone
Hung the issue of the day";
Slay, for blood, and blood alone,
Yet can wash thy sins away.

The Profiteers.—Tune: "Harvest Home."

"Here a little,
There a little,"
Reaping all we can;
Hear us, as we praise thee,
And bless the working-man.

The C. O.—Tune: "Gethsemane."

"Christian dost thou hear them":
How they rend and jeer?
He, who lived in Nazareth
Is dead—and cannot hear.

P. A.

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, H. J. Stenning, "Is there a Science of History?" Open Debate.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval): 7.30, Mr. E. Burke, "The Last of the Infallibilities." Public invited.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Camille Huysman, "The Labour International."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Hyatt, Swasey, Dales, and Kells; 3.30, Mr. Harry Boulter, "Bible Stories."

Woolwich (Beresford Square): 11.30 and 3, Geo. H. Swasey.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Discussion Class. Subject: "The Relation of Socialism to Freethought."

Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 6.30, Annual General Meeting.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. Henri M. Leon, M.A., LL.D., Phil. D., etc., "Manx Legends and Superstitions."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, The Secretary, "Freethought, Ancient and Modern."

Porth, Glam. (Morley's Restaurant): 2.30, A Meeting. Mr. Tal Williams of Maesteg will attend.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. J. C. Thomas, B.Sc. ("Keridon"), "The Return of the Gnostic." (The New Era of God-making.)

Southampton Branch N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): 11 and 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
God and the Savage.—The Editor	553
"Ignorant Worship."—J. T. Lloyd	554
The Exploitation of Death.—Mimnermus	555
Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."—Keridon	556
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund	559
A Naturalist's Paradise.—T. F. Palmer	560
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	561
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

God and the Savage.

There is no lack of gods in the world. Indeed, there never has been a shortage in that direction. Man, to follow Montaigne, who cannot make a flea, has nevertheless made gods by the score. He has made them in all shapes and sizes, colours and qualities. That wonderful procession of the gods in Flaubert's *St. Antony* by no means exhausts the list; it is only a sample from bulk. And from what resulted this extraordinary creative human activity? If I read Dr. Lyttelton's article aright in last week's *Freethinker*, primitive man was a philosopher struggling to express a great idea by means of a consciously devised fable or myth. Hence, in criticizing primitive presentations, we have to penetrate beyond their verbal form or face value to the deeper truth they embody. In this way all religions are true, because all religions embody truth. Our task is to get rid of the *form* in which the religion is presented to us, and hold on to the residual essential facts. This, I admit, is a theory that would save the religious idea. My only objection to it is that, in my judgment, it is quite wrong.

* * *

Getting Down to Facts.

Let us settle down to a few facts. Religion does not begin amongst civilized peoples; it does not root itself in developed knowledge. Civilized people never discover gods—they inherit them. Whether the gods express a fact or embody a truth or not, it is a fact that the belief in gods begins with people who were in the worst possible position to know what the truth was. The belief in spirits, in gods, in the supernatural, commences with the primitive savage. Of that there can be no question. And who was, or who is, for that matter, the primitive savage? On that again, information is easily accessible. The savage is not a philosopher—in our sense of the word; he is not curious about the causes of phenomena; he is not in the least concerned with presenting profound truths to others in the form of allegory or fable; he is, in short, a very matter-of-fact, incurious, ignorant person—very fearful of gods and ghosts, but neither loving them nor desiring them. His only desire is to keep on good terms with them. And his belief in these gods and ghosts is based upon a plain misunderstanding of things, the truth of which becomes apparent to later generations. When the savage says that a man tossing about in a fit of epilepsy is under the control of an evil spirit, he is not formulating an allegory—he is expressing what is to him a sober statement of fact. All the things around him, which are similarly explained, are equally statements of fact. Early religious beliefs are not fables, or myths, or allegories; they are statements of apparent fact. They become fables and myths and allegories to a later generation, which takes all the facts upon which the religious idea is based, and explains them in a completely non-religious manner. The curious thing is, that while the conception of the world upon which the religious idea is based is rejected, we still have the idea with us. In other words, we reject the world of the savage as false, but we retain a conclusion based upon admittedly false pretences. And man calls himself a rational being!

* * *

Error or Allegory?

Dr. Lyttelton says he would "agree that the early statements made in the childhood of nations generally took the form of myths." In that case, he would certainly not be agreeing with me. For to the people originating these religious "myths," they are not myths at all. They are as much statements of fact as are our own concerning the nature of an electrical disturbance or the motion of the earth round the sun. (There is a later stage at which myths may be consciously fabricated; but I am now concerned only with primitive thought.) Naturally, if *we* want to teach a child a lesson, we may construct an allegory with sole reference to the idea to be enforced. But that is a case of an instructed person teaching an uninstructed one. But with the savage all are uninstructed. Everything has to be learned; everyone has to learn. And it is surely approaching the absurd to assume that men who made the most grotesque blunders about common facts and everyday experiences should have deliberately concocted myths conveying profound moral and "spiritual" truths. Not to understand the body, but to know about the soul; not to understand man, but to know about God; to be completely ignorant of this world, but to be informed about some other state of existence, is a decidedly remarkable achievement. The truth to me is that religious myths are primitive errors. They represent man's first blundering attempts to understand the world in which he lived. And the endeavour to read into these primitive errors some profound moral truth is an attempt to put modern ideas into the brain of the primitive savage. Of course, it can be done, but so could one convert into a profound spiritual allegory Old Mother Hubbard or Jack the Giant Killer. And if these stories had by some chance appeared in the Bible there is not the slightest doubt but that their transformation would have occurred.

* * *

"God."

We are told that in saying the word "God" is used as though it stood for some understood thing, I am assuming that it expresses no more to Dr. Lyttelton than it does to me. Well, I certainly intended nothing

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of the kind. I do not know what Dr. Lyttelton means by God; he has not yet told me. I know what is meant by the God of the Bible, or of the Westminster Confession, because in these cases what is meant by God is set forth. My complaint was that in the absence of a definition God means nothing to *me*, and as under the usual conditions it means little more to others, it is a source of confusion to talk about "God" as though it had a settled meaning, such as gravitation or natural selection. Observe it is not here a question of completely understanding a thing (I doubt if we *completely* understand anything) so much as knowing what it is we are to try and understand. In the case of the child and its parents, the child knows there is something to understand. In the case of "God" that there is something to understand is the very question at issue. It is not understanding that is at issue here, but existence. And if Dr. Lyttelton can make clear the existence of his "God" all the rest will be a voyage of fellow-believers trying to know more about the subject. At present the difficulty is that we do not know there is anything about which to know. We are in the position of trying to understand what a thing is without knowing whether it exists.

* * *

A Restatement.

For the sake of clarity we may sum up the matter thus: What are called religious myths are fundamentally forms of primitive error. In a world of which he knows nothing, and concerning which the only way of learning is by experience, primitive man arrives at certain conclusions concerning natural happenings. These conclusions are expressed in terms of life and intelligence. Gradually a more accurate knowledge about things leads to the primitive animistic theory being discarded in one direction after another. But by that time religion has become an established social fact. It has gathered around it the support of vested interests and of various sentiments. The consequence is, not a complete and logical rejection of the religious idea, but an attempt to import into the primitive theory of things something that was not originally there. The religious explanation, wholly discredited and discarded, becomes the religious myth, and into that myth the modern apologetic mind reads its own feelings, ideas, and aspirations. That, as I have said, may be done equally well with any fable that one likes to take in hand. That it is done with Jonah and the Whale, or the Adam and Eve story in Eden, and not with Little Jack Horner or Old Mother Hubbard, is due to accident of position. Had these stories been in the Bible, I haven't the least doubt but they would have provided texts for hundreds of sermons, and afforded spiritual nourishment to thousands of thirsty souls.

Chapman Cohen.

TESTING OUR GODS.

A poor man, in our day, has many gods foisted on him; and big voices bid him, "Worship, or be ——," in a menacing and confusing manner. What shall he do? By far the greater part of said gods, current in the public, whether canonized by Pope or Populus, are mere dumb Apises and beatified Prize-oxen; nay some of them, who have articulate faculty, are devils instead of gods. A poor man that would save his soul alive is reduced to the sad necessity of sharply trying his gods whether they are divine or not; which is a terrible pass for mankind, and lays an awful problem upon each man. The man must do it, however. At his own peril he will have to do this problem too, which is one of the awfulest; and his neighbours, all but a most select portion of them, portion generally *not* clad in official tiaras, can be of next to no help to him in it, nay rather will infinitely hinder him in it, as matters go.—*Carlyle*, "*Latter-Day Pamphlets*."

"Ignorant Worship."

II.

As St. Paul declares—men do worship—therefore there is something to worship—therefore there is God. And so this leads me to say that for us all it is a question not whether we shall worship, we are sure in some form or other to do that, but whether we shall worship ignorantly or intelligently.

That is a sample of the method of reasoning pursued by the Rev. W. Garrett Horder, of Ealing, in a sermon published in the *Middlesex County Times* for September 21, which is the style generally followed in the pulpit. It may satisfy an uncritical, conventional congregation; but it is essentially fallacious and of necessity unconvincing. The mere fact that many people worship furnishes no manner of proof that there is something objectively real to worship. The so-called craving for God is confined to a minority that keeps getting smaller year after year. Mr. Horder declares that its reality is denied or doubted by "people who do not think"; but Professor Leuba, of America, has proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that it is the greatest thinkers who are the greatest disbelievers. American students are rapidly becoming Atheists. Touching the investigations as to their attitude to religion, the Professor observes:—

> The deepest impression left by these records is that, so far as religion is concerned, our students are grovelling in darkness. Christianity, as a system of belief, has utterly broken down, and nothing definite, adequate, and convincing has taken its place. 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 (*The Belief in God and Immortality*, p. 213).

The most significant fact is that, in proportion as progress in education takes place, the number of disbelievers increases. Another deeply symptomatic fact is that "in every class of persons investigated, the number of believers in God is less, and in most classes very much less than the number of non-believers," and that "among the more distinguished, unbelief is very much more frequent than among the less distinguished." On this point Professor Leuba sums up as follows:—

> The students' statistics show that young people enter college possessed of the beliefs still accepted, more or less perfunctorily, in the average home of the land, and that as their mental powers mature and their horizon widens, a large percentage of them abandon the cardinal Christian beliefs. It seems probable that on leaving college, from 40 to 45 per cent. of the students with whom we are concerned deny or doubt the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion. The marked decrease in belief that takes place during the later adolescent years, in those who spend those years in study under the influence of persons of high culture, is a portentous indication of the fate which, according to our statistics, increased knowledge and the possession of certain capacities leading to eminence reserve to the beliefs in a personal God and in personal immortality (*Ibid*, pp. 280-1).

We are convinced that what is true of American students is, to say the least, equally true of the same class in our own country, and that, generally speaking, unbelief among men of science is fully as rife here as there. It is well known that many of the most influential professors in our British Universities are non-believers in a personal God as well as in the Christian religion. Mr. Horder is, therefore, radically mistaken when he says that we are all sure, in one form or another, to be worshippers, and with that statement, the other, "Therefore there is a God," inevitably falls to the ground.

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This popular Congregational minister, addressing Christian believers, pronounces the Christian conception of God the highest and best; but evidently he does not realize that in doing this he is representing the Divine Being as the creation of the people who worship him. According to him, the chief defect of Hinduism is the bewildering multiplicity of its deities, and the same fault characterizes the religions of Pagan Greece and Rome. With an air of conscious superiority he adds: "Well, this must have been perplexing, to say the least. Polytheism deserves the epithet of St. Paul—of ignorantly worshipping." Buddhism is condemned because originally it had no God at all, and because now it "provides itself with many objects of worship for the eye, if it still claims there is no God for the mind," which is "neither quite satisfactory nor intelligent." Mohammedanism comes in for a word of praise because it "offers one God—one God only—with no idol of any kind to picture him to the eye," which is described as "good—very good." But the Mohammedan Deity will not do at all, because, though exceedingly great, he is forbiddingly hard. Confucianism is dismissed because it substitutes the worship of ancestors for that of a Supreme Being. "Confucius tried indeed to meet the great human craving with an Ethic—a morality without religion. And the heart wants more than that. And so I suppose it may be said Confucianism is a fading faith." Mr. Horder then adds:—

> And so I might go over all the faiths of the world—and you would feel, as St. Paul did, that there was needed the declaration of something better. All the faiths of the world had elements which met certain needs, but not all the needs, of the human heart—and therefore something better was wanted. And St. Paul felt that he had that better faith to declare. To his mind Christianity came to meet all the cravings of humanity, as these other faiths had met only certain of them, or met them only imperfectly.

With all due deference to the reverend gentleman, we venture to remind him that his compendium of the characteristics of non-Christian faiths is not only "a poor substitute for seeing the religions themselves and their effects," but also unfair, inaccurate, and misleading. He expresses a wish that they could all be displayed in their true character and effects before our eyes; but is he not aware that in London there are accredited representatives of all of them, who would, doubtless, welcome the opportunity of stating their respective claims, and who would certainly challenge the accuracy of the reverend gentleman's summaries? In any case, is it not a somewhat cowardly action to decry other religions in the absence of their official defenders? Has Mr. Horder forgotten that at the beginning of the seventeenth century there was every likelihood of Christianity becoming the religion of the State in Japan, and that such a consummation was prevented by the bitter jealousies and rivalries between the different orders among its missionaries? In our own time desperate efforts are being put forth to force Christianity upon China in defiance of the fact that heathen China is morally and socially fully equal, if not superior, to Christian Europe.

Mr. Horder closes his interesting discourse with a perfervid panegyric of the Christian God as an object of worship. The eulogium is exceedingly eloquent and touching. It would be extremely difficult to improve upon it. We are offered an object of worship created in the image and after the likeness of an ideally good man endowed with the impossible attributes of infinitude and omnipotence. In other words, the Christian God is, as Matthew Arnold used to say, a magnified, non-natural, impossible man, and, of necessity, non-existent. The worship of such a Being cannot possibly produce either an individual or a nation of the purest and noblest character, because the powers with which he is clothed are wholly imaginary, like himself. He is declared to be sitting as king for ever; but that declaration is true only in the imagination of the pious. In the control of human affairs he has never had any more to do than the man in the moon. He is called the God of love and of peace, who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; but in history he has never once made himself known. Here the powers of good and of evil have been at perpetual strife, victory falling now to the one and now to the other, the Prince of Peace having not yet begun to reign. What has God been doing through all the centuries, and, above all, what is he doing at the moment? *Absolutely nothing because he is but an idol set up in the sanctuary of the religious imagination.* His creators can do what they like with him both in public and in private; but he remains for ever silent and inactive, neither confirming nor protesting against anything they say or do. All parties to the present War passionately appeal to him for victory, but the fighting goes on year after as if he were not.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Exploitation of Death.

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. —*Shakespeare.*

"The angel of death is abroad in the land; you can almost hear the beating of his wings," said John Bright, addressing a hushed and troubled House of Commons at the time of the Crimean War. The words of the great orator come back to-day, when death has been the visitor at so many homes. One, whom we knew, who was near and dear to us, who moved in our little circle, has been met by "the fell sergeant, Death." And the mind circles ceaselessly around the labyrinths of life, that all lead in one direction, into the silent land, whither he whom we knew, he whose hand we touched but yesterday, has gone, never to return.

Since the dawn of the Christian era the fear of death and of pain has increased among the dwellers in the great cities. Fear of death scarcely exists among Asiatics, because, living in the open, their experience tells them that death and life are ever entwined in a struggle for mastery; that the victorious soldier of to-day is the corpse of to-morrow. Under Asiatic skies death is regarded as no less benign than birth, and the shadowy figure with the scythe is not to be feared as an enemy. Dwellers in towns necessarily acquire their knowledge of Nature from books, or from superficial and fleeting observation. For five months in every year Nature is represented in the towns by fog, rain, and snow, and the necessity for fires and artificial lighting. Dwellers in mean streets have no chance of meditating on the rigid processes of natural law.

The clergy exploit this ignorance. Death is, according to these pastors and masters, the "king of terrors." They heighten the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and use the Devil and his fearful pyrotechnics as a lever. The terror such stories inspire is largely owing to the gross ignorance which surrounds the subject of death. Men fear it, like children do the dark, through not knowing what it is. The fear of the night can be dissipated by a little light. Death would be no bugbear if it were known better. And nobody is there to tell people, except a small number of devoted Freethinkers, who are anathema to all the Churches of

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Christendom. The sermons from the clergy, archaic in thought and inflated with nonsense, deal in generalities and exaggerations. "The wages of sin is death" is their idea of wisdom. The clergy is hopelessly out of touch with modern man and common sense. Hence the Churches are emptying of men. The "cure of souls" is passing into the physician's hands with the cure of the body. For it is now admitted that a healthy body and a healthy mind go together.

Why should men fear death? It is only our nightly sleep prolonged, without a waking. Shakespeare, the supreme genius of literature, has told us that "our little life is rounded with a sleep." Sleep! All that the human fancy can conceive of refreshing and delightful things is comprised 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 the stout philosopher, Senor 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." Notice how the grand old Pagans look death in the face without flinching. Epicurus says proudly: "Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not." No less emphatic is Marcus Aurelius, who bids us regard death as a friend:—

> What is it to die? If we view it by itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is 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.

Modern science shows that the Pagans are right. Sir Henry Halford, towards the close of his medical career, said few of his patients, in the last hours, exhibited signs of severe suffering. Sir Benjamin Brodie, the famous surgeon, stated that the mere act of dying is seldom, in any sense of the word, a painful process. The great anatomist, Sir William Hunter, bore his own dying testimony. Just before he died he whispered to his friend, Dr. Combe: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die."

For thousands of years priests have chanted the old sad refrain of death as an enemy, but the Freethinker listens to far other strains. Death is the universal law of Nature, which befalls all living beings, though the majority encounter it sooner than man. After centuries of pious stupor, the world is rubbing its eyes and beginning to awake, and the priests are beginning to be found out. The wheels of progress may move slowly, but they do move. Those who drive her triumphal car through the shining fields of the world's to-morrow shall look back and see, far in the rear, a discredited ecclesiasticism. The hope that an ignorant and superstitious minority can always bend the intellectuals to its will is sheer illusion. The terror of death is passing away, because the Christian religion is decaying.

Mimnermus.

HIGHEST AND BEST.

The appeal to what is highest and best in men does not pay; a seeming appeal to what is highest and best does. I suppose the wealthiest corporations in the world are the Roman, the Greek, the Lutheran, and the Anglican churches. As a trade, as an art, Religion pays; but whenever there is an actual attempt to transcend, the crucifix and the stake are ready: ostracism for the man of independent means, death by starvation for the poor man, are prompt and inevitable.

—*John Davidson.*

Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."

A few weeks ago a friend sent me a copy of Dr. McDougall's little primer on physiological psychology in Dent's series, inviting my special attention to his pathetic plea, on behalf of his fantastic "soul" theory, for a fuller recognition of the value of psychic research under the disguise of the euphemistic phrase, "new empirical evidence."

Long before, however, I had reached the end of even the introduction I had found that the author was out on a mission, for he had in this little book taken out his "soul" dogma from under the "bushel" of philosophic terminology and had put it upon the "candle-stick" of common speech so that all might see and be illumined by its metaphysical "light." So long as his views were confined to larger works the peril arising from his reactionary efforts was not such as to cause alarm, for it was more or less confined to cultured people who had sufficient knowledge to weigh his dogmatic pronouncements and estimate them at their true value. But, in the case of a primer, the matter wears an aspect far more alarming. His new and much wider circle of readers will consist largely of youth drawn from the rising generation whose adolescent minds are undisciplined, unfurnished, and unsuspicious, but thirsting for knowledge, and very susceptible to "authority" as sufficient guarantee of the truth of dogmatic pronouncements, and gratuitous assumptions.

This primer has, obviously, a two-fold object—to teach psychology and to inculcate, or at least to sow the seed of, a "soul" doctrine. And without straining the evidence it is quite justifiable to infer that the author regards the latter as the more important mission of the two. For there was no occasion for obtruding his "soul" theory on the attention of his readers. To do so in a small science primer on physiological psychology was useless, irrelevant, and superfluous—an entirely supererogatory task that vitiates an otherwise excellent primer.

He, moreover, displays that instinctive acuteness of vision possessed by insects in the detection of appropriate places for depositing their eggs; he never misses a promising opportunity of dropping a seed of his "soul" theory. And it must be admitted that he possesses rare aptitude for the task. Even if he were a professional dialectitian he could not be more proficient in the art of engendering belief in the minds of his readers, and observe more faithfully their cardinal rule—*assume* what you cannot prove, and discuss its alleged attributes and traits; make a liberal use of *question-begging* terms, phrases, epithets, and queries; *deliver* your theories, *pronounce* your dogmas, be *oracular*, and never introduce a gratuitous dogma buttressed with arguments. If, for example, you wish to engender belief in angels, do not attempt to prove their existence, but discuss their orders and functions, or the *pros* and *cons* as to whether or not they actually appeared to the soldiers at Mons. He is verily a past-master of the art of mystification. He delivers his creed with that complacent nonchalance that disarms criticism—that quiet unobtrusiveness that was never excelled by any disciple of the famous saint of Loyola.

When natural truths and principles which had an interpretative bearing upon the origin and meaning of phenomenal existence were first discovered and established, it was invariably found that they were in more or less obvious disagreement and conflict with some primitive dogma or myth of religious belief. As a natural

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result of this antagonism a state of war ensued between the votaries of religion and the supporters and advocates of natural knowledge. Goaded by the instincts of self-preservation, the religionists persecuted the innovators with every weapon that malicious ingenuity could devise. And the Deity, if "silence proves consent," obviously approved of the truth-suppressing policy of his priesthood, despite the fact that he himself is credited with being the fountain-head of all truth.

In the end, however, natural science prevailed and myth and dogma, one by one, lay dead or dying; and, like all things inanimate, they tended to subside beneath the waves of oblivion. But religion could not subsist without them. So something had to be done to keep them afloat on the surface of current belief; and the change of policy brought into existence a new functionary—the harmonizing apologist. His duty was to "prove" that there was in reality no contradiction, no conflict, between them. That the antagonism between myth and science was only superficial, and that it required only a little verbal manipulation of the divinely inspired records to bring the two into harmony. So gradually persecution relaxed its methods; it abandoned its barbaric savagery and brutality, and confined its methods to calumny and abuse, and to social ostracism and boycott. And the harmonizer was duly installed in place of the holy inquisitor to keep the contents of the Christian creed floating on the surface as orthodox belief.

Such was the antagonism between the "soul" myth and the gradually discovered fact that mind was the function of the cerebral system.

During the persecuting period the science of any hostile truth was ignored, scouted, and denounced in the name of God; but immediately the "salving" policy had come into vogue a complete *volte face* was effected. Defenders of the faith who had expert knowledge of science were soon at a premium. Intimate scientific knowledge became indispensable in order to endow the harmonizer with that authority to give his "salving platforms" the necessary buoyancy and stability. And for that reason no better man could be found than the author of *Mind and Body* to undertake the operation of "salving the soul."

Before we begin discussing the "barrage" he sets up in defence of his "soul" theory, let us, for an instant, glance at the predeliction and bias betrayed by a somewhat conspicuous inconsistency. He displays a considerable punctiliousness in the use of terms lest they should "commit him to theories and presuppositions." It is, if consistently observed, a most commendable practice. And more, it is a policy that one had a right to expect from the author of *Mind and Body*, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. But alas! he belies his solicitude in almost the very breath with which he avows it. While demurring to using quite innocent psychological terms he freely uses the term "soul" without a demur, apology, or any attempt at defining it. Now, if there is a term in the English language which should be avoided on account of "theoretical" implications, well, that word is "soul." It is imbued with vague notions of personality, immortality, and of "controlment of voluntary actions," besides the emotions of religious bias and sentiment with which it is swathed.

He refers to it as "common sense theory." To dignify a term embodying the superstitious ignorance of a semi-barbaric age as "theory" and as "common sense" is to betray a predeliction of some fixity and strength. And this honourable mention is not an isolated occurrence; it is his wont throughout the primer to allude to any spiritualistic pretentions which appear to harmonize with his gratuitous theory in terms as respectful as his references to established generalizations of science are uniformly disparaging.

KERIDON.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Rev. J. T. Cox, Clerk to the Synod of Aberdeen, belongs to the good old school of theologians. We give him the same welcome that we should to a stray member of some almost extinct species. Mr. Cox naturally objects to religious instruction being permissive in the new Scotch Education Bill, and desires it to be mandatory. That, he says, is the only safeguard. It is one of the peculiarities of the situation that, although the clergy declare the people desire religious education, they will not have it unless it is forced on them. But there are some people, says Mr. Cox—Secularists and Agnostics—who object to religious education in the schools. Moreover, some of them are teachers. Here Mr. Cox rises to the occasion. His remedy is, "Clear them out of our schools. We have no use for such instructors of our children." Now, that is the "only way." Clear them out of the schools, also out of the country; that is the only way to check the growing feeling in favour of Secular Education.

The soldier, whose life was saved by a New Testament intercepting a bullet, has again turned up, this time in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. The incident may be genuine, but a pack of cards would have done just as well. And we feel sure thousands of bullets must have been intercepted during the War by all sorts of things. The incident is only noticeable because of its testimony to the incurable stupidity of some people

The *Daily News* says that Christian Science literature is being supplied to the troops on a very generous scale. It is somewhat late in the day to apply Christian Science in the present War; but they might make a modest start in the Veterinary Department.

The Sabbatarians are unusually active in Hull, and are not only summoning tradesmen for opening on Sundays, but also including customers in the charge for aiding and abetting. Is this a part of the long-promised revival of religion?

A Bayswater clergyman says that optimists had been the curse of the nation. If one has the brains of a hen, surely it is unnecessary to advertise the fact unduly.

A newspaper paragraph states that the Corporal Correction League, which advocates the use of the hard hand on children of tender years, has the support of many clergymen. We can understand the clerical support, for these gentlemen are always flogging dead horses.

A correspondent, who signs himself "A Churchman," writes to say that he cannot understand why we continue to send the *Freethinker* to soldiers, as he considers it a very "one-sided" and "harmful" publication. Therefore, we "deserve to be suppressed." To demonstrate our iniquity, he encloses a cutting from the *Daily Mail* of October 15, containing an alleged interview with a soldier, who says there is one indispensable book for every soldier—the Bible. The character of the *Daily Mail* forbids our questioning the truth of this. Indeed, its veracity is evidenced by the way in which soldiers clamour for Bibles when they come home, write for them when they are abroad, and their constant reading of it in tram, train, and 'bus.

Candles have gone up in price enormously. Catholic priests will be delighted. We hope it will not mean a strike in Purgatory.

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"Clerical Error" was a bold headline in a London daily paper. The accompanying letterpress referred to costing at a factory, and not to the blunders of parsons. The latter are past counting.

Says *Life and Opinion*, a Church of Scotland magazine, an Australian newspaper some time ago conducted a competition as to "Australia's best proverb," and the prize was given to this saying, "When your neighbour quotes Scripture, brand your calves early." It is a popular judgment on Christian profession that may well humiliate. But it is quite evident that the Australians who declared this adage to be the best must have had considerable experience behind them.

Superstitions die hard, but we did think the Mons angels were done with. Now, we really see no reason why some one should not start selling wing feathers as souvenirs. We feel sure many would purchase. At any rate, here is the Bishop of Durham, in a letter to the *Spectator*, saying he heard from the vicar of Crowthwaite, who heard from some British soldiers, who were told by some prisoners, how the Germans were led to retreat in 1914 because "they saw strong reinforcements" coming along. Now, the original story was not that British soldiers were seen coming, but that angels were seen in the sky. This story was confessedly manufactured by Mr. Arthur Machen, and was repeated as true, until he exposed the whole thing. Perhaps the Bishop of Durham thinks that after four years people may have forgotten its origin. What we should like to know is, does the Bishop of Durham believe it?

That such a story should be told, and believed, is enough to make one almost despair of human sanity. In any case, it is a reminder of how slight is our claim to be called a civilized people. The War itself was a challenge to that claim. The amount of credulity, hatred, lying, and brutality evidenced during these four years, whatever the qualities of a contrary character manifested; the general appeals for days of prayer, humiliation, repentance, etc., to achieve success in the War; the picture of the Prime Minister leading a procession of Members of Parliament to one of our "joss-houses" to pray for victory—like so many savages petitioning for the help of their tribal "joss"—are all evidence of how near the surface is the primitive savage. Talk about our work being done! Why, we have only just commenced. We are just making good our foothold. We have yet to tread a path broad enough for all to follow.

Many people imagined that the Devil was dead, but, on the authority of General Sir Ian Hamilton, this is not so. His Satanic Majesty is only on the retired list. The General assures us that "the Devil has had a seal set upon him that he will deceive the nations no more for a thousand years." Plainly, there is nothing to do but to disband the clergy for that period.

The Church frowns at divorce, but the public smiles at the Church. At the Divorce Court there has never been such a glut of work, no less than 935 cases being on the list for trial.

The Service Candidates' Committee has received names of 1,400 soldiers who wish to become parsons at the end of the War. Will someone tell these men of the unhappy "rural dean" who fed his family on 6½d. a meal?

The "godly" occasionally drop into evil ways. Here are two illustrations from the same issue of the *News of the World*. Harry Bowen, a married man, of West Bromwich, and a Sunday-school teacher, was summoned for the maintenance of an illegitimate child. The usual order was made. In the other case, a curate, of Rock Ferry, was charged with insulting behaviour towards women in Lord Street, Liverpool. Some of the evidence given by girls was of a rather startling nature. The Vicar of St. George's, Stockport, gave the accused an excellent character, but the magistrate said he never felt less doubt about any case before him. Result 40s. fine or one month.

The organist of an Isle of Wight church is also a hairdresser; so a London newspaper says. We can guess which is the better-paid employment.

The cause of the Allies' success is now given to the world. It is due neither to the strategy of Foch nor the bravery of the soldiers. On the authority of Alderman L. Pound (City London), just before the orders for the advance were given, "a bishop of the Church of England, who happened to be present," suggested to General Haig that General Headquarters should stop work and ask for divine guidance and protection. This was done, and success resulted. Now we know all about it. For no one would doubt the word of Alderman Pound.

The Dean of Carlisle is a gentleman who receives a comfortable salary for preaching the Gospel of non-resistance, and of returning good for evil. By way of showing that he earns his salary, he is reported in the *Evening News* of October 17 as saying that the way to stop the Germans destroying towns in their retreat is to destroy German towns. He thinks the destruction of some quarters of Berlin would be advisable. How, on earth, that will make good the damage done by the Germans we are puzzled to conceive. Punishment for those responsible for the wanton destruction of towns, we can understand, and advocate to not set about the work of destruction ourselves to show that we can be as brutal as others when occasion serves. And the advocate of this policy is a dean of the Christian Church!

The *Northern Daily Telegraph* reports a speech of the Vicar of Clitheroe complaining of the making of new bishops. He says that each new bishop requires the investing of over £70,000, and for that sum sixteen clergymen could be obtained. We agree that spending all this money on a bishop is a sad waste of funds; but if we are to have sixteen clergymen instead of one, we don't see how we are going to gain by not spending it on a bishop. Much better to spend it in a more reasonable manner.

The following is from a Johannesburg paper, the only reference on the cutting sent being July, 1918:—

> On Friday morning four natives were hanged at Bloemfontein gaol (says the *Friend*), three having been sentenced at the last Criminal Sessions for rape on a young white girl at Bethlehem, while the other one was the murderer of the warder at the Fiksburg gaol. All four died Christians. Two were Presbyterians, one Church of England, and the fourth, who was a heathen, was received into the Catholic Church at his own request a few days before he paid the penalty of the law.

We hope this striking testimony to the value of missionary work will be duly recorded in the missionary reports. For without mission work they might have died without the solace of the Christian faith.

CURSE OF INSINCERITY.

This is the sad condition of the insincere man. He is doomed all his days to deal with insincerities; to live, move, and have his being in traditions and conventionalities. If the traditions have grown old, the conventionalities will be mostly false; true in no sense can they be for him; never shall he behold the truth of any matter; formulæ, theologic, economic and other, certain superficial readings of truth, required in the market-place, these he will take with him, these he will apply dextrously, and with these he will have to satisfy himself. Sincerity shall not exist for him; he shall think that he has found it, while it is yet far away. The deep, awful and indeed divine quality of truth that lies in every object, and in virtue of which the object exists,—from his poor eyes this is for ever hidden. Not with austere divine realities which belong to the Universe and to Eternity, but with paltry, ambiguous phantasms, comfortable and uncomfortable, which belong to his own parish, and to the current week, or generation shall he pass his days.—*Carlyle*, "*Latter-Day Pamphlets.*"

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 10, Liverpool; November 17, Birmingham; November 24, Leeds; November 27 to December 1, South Wales; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

J. De B.—Received with thanks. We will send *Freethinker* with other literature to soldier as desired. For the information of other readers we may again state that we shall be glad to receive the names and addresses of soldiers and sailors to whom parcels of literature and copies of the *Freethinker* would be of service.

K. J.—There is really no need to apologise for the smallness of your contribution to the Sustentation Fund. We assume that those who help do so to the extent of their sympathies and circumstances. And that is all we have a right to expect. Of course, if all our readers did something we could laugh at all financial troubles due to the War. But we have no cause and no inclination to complain.

S. Clowes.—It is good of you to send along your fourth contribution to the Fund. The other matter is quite all right.

P. Murphy.—The address of the Secretary of the Liverpool Branch is: W. McKelvie, 68 St. John's Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. Mr. Cohen will be lecturing in Liverpool on November 10.

F. Jackson.—Thanks for cutting. The story might be true, but we do not care to publish it unless accompanied by stronger evidence than is supplied in the paragraph enclosed.

T. R. N.—There is no evidence, so far as we are aware, of an increase of insanity in the racial stock. There has been an increase in the number of lunatics, but that is due to the suppression of causes that served to eliminate those with a predisposition to insanity.

B. F. B.—Delays are apt to occur nowadays owing to shortage of labour and uncertainty of postal delivery. We have handed your letter to our shop manager. We appreciate your compliments concerning the *Freethinker*.

J. and J. M'Glashan.—In quite good time. Thanks for your appreciation and good wishes.

J. G. F. sends us 9s. for the purpose of distributing literature amongst the troops.

S. Lidgett.—We are sending one of our parcels to the address given. Hope it will do good.

W. J.—What is meant by praying in "a spirit of earnest inquiry"? Would it fill the bill if one prayed without expectation of an answer being received? And if one does expect an answer, one already believes in prayer, and proof is unnecessary.

G. Ogilvie.—We feel sure you will never be backward in doing what you can to help the *Freethinker*. The past four years has furnished ample proof of how many sincere friends the paper has.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The Special Conference ordered by the last General Conference will be held at Birmingham on November 13. The business of the Conference will be the consideration of a scheme of reconstruction drawn up by a Special Committee appointed for that purpose, with all amendments and suggestions that are offered. The Conference will meet in the Repertory Theatre at 10.30 and 2.30, and a public demonstration will be held in the evening. The President will occupy the chair on all three occasions.

As the business to be done at this Conference is of great interest to the future of the Society, we hope that as many members will attend as is possible, and that *all* Branches will make a special effort to send a delegate. Those who intend visiting the Conference should communicate with the Secretary, Miss Vance, as early as possible, so that accommodation may be secured. The earlier this is done, the better.

Birmingham friends will please note that Mr. Harry Snell lectures in the Repertory Theatre to-day (October 27), at 7 o'clock, on "Fifty Years of Darwinism: its Influence on Religion and Politics." We hope to hear that the theatre was crowded. It ought to be?

A commencement is being made with Freethought work in Pontypridd, South Wales, to-day (October 27). Mr. Saphin will lecture in the I.L.P. Hall, Graig, at 2.30. We trust that Freethinkers in the district will give the "Revival" a good start by making a special effort to be present. Mr. Cohen is hoping to visit Pontypridd towards the end of November.

Next Sunday (Nov. 3) Mr. Clifford Williams lectures at the Baths Assembly Rooms, at 7 o'clock, on "Secularism *v.* Christianity." The local Secretary, Mr. R. C. Hughes, 224 Lockhurst Lane, will be pleased to hear from anyone who is willing to co-operate in making the meeting successful. This will be a good occasion to give the new Coventry Branch a good send-off with its propaganda.

One of our readers tells us that after distributing some of our literature among his fellow-soldiers, one of his officers asked him to get some more literature, and they would pay for it. As a result of his propaganda, he has secured a number of new readers, and is expecting more. We hope he will not be disappointed. Meanwhile, we should be glad to hear from soldiers, either at home or abroad, who would care to receive parcels of literature, and would undertake the distribution thereof. It is good work all the time.

We are asked to announce that the *Freethinker*, with all publications of the Pioneer Press, can now be obtained at the Progressive Book Stall, 47 New Street, Paisley. This is one of many centres of distribution we hope to see established in the near future.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

The purpose of this Fund is to make good part of the deficit caused by the very heavy increase in the cost of paper, advance of wages, etc. A full statement on this head was made in our issue for September 1.

Eighth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged:—£392 0s. 3d. G. H. Green, 5s. W. H. Blackmore (second subscription), 5s. K. J., 2s. 6d. J. De B. and Wife, £1 1s. S. Clowes (fourth subscription), 4s. M. B., 5s. W. E. Hickman, 2s. 6d. W. Francis, 5s. A. B., 10s. J. and J. McGlashan, £2. G. Ogilvie, £1 1s. A. K. Ingarthdale, £1 1s. C. Bridger, 5s. E. Morrison, 10s. R. J. Hunter, 5s. Harold Elliott, 10s. S. Lidgett, 5s. G. B. Baillie, 10s. A. R. Richards, 3s. 6d. J. Stringer, 2s. 10d.

Per E. Pinder:—G. H. Folwell, £1. H. H. Woolley, 10s. W. Hopkins, 3s. E. Pinder, 3s. R. Wheatley, 2s. A. Martin, 2s.

Per Sec. Manchester Branch:—G. Brown, 3s. R. C. Cole, 5s. M. Greenwood, 2s. 6d. Mrs. Wilcock, 2s. 6d. Total, £404 4s. 7d.

Corrections.—"Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Browne, 5s." in our issue for October 6 should read "Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Broome." "A. W. B., £5" in our issue for October 13 should read "A. W. B. Shaw."

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A Naturalist's Paradise.

II.

(Continued from p. 550.)

THAT intelligent creature, the orangutan, or maias, as the native Malays call it, is still comparatively common in Borneo, even in Sarawak itself. This ape's distribution throughout the island is, however, dependent on the course of the streams, for the animal never appears to cross any channel, even the narrowest. The orang, or maias, is now restricted to Borneo and Sumatra, although it formerly enjoyed a wider range.

Shelford unsuccessfully strove to ascertain the domestic arrangements of the maias. The animal is extremely difficult to observe in its arboreal home. Essentially a tree-dweller, it rarely descends to earth, save when in need of water, and its favourite trees root in swampy soil through which the inquisitive naturalist slowly progresses while the object of his search skips nimbly along the upper branches of the trees. Again, the investigator is seriously handicapped by the circumstance that, although a large organism, the maias is surprisingly inconspicuous in its leafy surroundings.

A fruit-eating creature, the maias wanders widely to gather food, and seldom lingers on any given spot. The rhinoceros and wild cattle of Borneo have practically disappeared, so ruthless has been their treatment. To prevent the extinction of the maias, the Sarawak authorities imposed a strict limit on the number any one collector was entitled to slay. The wholesale destruction of the island's orchids has also necessitated their protection. In their *History of Sarawak*, Gould and Bampfylde declare that: "Collectors would ruthlessly destroy all orchids, especially the rarer kinds, which they could not carry away, in order to prevent others from collecting them."

Dr. Hose secured an excellent photograph of the nest or couch which the maias (orang-utan) constructs in the branches of the tree in which it sleeps. This structure is little larger than a rook's nest, and is composed of leaves and twigs. Upon this arboreal bed the ape reposes on his back, and firmly clutches the nearest branches with his hands and feet. In this way the maias is supported both by the small nest and the boughs which he holds in firm embrace even in deepest slumber. Shelford possessed a young maias which always retired to rest in an empty apartment. This room contained an iron bedstead, and we are told that

> on to the steel laths of this the ape would solemnly climb every evening at about 6.30; he invariably sprawled on the flat of his back, pulled over his head and chest a piece of sacking with which he was provided, and with his hands and feet got a good grip on the posts or frame of the bed. In a few minutes he would be asleep, and his snoring was so loud that he could be heard nearly all over the house.

According to the natives, the female maias, when her period of confinement approaches, arranges a great bed of branches in a trees, and remains there for several days. Most of the Bornean peoples regard this ape as an uncanny creature whose glance is unlucky, and at whom it is unwise to laugh. Both Kayans and Kenyahs view the maias with superstitious dread. Although a powerful animal, the maias is very docile unless enraged by persecution. But when infuriated the ape becomes a formidable antagonist, and will inflict serious injury even on his human enemies. In captivity the young maias proves an affectionate, entertaining, intelligent and cleanly pet. Its tricks betray numerous resemblances to the habits of small children. One of these is certainly suggestive. Shelford notes that the maias, when picking up a tiny object,

> such as a pea or a pellet of bread, does so, not with the tips of the thumb and first finger, but pushes the object with the ball of the thumb against the side of the proximal phalanx of the first finger, all the fingers being flexed, and so holding it, lifts it up. A young baby nearly always acts in the same way when trying to pick up a small object.

Several varieties of gibbon are found in Borneo. These little tailless apes congregate in large numbers, and their musical voices hail the sunrise in the primeval forest. The gibbon is a favourite pet not merely with the white residents but with the natives also. The animal walks erect, holding his long arms aloft, although his gait suggests that of a tipsy man. In mental power the gibbon falls far below the other anthropoid apes. By the Kenyahs the gibbon is sometimes regarded as sacred. A Kenyah chief informed Dr. Hose that his people would never dream of killing a gibbon, although "other Kenyahs will kill and probably eat it." In this instance the ape is evidently a tribal totem.

Among the various monkeys there are two quite abundant species of Macaques. One of these monkeys—the pig-tailed Macaque, or Brok, is strikingly intelligent, and the Malays train them to gather coconuts. First we are told:—

> A cord is fastened round the monkey's waist, and it is led to a coconut palm which it rapidly climbs. It then lays hold of a nut, and if the owner judges the nut to be ripe for plucking he shouts to the monkey, which then twists the nut round and round till the stalk is broken and lets it fall to the ground; if the monkey clutches hold of an unripe fruit, the owner tugs the end of the cord and the monkey tries another. I have seen a Brok act as a very effective fruit picker, although the use of the cord was dispensed with altogether, the monkey being guided by the tones and inflections of his master's voice.—(*A Naturalist in Borneo*).

While the Moslem Malays thus employ the monkey, the Pagan Kenyahs and Kayans vaguely view the animal as a hairy relative. In the districts inhabited by these tribes the Macaque is very commonly engaged in plundering the rice fields. In such circumstances resentment banishes fear, and the rice stealer is slain. But its flesh is taboo to the people, and they never eat it, although various other Bornean tribes esteem the meat of the Macaque a rare delicacy. Officered and led by a powerful male, this monkey wanders in droves through the jungle, and will fight with savage fury when attacked.

The eminent naturalist, Mr. H. N. Ridley, F.R.S., states that the commonest simian in Borneo, the crab-eating macaque, is also gregarious. It appears that the leading male of one of these monkey bands enjoys special privileges both of bed and board. The young are delivered in the trees, and in cases of troublesome parturition, the other females act as midwives, frequently with tragic consequences to the baby.

The native name for this macaque is "Kra," from the curious cry the animal makes when angered or alarmed. But the monkey really possesses extensive powers of expression. Fear, rage, contentment, wonder, and other feelings are all indicated by special sounds or signs. Ridley assures us that it is quite possible to distinguish the alarm note of this animal in the presence of a tiger from that uttered at the approach of a man.

The remaining monkeys of Borneo are all representatives of the Semnopithecus or Presbytes genus, with the solitary exception of the singular Nasalis larvatus, as yet never encountered elsewhere. This large-nosed monkey is a very comical-looking creature, with a most curiously prominent proboscis. The native designation

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for this animal is Orang Blanda (Dutchman), presumably because its nasal organ is pointed like that of a European, while the noses of the native races are broad and flat. Contrary to a quite general belief, this monkey subsists exclusively on vegetable food. The stories of its cruel robbery of the eggs and fledglings of beautiful birds appear to be entirely apocryphal.

The island of Madagascar is the chief habitat of the lemur, but two species of these quaint creatures are resident in Borneo. The slow Loris is a tree-dweller, and dozes through the day. As the day declines, the animal awakes, and searches for the insects which form its main food. Like lemurs in general, it is of feeble mentality, and its weird appearance seems solely responsible for the numerous superstitions concerning it which prevail among the Malays. Perhaps a few of this lemur's water-drops might prove useful in hunting for spirits in our own latitudes, for the animal's tears, it is said, "when applied to human eyeballs.....impart such clearness of sight that ghosts become visible."

One of the most uncanny creatures on earth is *Tarsius spectrum*. This little lemur's dark furry body scarcely exceeds 5½ inches in length, while its naked six-inch tail, something like a rat's, is decked at its extremity with a tuft of scanty hair. Its ears are large and very sensitive, while its eyes are simply enormous. The tarsier's diet mainly consists of cockroaches and insects, which it seizes with its wonderfully efficient hands. The lemur remains dormant during daylight, but as the evening advances it becomes eagerly occupied in its hunt for prey. Shelford refers to a tarsier that was kept under observation as it searched for insects which had tumbled into the traps of Nepenthes—the insectivorous pitcher plant. These flies and beetles had been drowned in the water that had gathered in the receptacles of the Nepenthes, and they were now drawn forth and greedily devoured by the hungry lemur. It is a pity that this intensely interesting animal so speedily languishes and dies in captivity, because if available as a pet, far fuller knowledge of its habits and instincts might be obtained than is now possessed. The female brings forth a single young one at a time, and this she will bear in her mouth in much the same manner as the domestic cat will carry her kitten.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Writers and Readers.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552?-1618).

To the majority of educated Englishmen sentimental emphasis is as hateful as is his Holiness the Pope to an Orangeman. We are nothing if not cool and critical. We prefer under to over-statement. Yet there are times when a little sentimental enthusiasm is salutary, especially when we commemorate the life and work of some great man who has helped to make us what we are. With our equipment, a less critical people would be celebrating an anniversary or some sort of centenary every week in the year. We seem studiously to avoid such rejoicings, possibly because they imply a good conceit of ourselves. Now, modesty is an excellent thing; but it may be carried too far, and it is carried too far when it makes us forget or esteem lightly the men of worth who have given us of their best. Those of my readers who have noted our national idiosyncrasy will be glad to see that the tercentenary of Sir Walter Raleigh's death on October 29 is to be commemorated here in London, and at Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina. Mr. Gosse is to deliver a panegyric at the Mansion House, and, of course, the parsons are to have their say. To-day, at St. Margaret's, Westminster, they will sing the praises of a Lucretian Theist, the friend of the Atheist Marlowe and the founder of the first Freethought circle for the discussion of religion—Raleigh's "School of Atheism," as it was called by a Jesuit pamphleteer of the time.

Raleigh was born about 1552; he was a Devonshire man, and came of good stock, but not good enough to prevent his being looked down upon as an adventurer, a *novus homo*, by the great nobles. He went to Oxford at the age of twelve or thirteen, but how long he was there we do not know. He acquired there, no doubt, that love of reading and study which was a passion with him to the end. He was fighting for the Huguenots in France, and was in the South of France when the Catholics were turning Paris into a hell on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. He saw his Protestant friends smoke out their enemies who were hiding in the caves of the Languedoc hills. It is possible, too, that he saw some fighting in the Low Countries. In 1578 he was in England, joining his step-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in setting out a fleet of legalized pirate ships. In 1580 he was given the rank of captain in the English Army, and sailed to Ireland, to help in quieting that rebellious country. In this sort of work he did not disdain to employ the methods of the "devil-dogs of Spain," for whose brutality he had no words strong enough. In 1581 he was sent to London with despatches, and managed to attract the attention of the elderly queen, who had a passion for handsome young men. His wit, eloquence, and fine manners brought him immense wealth and unlimited power, while his overbearing temper caused the nobility to regard him as an upstart. Up to 1603, he was the best-hated man in England. Temperamentally, he was energetic and restless, and ill-satisfied with the petty intrigues of a court. His ambition was to discover new lands and found colonies oversea. He is said to have spent £40,000 of his own money on the Virginian schemes—a gigantic sum when we remember that the Elizabethan pound was worth eight of ours. Unfortunately, all his enterprises were immediate failures, and when he had lost the patronage of the queen by injudiciously marrying without her permission, he became a butt for the satirist and playwright. A friend of mine, the late Mr. H. C. Hart, identified Raleigh as Sir Puntarvolo in *Everyman out of his Humour* and Amorphus in *Cynthia's Revels*. With all her jealousy and uncertainty of temper, Elizabeth remained a good friend to Raleigh, but at her death he lost everything except that peace which the outer world cannot give. The hypocritical pedant, James, had him tried and condemned on a frivolous charge in 1603, and kept him in prison in the Tower for fourteen years. His confinement was alleviated by reading, meditation, and scientific experiments, and intercourse with his family and friends. There he wrote his political and philosophic essays, and also his long *History of the World*, beginning with chaos and getting no further than the successors of Alexander the Great. In 1617 he was released, and set out once more to discover the golden city of Manoa, on the banks of the Orinoco. He was unsucessful, and, unfortunately, came into collision with the Spaniards, for whose friendship James was anxious. When Raleigh returned empty-handed and broken, his head was presented as a peace offering to outraged Spain. The barbarous sentence of hanging, drawing, and quartering, originally passed in 1603 (he was then reprieved), was carried out at Westminster on October 29, 1618.

. . . . .

For many people, Raleigh is merely a brave soldier and daring adventurer. Others remember him because he introduced the potato into Ireland, and made the smoking of tobacco fashionable; but for the student of English letters he is a considerable poet in an age of great poetry, and at his best a master of prose style. Linked by close friendship with Spenser, he wrote a fine commendatory sonnet to the first edition of the *Fairy Queen*. It will be found in all the anthologies. His early verses are written in the style of the day; they are witty and full of frigid conceits; he plays with words and feelings. Later, the note of passion deepening, the thoughts take on a melancholy cast; the melancholy of a faith in man chastened and disabused. For him as for Jacques in *As You Like It*, the world is a stage, and men merely strutting players, with feigned words and lying actions:—

> We are dressed for life's short comedy,
> On earth, the stage.....
> The graves which hide us from the scorching sun
> Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.

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As a prose writer he began with an anonymous tract describing the gallant fight of the little *Revenge* with the great Spanish men-of-war. This was published in 1591, four years before Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* saw the light. It is a model of simple and direct prose as this passage will show:—

> All the powder of the *Revenge* to the last barrel was now spent, all her pikes broken, forty of her best men slain, and the most part of the rest hurt. In the beginning of the fight she had but one hundreth free from sickness, and four score and ten sick, laid in hold upon ballast. A small troop of men to such a ship, and a weak garrison to resist so mighty an army. By those hundred all were sustained, the volleys, the boardings and entrings of fifteen ships of war, besides those which beat her at large. On the contrary, the Spanish were always supplied with soldiers brought from every squadron; all manner of arms, and powder at will. Unto ours there remained no comfort at all, no hope, no supply either of ships, men or weapons; the masts all beaten overboard, all her tackle cut asunder, her upper work altogether razed; and in effect evened she was with the water—but the very foundation or bottom of a ship, nothing being left overhead either for flight or defence.

This is the straightforward prose of a cultured man of action. Its beauty lies in its sinewy strength, its easy adaptability to all moods. With Raleigh it was to evolve into a style rich, complicated, and singularly harmonious, a style to which Sir Thomas Browne was to add the last perfection. It was the fruit of the long hours of thought and meditation spent in the not unpleasant solitude of the Tower—the most fruitful if not the happiest period of Raleigh's life. There he wrote his *History of the World* for the instruction of the engaging Prince Henry. It is a fearsome-looking folio full of painstaking and dull dissertations on impossible subjects, but enriched here and there with eloquent meditations and acute reflections that repay one amply for the trouble of looking for them. The apostrophe to Death, with which the book closes, "O eloquent just and mighty death," is too well known to quote. In the preface he says:—

> But let every man value his own wisdom, as he pleaseth. Let the Rich man think all fools, that cannot equal his abundance; the Revenger esteem all negligent that have not trodden down their opposites; the Politician, all gross that cannot merchandise their faith: Yet when we once come in sight of the Port of death, to which all winds drive us, and when by letting fall that fatal Anchor, which can never be weighed again, the Navigation of this life takes end: Then it is, I say, that our own cogitations (those sad and severe cogitations, formerly beaten from us by our health and felicity) return again, and pay us to the uttermost for all the pleasing passages of our life past.....

He ends his historical reflections on the same note of sobriety:—

> It is therefore death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are Abjects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them cry, complain and repent; yea, even to hate their forepassed happiness. He takes account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath Interest in nothing, but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a Glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness; and they acknowledge it.

. . . . .

I have noted that Raleigh was interested in free discussion of religious subjects, and numbered among his friends many who held heterodox, if not Atheistic, opinions. Like most men in those dangerous times, he made a formal profession of belief having no taste for martyrdom. He had pondered the *Essays* in Roman type, and had found many things to his taste in Charron's *De la Sagesse* (1601), transcribing passages from it in his *History of the World*. "By the audacity of his generalisations," says an acute foreign critic, M. Jusserand "Raleigh is closely related to a critical movement which was to develope unceasingly, beginning with Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes and Locke, and ending with the deists and sceptics of the eighteenth century." But, I imagine, it is not this aspect of the great Elizabethan that will commend itself to our religious friends to-day at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Geo. Underwood.

Correspondence.

BUDDHISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your contributor, "Mimnermus," on page 532 of your issue dated 13th inst., makes two misleading remarks regarding Buddhism.

In the first place, those acquainted with the teaching of the Gotama Buddha will hardly need to be told that it took the form of a philosophy rather than a religion.

But worse still is the seeming support given to the somewhat vulgar error, that Edwin Arnold's purely imaginary poem, written with the direct object of drawing an analogy between the Founders of Christianity and Buddhism, was an actual rendering of the latter's words.

Arthur J. E. Preece.

THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE.

Sir,—May I be allowed through the medium of your columns briefly to draw attention to a point which seems to militate against the Rationalist criterion? The theory that experience provides the only rational method of acquiring knowledge seems to me to be fraught with some difficulty. I mention it here as one seeking an explanation, which, very probably, you, sir, or some of your readers, may be able to offer. I notice that the Memorandum of Association of the R.P.A. says: "Rationalism may be defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of Reason, and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience, and independant of all arbitrary assumptions or authority." But, if we are so determined to limit philosophy to what is actually verifiable, it follows that we are deliberately diminishing our possible store of knowledge. Is it not unduly confining Reason, that "King of Heaven and Earth," to make it embrace a field no wider than that of experience? Without in any way belittling the importance of sensation and sense-perception, it seems to me that certainty is also the property of thought, by which man is differentiated from the rest of the animal creation. Plato was one of the first thinkers to appreciate the great distinction between reality and appearance; and before him Heraclitus of Ephesus pointed out that experience ought not to be considered as the ultimate criterion of reality—a truth which many great thinkers of all ages have repeatedly emphasized. There are many commonly accepted scientific truths which owe their origin, not to observation and experience alone, but rather to inductive reasoning on the data supplied by observation and experience. If we were content to accept the test of experience only, we should no longer be able to believe in such scientifically established facts as the motion of the earth in space or the Copernican system. Thus, would not such a method of attempting to exclude a first cause by reason of which all things are—commonly labelled God by theologians—at the same time tend to eliminate Heliocentricism and other accepted scientific beliefs founded on a sound basis of probability? Moreover, it seems to me that such a philsophy must necessarily exclude that very inductive principle by which scientific hypotheses come into being; for this same inductive principle cannot be proved by any appeal to experience, and is itself essentially assumed. It is true that with regard to examined cases experience may be expected to confirm the inductive principle; but, in dealing with unexamined cases, it would appear that an inference from the examined to the unexamined can only be justified by the inductive principle. From this it appears that arguments, purporting to be based on experience, which attempt to argue as to the experienced, can only do so by assuming the inductive principle. Hence to endeavour to apply experience in proof of the inductive principle seems to me to involve a begging of the question.

Thus the Rationalist system of philosophy does seem to require assumptions, and the definition of the Memorandum to which I refer seems to imply a contradiction. Personally, I am inclined to believe that to arrive at certainty

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about anything, we are not bound to do so, only through the medium of sensation, though I admit that this is the more usual way. But certainty belongs as much as anything to thought as distinct from animal sensation, and it is a state of mind which may be brought about by inductive reasoning just as much as by direct evidence. This seems to me to explain why people can be certain of the existence of God without having any direct evidence, and in the absence of any infallible proof.

Trevor T. Berry.

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death of an old and valued friend of the *Freethinker* in the person of Mr. William Mumby, of Newark, Notts. Mr. Mumby's interest in the Freethought cause dates back to the Bradlaugh days, and that interest remained keen until the end. The head of a large wholesale clothing firm, he stood well with his large staff of employees, and, in 1914, worked out a co-partnership scheme, shares being allotted to them in proportion to years of service. He was also a Justice of the Peace, and a liberal supporter of a number of local movements for the general betterment of the people.

We last saw him at his house some eighteen months ago, when, although unwell, he was quite cheerful, and evidenced his usual lively interest in the affairs of the world. Only about a month ago he wrote us much concerned to know whether we were not working too hard, and begging that we would take things easier. But he said nothing of his own health, and we found nothing in his letter for apprehension. A few days before his death he said to his family: "If I do not recover, I die with my mind at peace. I have always tried to lead an upright life, and I have done no man any harm that I know of." We can echo the local newspaper when it says that those who knew him best will readily concede that this was a fitting epitaph.

At Mr. Mumby's own request the body was conveyed to London and cremated at Golder's Green. His wife and children accompanied the body to the crematorium. The only wreaths permitted to go on the coffin were those from his family. They have lost a good husband and parent, Newark a worthy townsman, and the *Freethinker* and the Freethought cause a staunch and tried friend.—C. Cohen.

On Saturday, October 19, the Freethought Movement became the poorer by the loss of Henry Cowell, one of its most fearless, energetic, loyal, and honourable supporters. Mr. Cowell, who was a Vice-President of the National Secular Society and a Director of the Secular Society, Ltd., had been a Freethinker from his early youth, when, a staunch Radical and follower of Charles Bradlaugh, he worked for him assiduously in Sheffield. On leaving that town, he travelled widely, finally settling down in London, where he became the leading spirit of the Kingsland Branch N. S. S. When in health, he was a most regular attendant at meetings, and a generous supporter of all funds. He was absolutely devoted to principle, and whilst admiring and respecting his leaders, never hesitated to offer opposition and criticism, though in the most open and amiable manner. He lost no opportunity of expounding his views, and distributed much Freethought literature, often to the detriment of his business. His sterling qualities endeared him to all with whom he came in contact, and the grief of his sorrowing widow and youthful son is shared by all his friends. A few weeks ago, when paying what he felt was a farewell visit to the undersigned, he expressed a desire for a Secular burial, which he reiterated on his death-bed. Will friends please note that this will take place at Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, N., on Tuesday, October 29, at 3.30?—E. M. Vance.

Do justice to your brother (you can do that whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him, because you don't love him; and you will come to hate him.—*Ruskin.*

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, J. H. Van Biene, "What Atheism has done for Humanity." Open Debate.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval): 7.30, Mr. J. B. Johnson, "Is the Bible True?"

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Vistas of a New World."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Swasey, Dales, and Kells; Councillor Harry Boulter, 4, "Bible Stories"; 6.30, "More Bible Stories."

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Fifty Years of Darwinism: Its Influence on Religion and Politics."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 6, A Lecture, "Richard Jefferies," *The Story of My Heart.*

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss Margaret McMillan, "Vital Elements in the New Education Bill."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. T. F. Greenall, "Atalanta in Calydon."

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S. (12a Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Monthly Meeting and Election of Officers.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. E. N. Simons, "The Jews and their Religion."

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Hall, First Floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Fothergill, "Secularism and its Teachers."

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (c/o Alexandra Road, Swansea): 6.30, Branch Meeting.

Ethical Movement Meetings.

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SATURDAY AFTERNOONS at 3 p.m.

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W. H. THRESH, Founder and Principal of Ruskin House School (Rationalistic), Southend-on-Sea, has for nearly two years been engaged in clerical work for thirteen hours daily, and has had a breakdown through the strain. He will be pleased to receive lecture engagements for low fees. Subjects: Popular Science, Evolution, and Education. The matter is very urgent. Mr. Thresh is an Atheist.—Address c/o 5 Waddon Court Road, Waddon, Surrey.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
A Queer Defence.—The Editor	565
"Our Daily Bread."—J. T. Lloyd	566
The Revival of Devil-Worship.—Mimnermus	567
A Note on Miss Royden.—J. F. Rayner	568
"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund	572
A Naturalist's Paradise.—T. F. Palmer	572
Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."—Keridon	573
The Clergy and the Theatre.—"Verne E. Sheridan"	574

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

A Queer Defence.

Most people are familiar with the story of the man who informed a friend that he had been defending his character against the defamations of a mutual acquaintance. "Why," he indignantly exclaimed; "he said you were not fit to black his boots." "Oh," said the aspersed one, "And what did you say?" "I said you were." And for this defence he was expected to be thankful. Now, there is a certain defence of Christianity which reminds one of the above story. When the Freethinker argues that Christianity should be rejected because it is not true, a common retort is that the rejection of Christianity jeopardizes the practice of morality. Now, if Freethought and immorality, and Christianity and morality, went hand in hand, there would be at least a *primâ facie* case for the plea. But this is not the case. Freethinkers are not all monuments of vice, and Christians are not all paragons of virtue. We need not discuss the number of each that fall below a given standard of conduct, nor need we discuss how many of each in proportion to numbers betray moral shortcomings. It is enough that, taking the world as it goes, it is impossible to say of any man, by merely noting his conformity with accepted ethical rules, that he is a Christian or a Freethinker. To find out what he is we have to enter on an altogether different line of inquiry.

* * *

Conduct and Creed.

Now, the Christian of the type we are dealing with asserts that his morality is an outcome of his religious beliefs; and if we are to take his assertion seriously, some very curious conclusions follow. If he is married, we have to set on one side love of wife as having any great influence; if he is a father, affection for his children must be eliminated; as a friend, we must do away with any feeling of loyalty; as a member of society, we have to set on one side all feelings of duty. If we admit the moral force of these things we diminish the ethical importance of his religious beliefs. If affection for wife and children, loyalty to friends, and duty to society are admitted to be factors in determining morality, then it may happen that these may be strong enough to serve in the absence of religious beliefs. This kind of defender of the faith argues that he is only as decent as he is because he believes in God and a future life, and would be much worse than he is if he did not so believe. We are stating the case bluntly, so that it may be faced clearly.

* * *

Getting at the Facts.

Now, we are quite aware that humility is one of the Christian virtues, but this certainly seems like straining a virtue until it becomes a vice. It is carrying self-depreciation too far. That *some* Christians are the better for a little watching we should be the last to deny, but that *all* of them are not in this condition we strongly affirm. We do not believe that our Christian neighbours are only kept from burgling our house either because they believe in a God or because of the policeman on the beat. Were they so inclined they could easily evade the latter; and experience proves that when the latter can be avoided, the former is not an insurmountable obstacle to rascality. We do not believe that Christian husbands and wives, or parents and children, are what they are because of their religious beliefs, otherwise we should be denying them the possession of qualities that are obviously possessed by those who have no religious belief. We do not believe that all Christians are rascals held in leash by the fear of punishment. Many of their preachers say they are, a number of laymen think they are, and a proportion act as though they are. But *all* of them! Well, we have a much higher opinion of Christians than to believe it. We want to defend Christians against the slanders of the pulpit, and we claim that what the Freethinker can do the Christian can do. We believe in the substantial equality of the human race, and that all are alike in kind, however much they may differ in degree. And, therefore, we call attention to a significant fact, or series of facts. Freethinkers as husbands or wives, as parents or citizens, are as well behaved as Christians. No chief of police has ever reported that owing to the growth of non-religious opinions the number of crimes has gone up, and the police force has had to be strengthened. Freethought husbands and wives do not cut conspicuous figures in the divorce court. They are not notorious as child beaters. If Christians work for social and political reform so do Freethinkers. In extreme revolutionary movements Freethinkers have given their lives as cheerfully as have the religious. When the Christian asserts that only the power of Christ keeps him sober, the Freethinker legitimately replies that he can refrain from getting drunk without such assistance. There is really not a single social or domestic virtue practised by Christians that does not flourish with at least equal strength among Freethinkers.

* * *

Are Freethinkers Superior to Christians?

Are we therefore to accept the calumny of the pulpit, and say that the Freethinker is so much more richly endowed with the higher human qualities that he can do, without religious hopes and fears, what the Christian is only able to accomplish with their assistance. If that is so, what a superior kind of mortal the

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Freethinker must be? We do not say he is, we do not even believe he is; it is the Christian who implies as much. We are putting the case bluntly because we want it to be seen plainly. But it is certain that if all men and women were as bad as the Christian apologist paints them, society could not hold together for twelve months. A policeman is a bad teacher of morals, and he is certainly not improved by being shifted to an infinite distance and placed in an unlocalisable heaven. The moral groundwork of social life lies in the feelings and instincts and ideas that are generated by social contact, and for this reason substantially the same moral phenomena is manifested by all, irrespective of their religious or their non-religious opinions. The goodness of the Freethinker is a standing puzzle to the Christian. It is quite contrary to what he is led to expect. On the other hand, the goodness of the Christian—or his badness either—is no puzzle to the Freethinker. His philosophy of life includes the Christian view in a way that the Christian philosophy cannot include Freethought. To the Christian the Freethinker is an opinion *plus* a man, to the Freethinker the Christian is a man *plus* an opinion. The Christian hates the man in the interests of an opinion, the Freethinker hates an opinion in the interests of the man.

* * *

Defending the Enemy.

Hence our defence of the Christian against the slanders of his leaders. We are standing up for the innate equality of Freethinkers and Christians, because we do not believe that Freethinkers are made of such superior clay that they can play the part of real men and women under conditions that would demoralize a Christian. The Christian can be just as good as a Freethinker is if he will only throw off the demoralizing influence of his creed. If a Freethinker can be sober, honest, and reliable without religion, so can a Christian. The Christian is not an incurable moral cripple that must go through life on crutches for the issuing of which the clergy hold the patent right. Underneath the Christian there is a man, or the nucleus of one, if we can only get at him. The trouble is that most of them have been brought up with the idea that the deeper the man is buried the better, and they resent all attempts to disentomb him. At any rate, in relation to the morality of non-Christians the follower of Christ is between the horns of a dilemma. Either he must admit that his analysis of the moral forces is wrong, and that religion is not *the* moral determinent in the life of man; or he must assert, inferentially, that non-Christians are the innate moral superiors of Christians, since they are able to maintain a standard of conduct admittedly as good as that of Christians—sometimes better—and without any of the adventitious aids and extraneous incentives which the Christian believes is essential to his own right conduct. We have tried to place the issue plainly; if we did not know Christians so well, we might expect them to meet it with an equally plain reply.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Matter, in relation to vital phenomena, has yet to be studied, and the command of Canute to the waves would be wisdom itself compared with any attempt to stop such inquiries. Let the tide rise, and let knowledge advance; the limits of the one are not more rigidly fixed than those of the other; and no worse infidelity could seize upon the mind than the belief that a man's earnest search after truth should culminate in his perdition. Fear not, my friend, but rest assured that as we understand *matter* better, *mind* will become capable of nobler and of wiser things.—*John Tyndall.*

"Our Daily Bread."

CHURCHES and chapels all over the country have been holding thanksgiving services for the harvest, but no notice has been taken by any of them of the fact that for many farmers in the Highlands of Scotland and Wales there has been no harvest, whole fields of grain having perished through bad weather conditions. Is God a respecter of persons, who smiles on the valleys but frowns on the mountains, who showers his favours upon the dwellers in the southern plains but wreaks his vengeance upon those who have the misfortune to till the northern hills? Some of the divines spoke of the harvest as "the annual miracle," but they omitted to mention that in multitudes of cases the miracle was not completed. Is the harvest an annual miracle, or is it an annual instance of man's mastery over Nature, won after countless ages of more or less blind, unintelligent, but always resolute struggle for survival? As Ingersoll so well says:—

> Many years ago our fathers were living in dens and caves. Their bodies, their low foreheads, were covered with hair. They were eating berries, roots, bark, and vermin. They were fond of snakes and raw fish. They discovered fire and, probably by accident, learned how to cause it by friction. They found how to warm themselves—to fight the frost and storm. They fashioned clubs and rude weapons of stone with which they killed the larger beasts and now and then each other. Slowly, painfully, almost imperceptibly they advanced. They crawled and stumbled, staggered and struggled toward the light. To them the world was unknown. On every hand was the mysterious, the sinister, the hurtful. The forests were filled with monsters, and the darkness was crowded with ghosts, devils, and fiendish gods (*Works*, vol. iv., p. 159).

Primitive man was utterly ignorant of the law of sowing and reaping; but as he had to live by his wits or starve, he kept on hammering at the door of the unknown until it began to open. Bread came to him, not as a free gift from the supernatural in answer to believing prayer, but as the reward of his own incessant strife with the very forces which often seemed bent on crushing him. He persistently wrestled with what he ignorantly feared, and ultimately prevailed. And yet, in a sermon published in the *Church Times* for October 18, the Rev. A. Hanbury Tracey, vicar of St. Barnabas' Church, Pimlico, describes food as God's gift to man, and as possessing, on that account, "a mysterious sacredness." As a matter of simple fact, food is a symbol of man's triumph over Nature, and God is not in it at all, except to the blind belief of the pious. Mr. Tracey says that "man's need of food is that not of a higher sort of animal, but of one destined for Eternal Life"; but that is not true in any verifiable sense. Food does for man just exactly what it does for all other living things, and in its absence all life ceases. Of course, it is a clergyman's business to connect everything with religion, and Mr. Tracey, true to his profession, observes that this yearly operation of Nature, which the Churches thankfully commemorate, "is still eloquent of man's dependence on religion." Two-thirds of his discourse he devotes to a most dogmatic assertion, not only of the superiority of Christianity to all other religions, but also of its absolute perfection.

In spirit this reverend gentleman illustrates the exclusive and tyrannical nature of the Christian religion. He tells us there are two ways of regarding religion. One is the world's way, and the other the Church's; but in reality the two are one. Sir Robert Peel may have been pre-eminently a man of the world; but it was as a hopelessly prejudiced religious man that he expressed himself

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thus: "It is not prudent as a rule to trust yourself to any man who tells you that he does not believe in a God or in a future after death." The truth is, on the contrary, that the world does not as a rule trust itself to people who indulge in loud religious professions. As a member of the Catholic party in the Anglican Church, Mr. Tracey declares that "the Christian religion is the only religion which can properly be described as a social necessity, that it is the only religion which spiritually, intellectually, and morally can supply man with that which, having regard to his higher nature, he stands in absolute need of." This is a truth of which, according to him, numbers of professing Christians, and even Church people, are in total ignorance. In a glib and careless way they talk about the various forms of religion as if there were not much to choose between them. In Mr. Tracey's opinion this is very shocking, and in ours it is equally shocking to find that the reverend gentleman can be so bigoted and intolerant. This is how he puts it:—

> The persons to whom I refer talk as if there could possibly be some comparison between a religion which makes its whole claim to be heard to depend upon the absolute truth of the self revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, and a religion which does nothing of the sort. Such persons talk in their ignorance or their thoughtlessness about the mysteries and the dogmas and the moral excellences of such other religions as if the world were as much indebted to them as to the religion of Jesus Christ, as if, in fact, it were possible for one religion to advantage the world as much as another. It is shocking to note how some professing Christians and Church people thus dishonour their Faith.

To us the wonder is not that Mr. Tracy, holding his present views of Christianity, regards all other religions as utterly unworthy of comparison with it, but that in the present advanced state of the science of comparative religion he can honestly entertain such views. He is horrified to learn that any professing Christians can so dishonour their faith as to include other cults in the same category; but the most horrifying thing of all, from a religious point of view, is that Christians can so dishonour their God as to believe him capable of giving an absolutely perfect religion to less than one half of his children, and a great host of deplorably imperfect and corrupt ones to all the rest of them. Besides, with all available facts in our possession, it cannot justly be maintained that the minority who are Christians are on an average morally and socially any superior to the majority who are not. We do not in the least doubt Mr. Tracey's sincerity in regarding the Creed of Christendom "as an infallible utterance guaranteed by the consent of the undivided Church," but we do most seriously lay to his charge the offence of doing violence to the moral character of God whose servant he claims to be, and the merest tyro in history is fully aware that Christianity won its supremacy in the West, not by its intrinsic merit, but by repeated appeals to physical force.

This preacher's closing assertion is that Christianity is "a social necessity because of its unique moral value"; and this assertion is open to the criticism that it is radically false. Surely, a religion rooted in immorality cannot possibly make for an exalted type of morality in those who profess it. It may be true, but is by no means beyond doubt, that "it is the only religion which begins and ends with pure devotion to a Person"; but, unfortunately, that Person is at once its nominal creator and its real creation—a pure myth. Mr. Tracey's definition of a Christian is well worth quoting:—

> A Christian is not a man who lives a certain life and believes certain truths, but a Christian is a man who lives as he lives and believes what he believes out of pure love for him who is in himself the sum total of Christianity.

Being a sheer myth, Christ means a different thing to almost *everyone* who believes in him. Naturally, he is the sum total of Christianity, of which there are, in consequence, innumerable versions. No wonder Mr. Tracey goes to Napoleon for an argument for the Godhead of Christ, for there are divines not a few who curse Napoleon as a rank and blasphemous unbeliever. At any rate, his alleged utterances at St. Helena are almost as legendary as those of the Gospel Jesus.

Of all curious things, however, the most curious is the statement that our indebtedness to Nature for our daily bread is eloquent of our dependence on a religion so essentially anti-natural and immoral as the one so irrationally eulogized by Mr. Hanbury Tracey. All mankind enjoy the fruitfulness of the earth, which, apart from the light and heat of the sun, would be impossible; but there are millions of people who have no sense of dependence upon a Supreme Being, and millions more who have no faith whatever in a virgin-born Redeemer. Nature works in simple obedience to her own inherent laws, and our life consists in subjecting ourselves to her ordinances and utilizing her resources. It is highly instructive to note that those who understand her operations best are the least dependent on any form of religion.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Revival of Devil-Worship.

> There is no darkness but ignorance.—*Shakespeare.*
> The vain crowds, kindly wandering, led by lies.
> —*Lucretius.*

The Christian religion places a premium upon ignorance. The Bible contains the warning that not many wise are called, and that "God" chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. The Christian seldom speculates about his Deity. In the rapture produced by receiving a direct message from Omnipotence, he does not criticize, and if reason raises its still, small voice, it is his duty to show reason the door, and lock it afterwards. Reason may be a divine gift; but it must be kept in a burglar-proof, iron safe. Its free use is sinful, and may have awful consequences in the next world. Even to inquire into the cause of this anomaly is fraught with peril. The only liberty left to the religious citizen of a free country is to read the Bible for the purpose of finding out God's will and then obey it, or put up with the fearful results. To be a Christian, one must swallow the Bible whole. It is a worse job than evading the skirts of Dora, but it must be got through somehow. The only way is to chloroform or kill the reason.

The religious propaganda among sailors and soldiers has called renewed attention to this form of religion. The numerous tracts, written especially to entrap the fighting men, show conclusively that Christians, like the Bourbons, "learn nothing and forget nothing." Most of them appear to be written by men ignorant of the very alphabet of science. They blandly assume, not only that the Bible is true, but that it contains all truth. The writers of these leaflets have never a shadow of suspicion that history contradicts it, science flouts it, morality disowns it, and that superstition is twin-sister to it. These wooden-headed fanatics, in the first quarter of the twentieth century, put forward the fabulous rubbish of twenty centuries ago as being the highest wisdom of our time.

In controversy with Freethinkers, when defending their faith, the clergy act like cuttlefish, and raise a camouflage of words by means of which they evade the

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dilemma of dogmas. When they are addressing Sunday-school children, or haranguing village congregations, they forget their lame apologetics, and serve out unadulterated dogma. At a safe distance from the firing line, other things are served out besides cigarettes and currant cake. Here is a quotation from a tract, circulated among the troops, which shows Christianity in its most attractive guise. It bears the title, *What is there after Death?*

> You will never forget in hell. The chords of memory will be swept to the awful wailing of the lost. You may think of your loved ones left on earth, and seek, as Dives did, to send a message to them. But no, the stern silence of eternity forbids.....Oh! poor lost souls in torment! The drop of water to cool your burning tongues can never be given.....You chose death, and ye must die.

Let there be no mistake about it. The best-known Christian preachers from Charles Spurgeon to Billy Sunday have been men who imagined that the world's clock struck at Jerusalem two thousand years ago, and that it has never moved since. Moody and Sankey, Torrey and Alexander, in spite of their great popularity, were half-educated men appealing to ignorant folk. In spite of his parade of an American University degree, the Rev. William Sunday, Doctor of Divinity, is an ignoramus and a charlatan. Many years ago he was a baseball player, who was converted. Imperfectly educated, he has a keen eye for business, and he finds working in the Lord's vineyard a more profitable job than his former profession.

This popular Christian preacher, who addresses the largest congregations in the world, is an ignoramus, if not worse. For example, this is what he says, or shouts, of science:—

> Why don't we evolute a little now? I don't believe my great-great-great grandfather was a monkey, sitting up a tree, shying cocoa nuts with his tail across an alley at a neighbouring monk. I have too much respect for my ancestors. But if you think in that way, you can take your monkey ancestors and go to hell.

Sunday's command of slang is excellent, but, characteristically, he soils everything he touches. Recall the Biblical Story of the Prodigal Son, which, in its way, is not without art and dignity of a kind. This is how it emerges from the inspired mouth of this American evangelist:—

> He came up to his father and said, "Dig up, I'm tired of this, and want to see the world." His father didn't know what he meant, "Come across with the mazuma; come clean, divvy, I wan't the coin see?" Finally the father tumbled, and he said, "I got you."

Is it not enough to make a decent Christian ashamed? Once in his career Billy Sunday did deliver an oration worth listening to. That was when he addressed some old soldiers in Pennsylvania, and the newspapers praised him "not wisely, but too well." Unhappily, it was found that Sunday had used one of Ingersoll's old orations. Those who remembered the evangelist's language concerning Freethinkers were amused, for he had borrowed, without acknowledgment, from a man he was in the habit of consigning to the hottest portion of Hades. "You can tell the whole dirty bunch to come on," said the Rev. W. Sunday, D.D., in replying to the soft impeachment, "I'm here, and I'm giving hell the best kind of a run I know how."

It is, surely, the bitterest comment on Christianity that such a man as Billy Sunday should be regarded by the orthodox as a veritable Saint George attacking the dragon of Freethought. Freethinkers, we hope, will learn the lesson that the degrading supernaturalism they so justly detest is the mere result of a grossly imperfect system of education. Christianity draws the very breath of its life from the privileged classes, by whose money it is supported, because those classes realise that if working people trouble themselves unduly about a next world they will not care much about the conditions under which they live in this. So long as there are lower classes whose function it is to labour that the privileged few may enter into the fruits of their labour, so long will religion be necessary to keep the working-people in harness.

Christianity subsists to-day because it is profitable. Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops receive between them no less than £180,700 yearly, with emoluments in the shape of palaces and palatial residences. In addition 50,000 parsons have comfortable livings in peace, and an enviable position in war-time, when they are altogether exempted from the rigours of military service. Our work, as Freethinkers, is by no means over when tens of thousands of our countrymen are the prey of priestcraft. Any day the masses may be roused to an orgy of evangelism, for they do not lack credulity. The ghostly Russian army, the angels at Mons (vouched for by the Bishop of Durham), the regimental mascots, and the prevalence of charms among the soldiers, should make any Rationalist "think furiously." What critical acumen have those American citizens who kneel and weep at the bidding of an evangelist whose sickening utterances proclaim him a degenerate? The revival of devil-worship is a real menace. When Mark Twain was asked by a parson to subscribe towards the rebuilding of a churchyard wall, the genial humourist replied: "I do not see the necessity. The folks in the graveyard can't get out, and the people outside don't want to get in." When the democracy is educated, it will not see the necessity of paying money to hear the worn-out repetitions of orthodoxy any more than it will pay to see the revolutions of Tibetan praying-wheels. By directing men's thoughts to a to-morrow in heaven or hell parsons deter millions from thinking of to-day. And, as the schoolboy said: "to-morrow never comes." Our happiness is here, or not at all. Why should democracy sell its splendid birthright for paper promises on the Bank of Faith?

MIMNERMUS.

A Note on Miss Royden.

MISS ROYDEN, who preaches at the City Temple, and whose discourses are published by the *Christian Commonwealth*, may be taken as a sign of the times. Her moral teachings are quite excellent, and in close accord with modern Rationalism. They are certainly not Christian, though she seeks to gain acceptance for them by an attempt to reconcile them with the sayings of Jesus Christ, on which she puts a gloss unknown to the apostles, doctors, saints, and martyrs of the ages, and which in fact they would have repudiated with horror. Her very appearance in the pulpit is contrary to Scripture (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12) as it has always been accepted and acted upon. To argue that the doctrines of Christ have been everywhere misunderstood till Miss Maude Royden turned her attention to them is to brand Christianity as a fiasco.

In "Moral Problems, No. 1" and elsewhere she claims that Christ, our great exemplar, was no ascetic; but at all events his example did not include marriage. He was "tempted in all things even as we are," but the peculiar difficulties and stumbling-blocks of the married life he never experienced; nor did he lend any countenance to Miss Royden's pleasing views as to the "naturalness of man and woman desiring physical union"; on the contrary, he referred it to our hardness of heart, *i.e.*, sinfulness (Matt. xix. 8, 11, 12); and St. Paul, the greatest of the apostles, who was converted to Christianity by a special miracle, strongly deprecated all sex

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intercourse (1 Cor. vii. 1, 7-9, 32, etc.). The Roman Catholic Church lays it down in so many words that sex intercourse, except for the purpose of procreation, is mortal sin, and the reputable Protestant Churches have never, so far as I know, repudiated this doctrine. The "purity" of Christian sex-morality has always been its greatest boast. Its fundamental idea has always been that sex-intercourse is a vile thing, and the less of it the better. So strongly has this notion permeated Christian thought that even in a typically modern work like Maxwell's *Devil's Garden* the hero is extolled for his "purity" in "ceasing to be a lover" to his wife. In her favourable notice of Islam as comparable to Christianity in its non-asceticism, Miss Royden forgets that Christians have all along denounced it as the "sensual creed of Mohammed."

Miss Royden's interpretation of "Take no thought," etc. (Luke xii. 22-34), as showing that Christ, with his allusion to "your Father who knoweth ye have need of these things," was concerned about bodily wants, is obviously forced. We all know we cannot exist without nourishment and (in cold climates) clothing, but the context plainly shows that the Christian is to take no interest in them, or even to try to get them. By the same rule he is to cast aside earthly possessions of all kinds (Matt. vi., 19), and so the saints have always seen it.

The lady's nerve reaches its climax in her treatment of Christ's teaching about divorce. It appears that when he said "Whosoever shall put away his wife.....and shall marry another, committeth adultery," he had no idea of its being taken literally. We do not act, says Miss Royden very truly, on his teaching about killing, or oath-taking, or judging—or, we may add, on any other of the injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount—therefore, argues she, just as we are now killing one another to an extent unparalleled in pre-Christian times, so we are entitled to divorce one another if we think fit. Christ was "laying down principles, not making rules." This remarkable opposition between rules and principles does not seem (so far as divorce is concerned) to have occurred to other Christian leaders, for they are pouring in petitions to Parliament against the Bill to relax the present divorce laws. In this they are quite consistent. It is an historical fact that freedom of divorce, prevalent in Pagan days, was abolished or greatly restricted by the first Christian Emperor, and never revived till the time of the "infidel" revolutionary Government of France.

If Christ, as Miss Royden asserts, "delighted in the beauty of health and vigour and strength" and the "needs of the body were as precious to him as the needs of the soul," it seems odd that his most devoted followers didn't notice it. Not to dwell on the hideous self-tortures of the early anchorites, we may point to the lady saint who boasted that she never washed except the tips of her fingers for the Mass, to St. Thomas of Canterbury, Chancellor and Archbishop, covered with lice, to Sir Thomas More with his hair shirt and his scourge. These were among the highest ornaments of Christendom, and its most characteristic products.

How much better it would be if Miss Royden were honestly to admit that she derived her ideas on the claims of the physical, of sex, and of women, not from the New Testament at all, but from Mary Wollstonecraft, J. S. Mill, Lecky, Buckle, Geddes and Thomson, Lea, Letourneau, Westermarck, and other Rationalists. But, doubtless, she knows her world. The Rationalist pill is bitter on the vitiated palate of the religionist, and the sugar of pious phraseology may help it down. She is, perhaps, wise in her generation. Still, the loyal Rationalist loves the plain truth, cost what it may.

J. F. Rayner.

Acid Drops.

The House of Commons has taken the leap, and decided that women are eligible to sit as Members of Parliament. The level of the House has fallen too low for it to be a compliment for anyone to be there, but the admission of women is at least an assertion of right. There were very few objectors to the proposal that women should sit in Parliament; "scraps of paper" and assertions of principle by old-time opponents to the enfranchisement of women were tossed on one side quite lightly, and politicians showed themselves the equal of parsons in swallowing their previous professions when it paid them to do so. For our part, we regard the measure as one of justice and common sense, and another indication of the waning influence of Christianity.

One thing worth noting, however, is that the avowed responsibility for the change of opinion with regard to woman and the vote is, not the nature or the dignity of woman, but the part played by her in the prosecution of the War. These good Christian legislators have made woman's right to the vote contingent upon her readiness to help in conducting a war. As an example we may cite Mr. A. MacCullum Scot who, on a previous occasion, opposed the vote being given to women on the ground that all laws rested on force (a perfectly false and stupid doctrine), this time voted for women entering Parliament because, he said, his views had been enlarged "as to the extent to which women were capable of serving their country in time of war." Thus is stupidity piled on stupidity. If the capacity for helping in war is to be made the ground for women voting, why not apply the same standard to men? And if this is not Prussianism, in its worst form, what is it? At the opening of the War we said that a large number of people in this country ought to try and make up their minds whether they hated Prussianism or were only jealous of it. We feel the same advice is timely now. It is a poor thing to be jealous, and if women justify their use of the vote, it will be as a war-preventing, rather than as a war-waging, factor. What the world needs is an end to Prussianism in both act and thought.

The *Morning Post* reports that the Kaiser is suffering from "a serious mental disease." The only symptom described is that he is "becoming more and more pious, praying the whole day." We do not know what other symptoms there are, but the one named seems conclusive.

The teachers of Scotland have at last taken their courage in both hands, and scrapped the Catechism. At the request of the Scottish Churches, the Educational Institute of Scotland (the teachers' professional union) undertook to draw up a Syllabus of Religious Instruction, and for eighteen months a sub-committee has been working at it. At the Council meeting held on October 12, Dr. Strong submitted the draft for approval. Dr. W. Boyd moved that the Catechism form no part of the Syllabus. There was a double objection to it. No educated person now agreed to the theological doctrines taught to children in the Catechism. Even if the doctrines were true, this would be a wrong way of teaching children. Miss Rattray seconded, and the motion to excise the Catechism was adopted.

A facetious writer in the *Daily Chronicle* says: "I asked a returning friend: 'What is war like?' He replied: 'Oh, you sit in a puddle and read one of last year's magazines.'" That friend must have been an Army chaplain.

An advertisement of St. Mary-at-Hill Church announces: "Sacred songs with orchestra and cinema. Speaker, Prebendary Carlile, on 'Hun Doves.'" It seems like the "old, old story" under a brand-new disguise.

Alongside of a poster on the Glasgow tramways announcing a great missionary meeting in the St. Andrew's Hall, is another poster appealing for funds for the National Society

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for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Is Mr. Dalrymple trying to play a joke at the expense of those organizing the missionary meeting? What satire in a Christian country.

The Very Rev. Canon McBrearty, St. Anthony's, Govan, has left £2,776. Quite enough to pay his passage over the Jordan.

The writer of the weekly religious article in the *Times* (the Northcliffe Press, by the way, never neglects religion) discovers in the defeat of the German Army evidence of the operation of a "retributive Power inflicting its awful sentence on the authors of a colossal wrong against the world." The same old cant, and the same old stupidity. This "Power" remains idle while the wrong is being done, and only becomes active in the direction of wreaking vengeance. Even then, thousands of other people must suffer in the very act of inflicting retribution. It is, surely, either a dulled or a distorted moral sense that can write such rubbish as an apology for God. And there is little wonder that a militaristic, God-drunken, people like the German leaders have reached their present position.

Is Spiritualism a religious denomination? The Sheffield magistrates have decided that it is not. The question was raised in a case in which the President of the Spiritualist National Union was charged with failing to render military service. Perhaps Sir Oliver Lodge will explain. He has so many "spirit" friends in the "next world."

America has a very sharp way with men with "consciences." In the House of Commons it was stated that forty conscientious objectors were tried recently in the United States and sentenced to penal servitude for life, which was afterwards graciously commuted to twenty-five years' penal servitude. Should they die in prison, such very wicked men will have, doubtless, a further sentence in the next world of several million years, 212 Fahrenheit. They must appreciate the blessing of living in a civilized and Christian community.

Restaurant music is not liable to the entertainment tax, and is in the same enviable position as church music. The dear clergy still make a charge for musical additions to wedding services.

In his inaugural lecture of the joint session of the Edinburgh University Divinity Hall and the New College, Principal Martin, D.D., said there must be an early restatement of the Church's faith. It was dangerous when the official creed of a church and the working faith of the average believer fell apart. Dangerous to whom? To the ministers or to those who were silly enough to believe what the ministers preach, but do not themselves believe?

In the name of freedom—press censorship, seizure of pamphlets without rhyme or reason, abolition of trial by jury (except in very special cases, freedom of speech severely limited, and now we have the Chief Constable of Preston prosecuting a newsagent for putting outside his door "Germans Confess Defeat and Accept President Wilson's Terms. War as Good as Over." And before the magistrate the Chief Constable said:—

> if people wanted to disseminate information they should go to him for it. He was responsible for the good government of the town, and did not ask for the assistance of newspaper agents or theatres; when he wanted their assistance he would ask for it.

We are progressing in our knowledge of freedom. The attitude of the Chief Constable of Potsdam—we mean Preston—deserves to be remembered.

Dr. Clifford, in an interview, published in the *Daily News* says that the clergy are "fettered by traditions." It is a sample of wisdom while you wait, but there is nothing novel in the remark.

Dr. Clifford says that after the War the Christian Churches were going on to "new heavens and a new earth." He forgot to mention that the stokers in another place will have entirely new uniforms.

The President of the Board of Trade has suggested that Church services should be held in daylight in order to save gas and coal. More daylight on religion should be very welcome.

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare. A Church of England curate bears the name of Herbert Spencer, and a private soldier is listed as "J. Cæsar."

A discussion on Christianity is proceeding in the *Heywood Advertiser*. A writer, who signs himself "W. Gibbs," tells two stories that deserve preserving. The first is about Bradlaugh. Bradlaugh went to lecture in Bristol. At the end of his lecture someone asked him, if he did not believe in faith, how did he account for Muller's Orphanage? Bradlaugh was silent, and never after spoke about faith. The second story concerns G. W. Foote. He was lecturing on "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?" W. Gibbs rose to ask a question, and "the men stood on the seats, pulled the pipes out of their mouths, and shouted at the top of their voices for me to sit down." We do not like to contradict Mr. Gibbs, but we think the story would have sounded more convincing if he had added that the audience threw pots of beer at him, that Mr. Foote escaped by the back door, and left the city without paying his hotel bill. Perhaps Mr. Gibbs charitably withheld these details.

The Archbishops of York and Canterbury are about to issue an appeal for five million pounds to carry "a big after War campaign of reconstruction." We wonder whether they will get it. We should not be surprised if five million fools could be found in the country who would give a sovereign each to such a stupid purpose. But we suspect that no small part of whatever is received will come from those who have made money out of the War.

The Bishop of Hull says the War has taught people to realize as never before "the real divine purpose of life." Quite evidently, then, the divine purpose of life is a funeral.

"It is a mystery how ministers of religion live," says Rev. P. Thomas, of Ferndale. It is a mystery to many people *why* they live. The how is simple enough.

No less than 22,500 teachers from elementary and secondary schools have joined the Army and Navy. The clergy are exempted from military service.

The Bishop of London is always talking of the dreadful poverty of the poor clergy, but they are not all in the casual wards and workhouses. The late Rev. Sir J. R. Laurie left estate of the value of £100,630. This should ensure his introduction to Dives in the place where there is no winter.

The *Daily Chronicle* points out that "the Prime Minister has two bishopric appointments to settle within the next few weeks." The dear clergy like people to think that the "Holy Ghost" makes the selection.

Providence still displays its playful partiality for human beings. A Reuter's telegram from San Juan de Puetorico states that nearly 200 persons were killed in the earthquake on that island, and much damage was done.

Giovanni Succi, who for many years puzzled the doctors by his ability to fast for periods of forty days, has died in Italy at the age of sixty-eight. No one regarded this ability to fast on the part of Succi as a proof of his divinity.

"Europe Smitten by Influenza" is a headline in a daily paper. A striking proof of the paternal regard of poor old Providence.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 10, Liverpool; November 17, Birmingham (N. S. S. Conference); November 24, Leeds; December 1, Ferndale; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.

S. C.—Received, and shall appear as early as possible.

J. A. Tomkins.—Crowded out. Shall appear next week.

R. Edmonds.—Women have been forcibly taken into the Navy. During the ages of Christian chivalry, namely, in 1379, when Sir John Arundel's fleet was overtaken by a storm, some sixty women were thrown overboard to lighten the vessels. Some of these women had volunteered to go with the sailors, others had been forcibly carried off.

F. Smith (Sheffield).—Sorry we are unable to use the MSS. submitted.

J. Williams.—We are not surprised at your wondering how we manage to keep the paper at the old price. It is not done without much trouble and anxiety. All our work is done by Trade Unionists, under Trade Union conditions. Thanks for contri bution to Fund.

H. Austin.—Free parcel being sent to address given.

J. Lauder.—Pleased to learn from a one year's reader that this paper has been of so much use to him.

F. Whatcott.—Bag of waste paper was received. Thanks for same. It is extremely useful to help in this way, and we need all the waste paper we can get.

C. A.—There is no such thing as blasphemy apart from the specific offence manufactured by Christians and other religionists. And no one can blaspheme unless he believes in a God. It is an impossible offence to one who does not believe in Deity. "Blasphemy" is an offence at law, but that is because Christians have made the law—and administer it.

T. Bell (Glasgow).—Want of space prevents our noticing your communication until next week.

E. Schofield.—Mr. Cohen's meetings will be held in Liverpool in the Clarion Cafe, Cable Street, at 3 and 7 o'clock.

Mr. B. Coupe (Glasgow).—We are sending on one of our free parcels to address. Shall be glad to hear of the result.

J. Roberts.—Glad to hear from you, and to know that you are keeping well. Pamphlet being sent.

H. W. Manon.—We are pleased to have been of use.

R. Popper.—We are sending copies as desired. Your experience has been a very hard one, and we sympathize with much that you say. We hope to see Mr. Effel's pen busy again at no very distant date.

Mr. E. Taylor.—We are very sorry to hear of your daughter's illness, and hope for better news soon. Shall hope to see you at the Leeds' meetings. Please make yourself known to Mr. Cohen.

W. P. Pearson.—If you will send on the papers here we will see to the rest. We have hopes of doing something in Ireland after the War.

W. J. Bourne.—Thanks for information which we have filed for future use.

J. Partridge.—Very pleased to know that Mr. Snell had such a fine meeting at Birmingham on Sunday last.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We regret that, owing to an oversight in proof reading, the date of the Secular Society's Conference at Birmingham was wrongly announced as November 13. The correct date is Sunday, November 17. We may take this opportunity of again expressing the hope that all Branches will be represented, and that as many members as possible will attend. Those who wish accommodation to be secured for them should write as early as possible to the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, stating their requirements. No time should be lost in doing this.

Manchester readers will please note that Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick. The meetings are at 3 and 6.30 o'clock. Trams run past the door of the hall, and we trust that it will be well filled on both occasions. Freethinkers should make a special point of bringing a Christian friend with them. They could not choose a better occasion on which to introduce them to a Freethought meeting. Admission is free to these meetings, but those attending should remember that the expenses are quite as heavy as usual. Mr. Lloyd is spending some days lecturing in South Wales, and will proceed straight from there to Manchester.

During the discussion of the Scottish Education Bill in the House of Commons, the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. forwarded to the Secretary for Scotland and other M.Ps. a well-worded resolution protesting against the inclusion of religious instruction in any form. Of these gentlemen Sir John M'Callum replied:—

> Your letter of Glasgow Secular Society with Resolution received. I quite approve, and did my utmost in Committee to contend for the question at issue, but while we defeated the Government once, we were not successful in carrying this matter in the direction which you indicate, and therefore accepted the milder form of religious instruction without being mandatory.

We are glad to be able to publish this reply, and we hope to see Mr. M'Callum as active when the question of religion in English State schools comes before the House of Commons.

Next Sunday (Nov. 10) Mr. Cohen lectures twice at Liverpool. The meetings will be held in the Clarion Cafe, Cable Street, at 3 and 7 o'clock. Local Freethinkers are asked to do what they can towards making these meetings as widely known as possible.

We have received two works written by Mr. Theodore Schroeder, of New York, neither of which state any published price The first covers 120 pp., and is another contribution to Mr. Schroeder's more numerous writings on the erotogenetic interpretation of religion. It consists of an unpublished essay on "Heavenly Bridegrooms," by "Ida C.," and describes the experiences of various women with "Borderland Bridegrooms." It is a fine sample of the workings of the sex-instinct and its mistaken interpretations in terms of religious mysticism. Religious history and literature is full of such instances, and it is only of recent years that the real nature of much of the so-called religious ecstasy has been recognized. To this enlightenment Mr. Schroeder has helped in no small measure.

The second work is also of great interest to Freethinkers. It consists of a summary of Mr. Schroeder's prepared argument in the trial for "blasphemy" of a Freethought lecturer, Mr. N. X. Mochus, in Detroit, in 1916. After citing all the American statute laws on the subject, Mr. Schroeder gives an interesting survey of the various blasphemy prosecutions both in this country and in the United States, and the opinions of authorities thereon. It is an important publication, and, from the title page we gather, will form part of a larger work on Constitutional Free Speech. American Freethinkers owe Mr. Schroeder a debt of gratitude for his able and unwearying work in the cause of Free Speech.

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Mr. Schroeder notes the importance of the House of Lords' decision in the Bowman Case, particularly as affecting that ancient shibboleth, "Christianity is part of the law of England." But he does not note another very important aspect of the judgment, which is that it makes a bequest to any Secular Society—that is, to a Society organized for the avowed purpose of destroying Christianity—perfectly legal. The fact of the Secular Society, Limited, being a registered body has led to the belief that a bequest to an unregistered Society was illegal. That is not, and never was, the case. Bequests to the National Secular Society, or to local Secular Societies, were set on one side solely because of the purposes to which the bequest was to be devoted. The decision of the House of Lords declares those purposes to be quite legal, and therefore legalizes a bequest to any Society, whether registered or unregistered. It is this which, in our opinion, gives the victory so sweeping a character.

We note that Mr. A. B. Moss made an "official" appearance at the Southwark Sessions the other day, and, as has been his custom for nearly thirty years, affirmed on the ground of being without religious belief. We should like to see Mr. Moss's excellent example followed by other Freethinkers who hold any post or office under local governing bodies, and whose appearance in courts is rendered necessary thereby. It has an educational effect on all concerned, and would serve to enlighten court officials who are sometimes painfully ignorant on the matter.

One of our Scotch readers and occasional contributors writes:—

> A chance remark sometimes helps to make a lifelong friendship. This week, in a railway carriage, I met an old gentleman, who passed the remark that it was sad to see so much grain spoiled by the rain while God was in his heaven, and did nothing to help the poor farmer. This remark led to an interchange of ideas. My chance friend was an out-and-out Freethinker, and anxious to get into touch with the N. S. S. literature. He has now got a start, and is likely to get more, as he has been supplied with the address where he can obtain same.

The same correspondent adds:—

> There is now such a demand for the *Freethinker* in Glasgow that usual readers are finding some difficulty in procuring a copy. Better give a standing order to your newsagent. The idea of ordering a few copies, and leaving your newsagent to dispose of them, has caught on. Very few copies are ever left over.

Another centre for the supply of Freethought literature is The Reformers' Bookstall, 126 Bothwell Street, Glasgow.

From the *East Rand Express* of August 3, we see that the Education Inspector of the East Rand Circuit reports that 318 children have been withdrawn by their parents from religious instruction. Our compliments to the parents of those 318 youngsters. We feel sure they will appreciate their parent's action when they grow older.

Many of our readers will no doubt miss Dr. Lyttelton's promised article in this week's issue. But up to the time of going to press nothing from that gentleman had reached us. We hope this is due to nothing worse than a postal miscarriage.

The Glasgow Branch tried the experiment of changing its hour of meeting from 12 noon to 6 in the evening. Mr. Lonsdale, the Secretary, gave a very much appreciated address on Jefferies' "The Story of My Heart," but it has now been decided to revert to the midday hour as the time for meetings. To-day (Nov. 3) the subject is "The Higher Criticism."

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

THE purpose of this Fund is to make good part of the deficit caused by the very heavy increase in the cost of paper, advance of wages, etc. A full statement on this head was made in our issue for September 1.

Ninth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged:—£404 4s. 7d. Sapper J. Rollason, 5s. Iris, 2s. 6d. F. Whatcott, 4s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, 5s. R. W. Blakeley, 10s. 6d. D. O., 2s. 6d. J. J. Roberts, 5s. S. Thompson, 5s. Mrs. E. Taylor, 5s. Mrs. S. Dobson, 5s. W. P. Pearson, 5s. B. E. F., 5s. W. Micklethwaite, 10s. F. Mareschel, 10s. W. Hill, 2s. 6d. J. Hardie, 2s. 6d.

Per T. Emery (Glasgow):—Mr. Newman, 10s. Mr. Harrison, 2s. 6d. Mr. Savill, 2s. 6d. Mr. Little, 3s. Mr. Learnouth, 2s. 6d. F. R., 2s. 6d. Mrs. Scott, 1s. T. W. E., 3s. Mrs. Turnbull, 5s. F. Turnbull, 2s. Mr. and Mrs. Lonsdale, 6s.

Per J. Williams (Ystrad):—T. Godfrey, 1s. R. Lloyd, 1s. F. Cox, 10s. J. Williams, 10s. Total, £411 11s. 7d.

A Naturalist's Paradise.

III.

(*Continued from p. 561.*)

HAVING reviewed those nearer relatives of humanity, the apes, monkeys, and lemurs of Borneo, a few words are necessary concerning man's remoter congeners, the bats. Twenty genera, subdivided into forty-six species, of these flying mammals, reside in the island. The huge fruit bats, it is said,—

> are as familiar a feature of the Bornean landscape at evening as are in England the rooks winging their way home to roost; the bats, however, are on their way to some fruit trees, where they will feed all night, yelling and wrangling the while like all the cats of Kilkenny. During the day they have hung in numbers from the branches of trees, often at a considerable distance from their last feeding place, and they look like bunches of some grotesque fruit.

These voracious creatures devastate the fruit gardens, and in the adjacent island of Java the cultivators are driven to harvest their fruit before it is mature, so as to preserve it from the predaceous bats. Then there is an army of smaller bats, with appetites so keen that one only of these gluttonous animals will gorge more than its own weight in bananas in a single night.

Like all other organisms, bats are afflicted with parasites. A curious earwig infests the brood pouches of one Bornean species; but although bats are usually plagued by wingless flies, the flea is seldom a source of annoyance to them. Presumably, most human beings have observed, or even been temporarily exasperated, by the presence of fleas at some time or other. Yet we are assured by a high authority, Harold Russell, that our cousins the monkeys, in a state of nature, are free from the attentions of these leaping, blood-sucking parasites. In captivity, monkeys are liable to the attacks of human and other fleas; but we learn from Russell that "no fleas have been found truly parasitic on monkeys." When to the onlooker the monkey appears to be energetically occupied in flea-hunting, it is really searching, as Professor Shipley puts it, for "little scabs of scurf, which is made palatable to its taste by a certain sour sweat" (*Studies in Insect Life*, p. 19; 1917).

Bats are very unprepossessing in appearance, and probably suggested the traditional Evil spirit. The membrane of their umbrella-like wings provides an extensive pouch, common to both male and female forms, in which the offspring are carried. Whether the male bat ever carries the young is an open question. Indeed, our knowledge of the habits of bats is still very imperfect; and of the Bornean species it is asserted that not one of them has been adequately studied.

The Cat group is well in evidence in Borneo; but these carnivores give little trouble to the natives. The

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Clouded Leopard is the largest of these creatures, but, distinctly unlike its relatives, the tiger and panther of the neighbouring peninsula, it avoids the vicinity of man. One of the wild cats of Sarawak proves a terror to the natives' fowls. Concerning another Bornean cat, *Felis planicops*, Dr. Hose, in his valuable *Mammals of Borneo*, relates "that the animal is extremely fond of fruit, and has frequently been known to dig up and eat the potatoes which are grown by the natives." This statement may seem strange in the light of the fact that all the Felidæ are carnivorous; but when we remember how omnivorous domestic cats have become, our astonishment is diminished.

Various animals announce themselves to friend, foe, and neutral by their conspicuous markings. Such striking advertisements are frequently associated with nauseousness of taste or odour. The North American skunk bears his large white tail erect in such a way that it serves as a warning. The appearance of a skunk's tail in the distance is sufficient to deter anyone in the least degree susceptible to evil odours from any nearer approach to the animal. Several animals of this type are common in the Malay region, and are studiously avoided on account of their disgusting stench. One of these creatures is abundant in the Natuna Islands, and a naturalist engaged in collecting there assured Shelford that his native assistants "flatly refused to skin the specimens that he shot on account of the revolting odour." Several of these malodorous organisms are found in Borneo and the adjoining islands, and are all conspicuously coloured. Moreover, in Java an edible Musteline carnivore mimics the odious Mydaus, and doubtless its marked resemblance to its nauseous model serves as a protection against predatory enemies.

The munsangs and monkeys of Borneo are very partial to the coffee berry, and seriously injure the crops. But Nature moves in a mysterious way her wonders to perform. The animals' digestive juices, while acting on the delicate pulp enclosing the hard kernel, permit the berries themselves to pass through the intestinal channels entirely unimpaired, and thus they are expelled from the body. Their strange journey completed, the discarded berries are carefully gathered. In terms of the received theory—

> only the ripest and best fruit is selected by the monkeys and munsangs for their meal, the dejecta are regarded as of first-rate quality and fetch a good price in the market—a fact which is mercifully concealed from the British consumer.

While the rodents are represented by twelve species of rats, three species of porcupine, and at least sixteen of squirrels, the hoofed animals are very sparsely present in Borneo. The noble elephant survives in small numbers in British North Borneo. Although these quadrupeds *may* be the descendants of a herd of elephants originally introduced from one of the Malay States, there seems small doubt that the elephant was at an earlier period indigenous to the island. A fossil tooth discovered in a Sarawak cave is evidence of this. But, apart from the Malay term "Gajah," there is no name for elephant in the primitive native tongues, and no tradition lingers of the former existence of the animal in Sarawak.

Another giant mammal, the rhinoceros, is still extant in British North Borneo; but the animal appears mainly confined to the little-visited interior of the island, where it struggles on the brink of extinction. Those lesser Ungulates, wild swine, boast three species in Borneo. In the primitive jungle these pigs progress in great herds from place to place. The reason for these migrations is conjectural. Possibly the need for new pastures, or even the prevalence of swine fever, or some similar epidemic may explain these wanderings. In any case, the non-Moslem tribes take full advantage of these migrations, for when the animals emerge from the forest they slaughter them wholesale for food.

What Kropotkin termed "Mutual aid among animals is cogently illustrated by the naturalist, Ernest Hose. Hearing a tremendous uproar of wild boars grunting and squealing in the forest near his residence in Santubong, Mr. Hose went out to ascertain its cause. He discovered that a huge snake had seized a young swine and was trying to kill it. "The snake," writes Shelford, to whom Hose narrated the occurrence,—

> was surrounded by a number of full-grown swine which were goring it with their tusks and trampling on it; so resolute was their attack that the python was compelled to relinquish its hold of the loudly protesting young pig, when the herd catching sight of Mr. Hose, hastily made off, the young one, apparently little the worse for its adventure, trotting away with its companions. Mr. Hose examined the snake and found it to be so slashed and mangled that it was unable to crawl away from the scene of battle.

The Bornean wild boar, Shelford contended, provides a powerful example of the transmission of an acquired character. In the young animal each side of the upper lip is "deeply notched to accommodate the tushes which, however, have not yet made their appearance." This is obviously a weighty circumstance, for we have every reason to suppose that this notching *originally* arose through the pressure of the enlarged tusks. *Now*, these notches precede the appearance of the tusks which originally caused them by several months. In this instance the acquired notches have become firmly fixed by heredity.

The Plandok or Bornean mouse deer is one of the most beautiful and graceful animals in the world. This pretty creature is the hero of a host of native stories, and it has, doubtless, always attracted attention through its diminutiveness and beauty, for the mouse deer is no larger, and far less heavy than a hare.

In addition to several species of more ordinary deer, a few wild oxen survive. The only other mammals of moment are the aquatic dugongs, porpoises, and an occasional whale stranded on the Bornean shores. The solitary member of the Edentate order is the scaly ant-eater, an animal which is credited by the natives with far greater guile and general intelligence than is usually conceded to it by the average European naturalist.

(To be concluded.) T. F. Palmer.

Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."

II.

(Continued from p. 557.)

His prepossessions are likewise revealed in the fact that his theories and dogmas are oracular pronouncements and not reasoned conclusions from established truths. I will give one example of it from his *Psychology* (Home University Series). On p. 174 he states in quite his oracular strain that "progressive evolution has been primarily an evolution of mental structure and only secondarily one of bodily structure." We are not, by-the-bye, favoured with a peep into the metaphysical "cabinet of mysteries" and see the how and the why changes in "mental structure" occur in the absence of experience.

Now, the above statement by presenting a *half* truth as if it were the whole, is tantamount to a falsity. It has all the ugly look of a *suppresso veri et suggestio falsi* Why omit all mention and reference to the cerebral

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system —the brain and its appendages? Why slur over in dumb silence the premier system of the body, and the very one that "leads and controls" the rest? Why allude to the body with such culpable vagueness, by the phrase "bodily structures," as if all systems within it were *co*-ordinate—as if brain and ligaments, for instance, were apar in functional importance in the animal economy? Whether he intended it or not, his pet phrase, "mental structure," by drawing attention away from the whole truth, does suggest the false. And it is upon this suggestion that his "soul" theory rests. A full and accurate statement of the facts would rob it of any basis. No one could imagine from his language in that chapter that the body contains an organ of mind. One could think that "mental structures" were metaphysical self-existences in no organic relation with brain and nerves. Yet no one knows better than he that there is no "mental structure" except in absolute correlation with cerebral structure, and that every change in the one involves a simultaneous change in the other.

Had he said that "progressive evolution" has been primarily one of *neural* structure, and the rest of the body a secondary one, it would be an accurate statement of facts; for muscles, bones, ligaments, glands, cells, and secretions are merely the instruments of the brain to effect its ends. And as the series of changes, usually, if not invariably, originate in the creature's physical environment, it might be said without inaccuracy that the changes in "mental structure" *follow* the changes in neural structure, though strictly speaking they are simultaneous modifications.

The way to test his metaphysical dictum is to apply it to a familiar case in which its truth may be easily checked. For example, to become a smoker involves a complete change in "mental structure"—that is, from a feeling of disgust for tobacco to one of liking for it. Now, according to the above "principle," this liking for tobacco is acquired by the smoker *before* he ever puts a pipe in his mouth. Otherwise it is not "*primarily* an evolution of mental structure," for it would involve experience and the participation of the body in the change, and reverse the above order.

This example, though a voluntary one, is typical of the way in which every change in tastes, habits, and "mode of life" is effected by sentient creatures. It begins with a state of disharmony or antagonism between a stimulating environment (tobacco in this instance) and neural tissue; then, after a grim and often a protracted struggle, harmony is restored through a readjustment between the revolting neurones and the hostile environment.

Without pursuing the matter further, it is thus obvious that only a person in the firm grip of a prepossession would ever commit himself to such a "theory."

Again, he seems to shun the obvious lessons of his his own teachings. At all events, he slurs over them in dumb silence. He not only admits, but teaches, in the most unequivocal and praiseworthy manner, the absolute concomitance, correlation, or parallelism which exist between mental and neural processes. Lest the reader should miss the significance of this fact, I will summarize in the briefest manner I can the lessons taught in the book. The parallel movement between the structure and activity of mind and brain may be advantageously summed up under three orders of concomitance. (1) An ascending order. (2) A descending order. (3) A functional order.

That is to say, the level of mental development or capacity ascends in strict concurrence with complexity of neural structure from amœba to man, and from infant to adult. Again, degeneration, decadence, or disappearance of mental powers, as witnessed in senile decay, in insanity, and in cases of cerebral injury, keeps pace with neural conditions with the most absolute regularity. And, lastly, mental activity flows and fluctuates at every instant of life in strict accordance to the efficiency with which the brain functions as determined by rest, sleep, and the quality and abundance of the blood-stream that energizes it.

The irresistible inference or lesson from these facts is, that the mind is the offspring of organized neural substance, whatever may be its ultimate nature—whether it be a physical "something," a metaphysical "nothing," or a physico-metaphysical hybrid; and, further, that when the organization decays, is destroyed, or fails to function, mind vanishes. In other words, that mind is as mortal as body.

This lesson is further emphasized in his very remarkable but correct insistence upon extending the principle of causation so as to include, in the case of sentient beings, not only physical phenomena, but mental ones as well. That is to say, that alcohol and intoxication, for example, stand related to one another as cause and effect. Nobody, of course, outside Bedlam ever dreams of doubting that fact save those "extra mural patients," the pure metaphysicians. It should, however, be pointed out that Dr. McDougall does not adopt this most sane but novel view for the sake of emphasizing the absolute correlation between mind and body, but simply because he considers it favourable to his "soul" theory—an object that will save him the execrations and derisions of the metaphysicians.

Such, then, seems to be the lesson taught by this little primer; and I fancy that Dr. McDougall would readily acquiesce in the above summary statement of it, though he fails himself to express it in a manner so outspoken and categorical, as if afraid of his own conclusions.

To me this lesson is so complete and absolute that it carries with it the corollary that the idea of a "soul" or "spirit" is so unnecessary and useless an adjunct as to be a meaningless superfluity in the mental economy of sentient life. To Dr. McDougall, however, that is not so. He thinks a "soul" is necessary to complete the mental machinery, and so sets about to salve it in right earnest. What this "soul" is, apart from mind, he does not tell us; anyhow, he acts on the maxim that "Silence is golden." From the few vague allusions, however, we may hazard a negative description of this destitute and characterless vacuity: The "soul" is the mind's sleeping partner during life, but which may wake up at death and carry on the mind's business without the aid of its cerebral plant and machinery.

(To be concluded.) KERIDON.

The Clergy and the Theatre.

(Reprinted from "Jack Canuck," Toronto, August 17, 1918.)

A few weeks ago the Rev. James H. Boyd, at the Middlesex and Lambton Ministerial Association, gave voice to a general denunciation of all worldly pleasure, he, in turn, attacking the dance halls, card-playing saloons, books, and the theatre. The reverend gentleman receives his answer in the following letter (so far as the theatre is concerned) from a Newark, N.J., lady, who "follows a stage career."

DEAR SIR,—As one of those "who follow a stage career," will you permit me a word of reply to your rabid indictment before the Middlesex and Lambton Association of Baptist Churches?

Let the card players and dancers speak for themselves, but as one who is making her way in this world by work on the stage, I think I have a few things to call to your mind which you, in your holy zeal, have entirely overlooked.

My home is in the U.S.A., but I can safely speak for the artists of the stage in Canada as well as in England when I

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say that, in the first place, when there is a great fire, a pestilence of any sort, a damaging flood, a catastrophe of any sort, to whom does the public first turn? Who are the first to offer their services *free?* Is it a minister of one of the many gospels? Not so you could notice it. The people of the stage are the first to stage a benefit, and thereby net huge sums which they turn over to the sufferers. When the Governments want to reach the people to have them conserve food, to buy bonds to defray the expenses of the present conflict in Europe, do they use the churches? Not much. They go to the theatres, where they are sure of courteous treatment by managers, actors, and other employees as well.

Would the ministers and priests surrender their pulpits as cheerfully as actors have their stages? Try the little matter out and see.

When the boys on the other side are in need of cheer and comfort, do the Governments call on the dominies to do the task? Yes, they do *not*. They call on the actors, and these respond gladly and cheerfully, and give their services *free*, which the ministers do not. Your ministers and priests may serve in some capacity, yes, but they go as *paid chaplains*, and not as voluntary workers.

Did the actors claim exemption in this world battle? They did not. But you ministers lost no time in getting on the exempt list.

Are actors paying their *full fare* on the railroads, and thereby putting themselves out of pocket by many dollars? They are. But ministers and priests still ride on the "half fare" graft, which they are not willing that returned soldiers, or soldiers about to go over, should enjoy.

Have you ever, my fine friend, looked up the statistics of the U.S.A. and Canada, which will tell you that there are any number of parsons in jails, while the number of actors, male and female, is a surprisingly small one in comparison? Of course you have not, because, in doing so, you might learn something about your trade, and those that pursue it.

Your actor is ever in the front rank of those that are giving—giving and doing it gladly—and without thought of recompense, while ministers and priests, the world over, dole out their salvation at so much per "salve."

"I do not see the U.S. Government getting together any number of parsons to go "over there" for the good of the *morale* of our heroes, but it certainly is getting together contingents of actors and actresses to bring cheer and comfort to the hearts of them that are fighting for us. If the theatre were the pernicious influence you and your kind are trying to make others believe that it is, the U.S. Government (in which I have every confidence) would try its utmost to keep actors far from the battle line, instead of sending them over. Think it over, and see if you will not learn something if it is not too late.

When you say that "Few of those who follow a stage career escape the meshes of the net" you are aware, of course, that you are attacking the women of the stage? Are you aware at all that when a woman works on the stage she is working harder for a living than ministers and priests. And that she gives the public, who pay the price, full value for money received, while you and others of your ilk dole out promises of a future hell and other stuff that should be banned for larger salaries than the average actress gets? She gives melody and artistry of some sort, while you give for the money you get only promises about something that will happen in the future life—which is all speculation, and nothing that you are *positive* of. The average actress has far finer ideals than the average minister, her life is cleaner and sweeter, even if you do not think so.

Consult your criminal records of murder, rape, and other bestialities, and compare the number of ministers and priests, not only accused, but *convicted* on these counts with surprisingly small numbers of actors and actresses that you will find.

My hat is off in all reverence to the members of the theatrical profession, while my hat is *not* off to ministers who Talk so much and Do so little to make this world a better place to live in! Yours for *truth*,

"Verne E. Sheridan."

Obituary.

Wm. H. Hall, aged fifty-five, of Seymour Place, Marylebone, died on October 23. His passing away will be regretted by all who knew him. For several years he and his wife devoted most of their leisure time in selling Freethought literature at open-air meetings, principally in the vicinity of Hyde Park. He met death at the very gate, and his brave resignation, after a long illness, was a splendid example to all who value intellectual freedom as the greatest treasure in life.—E. D.

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, Percy H. Muir, "Internationalism." Open Debate.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Foundations of Peace."

OUTDOOR.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Kells, Dales, and Swasey; 4 and 7, Mr. Geo. H. Swasey.

Woolwich (Beresford Square): Councillor Harry Boulter, 11.30, "Some Bible Stories"; 3, "More Bible Stories."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Burnley Branch N. S. S. (Irving's Studio, 48 Sheffield Road): Wednesday, November 6, at 8, Branch Meeting. An Essay on Thomas Paine will be given.

Coventry Branch N. S. S. (The Baths' Assembly Hall): 7, Mr. E. Clifford Williams, "Secularism *v.* Christianity."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, A Lecture, "The Higher Criticism."

Goldthorpe Branch N. S. S. (14 Beaver Street, Goldthorpe): 3, Important Business. Members earnestly asked to be present.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, The Rt. Hon. John M. Robertson, M.P., "Trade Policy after the War."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Co-Operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "The Fight for Freedom"; 6.30, "The Value of the Bible in National Life."

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. E. A. Webb, "Religious Reconstruction."

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, Swansea): Mr. J. C. Thomas, B.Sc. ("Keridon"), 3, "The Two Ideals of State"; 7, "The Art of Squaring the Circle, or Solving the Insolvable."

W. H. THRESH, Founder and Principal of Ruskin House School (Rationalistic), Southend-on-Sea, has for nearly two years been engaged in clerical work for thirteen hours daily, and has had a breakdown through the strain. He will be pleased to receive lecture engagements for low fees. Subjects: Popular Science, Evolution, and Education. The matter is very urgent. Mr. Thresh is an Atheist.—Address c/o 5 Waddon Court Road, Waddon, Surrey.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Spiritual Vision.—The Editor	577
Experience as Argument.—J. T. Lloyd	578
Out of the Night.—Mimnermus	579
Religion and Life.—E. Lyttelton	580
The "Freethinker" and the War.—Chapman Cohen	583
The Greed of Gold.—Arthur B. Moss	584
Soldiers of Freethought.—E. A.	586

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Spiritual Vision.

In one of his writings Mr. G. K. Chesterton says that the real question at issue between the Christian and the Freethinker is, "Are there or are there not certain powers and experiences possible to the human mind which really occur when the mind is suitably disposed? Is the religious history of mankind a chronicle of accidental lies, delusions, and coincidences, or is it a chronicle of real things which we happen not to be able to do, and real visions which we happen not to be able to see?" As is not unusual with Mr. Chesterton, he succeeds here in saying nothing in particular, while apparently expressing a deal in a small compass. For, far from meeting the case of the scientific Freethinker, it shows no real appreciation of it. Mr. Chesterton's case is that the Christian saint or mystic is, by the exercise of certain spiritual experiences, brought into another world of being. The Freethinker does not deny the experiences —without the qualifying "spiritual"—but he submits there is another and more rational explanation at hand.

* * *

Witnesses to the Unseen.

Let us take a few examples. The Catholic Church will produce clouds of testimony from men and women to the effect that certain visions were seen in certain circumstances. These circumstances are usually long vigils, fasting, praying, a more or less solitary life, and constant meditation upon mystical matters. The witnesses will dilate upon the feeling of exaltation that accompanied and preceded such visions, and will describe the subjective experiences with all the detail that one might use in describing a fit of indigestion, or an attack of the toothache. Now, no Freethinker who understands his case would say these witnesses were all liars. Nor would he say that they were *all* insane in the general sense of the word. Neither would he deny that under the same conditions he himself would in all probability experience much the same kind of visions and feelings. What he would say, and what he does say, is that all this religious testimony can be explained on pathological grounds as due to an unwholesome nervous strain. If any modern cares to try the experiment, and sit, like some Hindoo fakir, for so many hours per day contemplating his stomach, and repeating the sacred word "Om," we do not hesitate in saying that he too will see visions; and in that case he need not cite a "cloud of witnesses"—he can cite himself.

* * *

Spirits and "Spirits."

Delirium tremens is not a spiritual, although it is a spirituous, complaint. Yet the visions seen by people in this state—the devils and curious animals crawling and rushing in and out—are as real as anything seen by St. Theresa or St. Anthony. But we do not suppose for a moment that anyone will argue that beer or whisky has the power of unlocking a new and real spiritual world to which ordinary people are dead. He will say, of course, that these people *are* real enough to the people who see them, but that they are in fact the creation of a brain and nervous system disordered by excessive alcoholic indulgence. But will he, or will anybody else, point out the essential difference, if any, between the visions of a St. Theresa and those of a confirmed dipsomaniac? It is beside the point to run off with the remark that the comparison of a "saint" with a drunkard is degrading. There is nothing degrading in a scientific inquiry; and in all seriousness we assert that the visions of saint and dipsomaniac, the exaltation of the religious mystic, and the exaltation of the opium-eater or whisky-drinker are in all essential features identical. They are each induced by excessive indulgence in one direction, and by the exclusion of counteracting agencies. The dipsomaniac enters into communication just as much, or just as little, with an actual spiritual world as does the Christian saint. And, as a matter of fact, a man suffering from *delirium tremens* would, in the Middle Ages, have been placed on the same level as the "saint." *His* visions would have been of the lower world exclusively; but there would have been no other distinction. All sorts of lunatics were also placed upon the same level. And we would suggest to Mr. Chesterton that any lunatic asylum would furnish him with quite as many people who have "certain powers and experiences when the mind is suitably disposed" as he can find in "the world-old chorus" of religious witnesses.

* * *

The Influence of Environment.

And here is another aspect of the matter that appeals to one conducting a really scientific inquiry. The Christian "saint" sees visions. So, too, does the Hindoo fakir and the Mohammedan dervish. On Mr. Chesterton's hypothesis they are each catching a glimpse of *the* spiritual world from which the more materialistic evolution of others has shut them out. Yet the Hindoo never saw the Christian form of the spiritual world, the Christian never saw the Hindoo form, the Mohammedan never saw either. Each sees his own or, to put it in another way, each sees what his education has led him to see. And while there is such an obvious explanation of these facts so ready to hand, it is almost insanity to propound such a fantastic hypothesis as that of a new spiritual world unlocked to the view of certain highly-favoured individuals. There is also the modern form of this spiritual exaltation. This no longer takes the form of

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visions. The man who nowadays went round seeing visions and hearing voices and fighting with the Devil, as did Luther and others, would soon find himself in a lunatic asylum. Nowadays people say they *feel* the influence of a spiritual world. They have left off seeing it, and have come down to the more general sense of feeling it. People are no longer moved to rush off to the wilderness, abandon soap and water, and even clothing, for their spiritual welfare. On the contrary, they talk much of the gospel of social work, of sanitation, advocate the building of workhouses for the greater glory of God, and behave in such a way that the earlier "saints" would, if they were here, denounce them as children of the Devil.

* * *

The Old and the New.

Why should the "spiritual vision" have undergone this change? If it teaches the holiness of social work in the twentieth century, why should it have taught the exact opposite in the tenth? Surely anyone whose mind is not given over to the fruitless labour of hatching ingenious theories to amuse an idle hour or to fill a couple of columns in a newspaper, must see that the whole explanation lies in the difference and influence of environment. The present day Christian, living in a community that calls itself Christian, coming of an ancestry that has been Christian, operated upon by the eloquence and influence of people whose business it is to see that he remains Christian, clothes his social feelings and his morality in a Christian dress, as naturally as he—in this country—expresses his thoughts in the English language, and for exactly the same reason. But his feelings and his morality are no more due to Christianity than his thoughts are due to his use of English. Both are mere accidents of the environment. If he did not think in English, he would in French, or Russian, or German, or some other language. And if his social instincts did not express themselves in Christian dress, they as certainly would in some other manner. The Freethinker does not, therefore, put on one side the "evidence" brought forward on behalf of religion. He accepts it and shows its real nature. The visions of the mediæval saint or mystic exist to-day, but they are differently understood, and differently explained. The "spiritual vision" of Jesus casting devils out of an epileptic, and the methods of the modern physician dealing with a similar case, represent the difference between the old and the new point of view. The modern world is hardly likely to go back to the standpoint of Jesus. Devils once exorcized by science never return. And that camouflaged mediæval delusion—"spiritual vision"—is doomed to one day follow the way of other superstitions.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Experience as Argument.

A VAST amount of importance is now being attached to religious experience, especially by those who no longer treat the Bible as an infallible document. Time was when the Protestant divine finally settled every religious dispute by stringing together as many proof-texts as he could find, bearing, however slightly, on the points at issue. Except for a steadily dwindling minority the Word of God has ceased to be, and in its place has arisen the admittedly not always accurate Word of Man about God and destiny. Argument, too, has at last lost its clinching efficacy, and few theologians resort to it. In an interesting article in the *Christian World* for October 24, the Rev. F. Townley Lord, B.D., describes "the increased demand for reality, and the complaint, heard in many quarters, that so much of our time is spent in theological disputation and so little in experiential religion." What does Mr. Lord mean by "reality"? Sometimes it signifies sincerity or single-heartedness, and sometimes that unknown, possibly unknowable something, which, by many philosophers, is supposed to underlie all phenomena. In the latter sense reality is not a commodity for which there is any general demand; but it is incontrovertible that the theologians spend most of their time is vain disputation. Every believer in God is to that extent a disputatious person. Has a preacher of the Gospel ever appeared who did not dispute with unbelievers? So-called experiential religion is rooted and grounded in beliefs which are in their very nature debatable. Mr. Lord is entirely mistaken when he affirms that "religion begins in experience." The present writer is acquainted with scores of persons who have never entertained a single supernatural belief, and not one of them has ever had any religious experience. One of the commonest forms of religious experience is prayer; but prayer is an appeal to, or fellowship with, something which is supposed to be an objective reality. Belief of some sort necessarily precedes and accompanies prayer. "He that cometh to God," we read in Hebrews, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." Mr. Lord himself virtually admits this in the following passage:—

> In the first dim beginnings of tribal religion we find an Animistic conception of the world combining with the experimental factor to form the beginnings of religion.

The conception antedates the experience just as it antedates theology, while both experience and theology develop together and usually in the same proportion, being but too closely allied off-shoots of the same stem. Belief is the offspring of ignorance energized by fear, not of the consciousness of "some Greater which is conceived as ministering to the needs of life." The appearance of a Benevolent Greater marks a later stage in the evolutionary process. Mr. Lord is somewhat vague in several of his statements, as proved by the following passage:—

> On this Mount of Experience the great stream of our religious life took its rise. The great institutions of religion—Bible. Church—began here. This was the starting-point of Theology, and all the musty volumes which grace our libraries received their birth in experience.

There is, of course, some truth in all that. It is possible to conceive of ignorance and undefined dread as phases of experience; but, surely, Mr. Lord would not dream of dubbing that experience religious. In this connection reference is made to William James's *Varieties of Religious Experiences*; and all readers of that remarkable work are aware that the pragmatical philosopher depicts therein an experience he himself did not share in any of its varieties. He did not believe in the existence of a personal God, nor in that of the human soul. He believed neither in the spiritual world nor in immortality. Like Browning, he was an Agnostic, and, like Browning, he could accurately delineate beliefs and experiences of which he had no direct personal knowledge. He was merely a skilful psychologist. Speaking of personal religion all he maintains is that it is more fundamental than either theology or ecclesiasticism, and was the primordial thing with the founders of every Church who represented themselves as living in real communion with the Divine. But of necessity those founders believed in the Divine before they could have had fellowship with it. In reality, James does not support Mr. Lord in the least.

It is contended that the varieties of religious experience "reflect the free movement of the human soul

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towards the Divine"; but, generally speaking, such a movement has never been quite spontaneous and free, but painfully constrained, against the grain, a severe violation of the natural order. The natural trend of the human mind is away from, not towards, the Divine. By Nature we are all alike Atheists. Sainthood is a profession carried on by never-ceasing effort. Augustine, A Kempis, and Bernard, three of the most illustrious saints, experienced unspeakable difficulty in realizing the gracious nearness of their Divine Redeemer. Because their nature rebelled against God and religion they insulted it and its Maker by calling it corrupt, depraved, and lost, because of Adam's sin. To be natural was to be non-religious, ungodly; therefore, to be natural was the greatest conceivable offence against God. Religion was and is a perpetual fight against Nature, and the greatest saint is he who is most successful in subduing it. It is in order to counteract and overcome the natural resistance which the human mind offers to the appeal of religion that Christendom teems with crafty priests, Catholic and Protestant; but so powerful is Nature's antagonism to the heavenly calling, that their ministrations, so far from prospering, are becoming more and more futile each succeeding generation. Mr. Lord complains that the religious life is to-day far from what it ought to be. He says:—

> One cannot help feeling that too many to-day are content with the repetition of religious formulæ, and the observation of religious ceremony, without the all necessary life of which these are but the expression..... The same applies to all forms and ceremonies, which retain their power only in the measure in which they touch our lives.

Mr. Lord is convinced that the War is having the effect of reviving people's interest in religion, which may be true in a few instances here and there; but we have the testimony of several chaplains at the various fronts and at home that on multitudes the effect is of an entirely opposite character. This is how Mr. Lord states the case:—

> Religion, to be real, must be first hand. On this ground we are encouraged when we hear of men, hitherto careless of God, but now in these days of sore distress feeling in the depths of their being the inflowing of the Divine tide. At last many are beginning to hear the still small voice, and they can hear the tone above the din of battle. In their hearts they feel that thrill—the pulsation of the Divine heart. Life is becoming transfigured with new meaning, and words and things and values cast away before are appearing in their true colours. If there should be any revival of religion, it will begin here—not in acceptance of a statement previously rejected, but in a new impulse, a new force surging through the soul.

The writer of that passage evidently belongs to the so-called non-dogmatic school of theologians; but in reality there is no such school. Theology, of necessity, treats of God, including his being, his attributes, and his relation to the world and human destiny, and every statement concerning him can be no other than a dogma, a metaphysical speculation. Even the article we are now criticizing is of a highly speculative, hypothetical character. Whenever a man turns religious it is because of the stirring within him of a certain emotion or impulse as the result of his acceptance of specific declarations made in the name and by the alleged authority of God as revealed in and by Christ. By pure speculation Jesus blossoms into the Eternal Christ, his death into a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and his Church into the temple of the third person in the Holy Trinity. Supernatural religion cannot even exist at all apart from dogmatic theology. Our contention is, however, that all theology, the New no less than the Old, concerns itself about nothing but its own creation, the objective non-existence of which is demonstrated by the fact that it appeals only to those who are superstitious enough to believe in it. To all others it is as if it were not. Somebody has said that God does not reveal himself to fools; but even the admission that there are fools is in itself a powerful argument against the existence of a personal God. The most illuminating of all facts is the fact that no Deity exists save as an object of faith. To the non-believing he is profoundly and eternally silent, and as inactive as he is silent. The tremendous significance of this fact has never been sufficiently emphasized by the advocates of Freethought; but its weight is being appreciated more and more by crowds of thoughtful young people as this terrible War drags on. Questions are being asked and answered. What is he doing? Nothing. Where is he? Nowhere. A few ardent believers in Germany, in France, in America, and in Britain, exclaim at one and the same time: "He is on our side, fighting for and with us." Surely, this is the very climax of absurdity, the repetition and circulation thereof being the best indirect service that can possibly be rendered to "the best of causes."

Meanwhile, the people who glorify religious experience, regarding it as the only effective argument for supernatural religion, are almost daily decreasing in number.

J. T. Lloyd.

Out of the Night.

> A world in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let us have to do with real men and women, and not with skipping ghosts.—*Emerson.*
>
> After all, a book (the Bible) cannot make a stand against the wild, living intellect of man.—*Cardinal Newman.*

The name of Cardinal Newman is known the world over; that of his younger brother, Francis Newman, is known to but few. Yet Francis did substantial good during his lifetime, which extended almost throughout the nineteenth century. Born at the beginning of the century, he lived until near its close, working, as he himself said, in a letter to a friend, to do something for the good of those who had fewer advantages than himself.

Francis William Newman was born in a religious family, and he had the same early training as his elder brother, who became a Cardinal of the Catholic Church. Educated at Oxford University, he was elected to a fellowship at Balliol College, but resigned, being unable conscientiously to comply with the regulations of the Test Act, then in force. After journeying into Syria as a missionary, Francis Newman abandoned all thoughts of taking holy orders as he had contemplated. While his brother, John Henry Newman, was attracted by the authority of the Church, Francis found himself seceding more and more from her, drifting slowly but surely into Freethought. The Church's loss was the world's gain, for the good work he was to do was not within the narrow confines of the cloister, but in the busy world. He became Classical Professor in Manchester New College, and subsequently Latin Professor at London University. By the middle of the century he had given up Christianity, and had written his memorable *Phases of Faith*, a work which still lives, and will continue to live, as an expression of a remarkable personality and a "human document" of extraordinary interest.

The book is a veritable pilgrim's progress from Christianity to Freethought. It is a plain unvarnished account of the reasons why Francis Newman gave up his belief in orthodoxy. Beginning as a believer of the narrowest type, he shows, step by step, how he relinquished

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article after article of his creed. Its great merit is the transparent honesty of the writer, which shines on every page. It needed courage, too, to write such a book, for Newman was a university professor and ran the risk of dismissal from his post. Indeed, ostracism was then, as now, a formidable weapon in the hands of the Church. A work which, for the first time, put the arguments for evolution in popular language, the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), had to be issued anonymously, or its author would have been ruined. Professor Newman had more courage than Robert Chambers. Referring to his youthful creed he said plainly:—

> I knew not then, and I know not now, why bishops, as such, should be more reverenced than common clergymen; or clergymen, as such, more than common men.

It needed audacity to write such things. Such a declaration, over the signature of a university professor, was not pleasant reading for the orthodox. It was written in a way that all could understand, and not in the veiled language of the learned. Plain speech is not esteemed at its proper value. Ruskin once said, laughingly, that people no longer thought him a fine writer, because, if he thought a man's house was on fire, he only said, "Sir, your house is on fire," whereas formerly he used to say, "Sir, the abode in which you probably passed the delightful days of your adolescence is in imminent danger of conflagration."

Like so many Freethinkers, Francis Newman was a zealous reformer. No sooner did his eye alight on an abuse, or he became aware of a canker in society, than he burned to remedy the one and pluck out the other. In every civilization there will always be found, sheltering under the wall, evil things not yet brought to book, not yet revealed in their true nature, but still dragging back the wheels of progress and the betterment of humanity. Four of such evils Francis Newman spent years of his life in combating: cruelty to animals, intemperance, militarism, and the harshness of the criminal code. Newman was no half-hearted reformer, and he wielded a swift, live pen. How pertinent is his question, "Why does one murder make a villain, but the murder of thousands a hero?" And again, "Why do princes and statesmen, who would scorn to steal a shilling, make no difficulty in stealing a kingdom?"

Newman was a determined opponent of the system of long terms of imprisonment, and pointed out the evils that arose from the offences of one bringing in their train the pauperizing of many dependent on the criminal. His strenuous advocacy of land reform was by no means the least service rendered by this noble-hearted enthusiast. Hear his words:—

> That a man should be able to buy up large tracts of land, and make himself the owner of them—to keep them in or out of culture as he pleases—to keep or open roads, and dictate where houses should be built .....this is no natural right; but is an artificial creation of arbitrary law; law made by legislation for personal convenience—certainly not for the benefit of the nation.

This country is far behind the Continent in this matter. "We know not whither, beside England," he wrote, "to look for a nation living by wages, and divorced from all rights in the crops which they raise."

Brave old man! His famous brother, the lonely Cardinal of a reactionary Church, may be better known to the world, but to us Francis Newman is the greater and nobler man. He was of the stuff of which heroes are made. Always boldest where there was a cause that needed fighting for, or on behalf of fellow-citizens who were powerless to right their own wrongs, and who required someone to voice them, his pen was tireless on behalf of progress. We salute the memory of one who, in the midst of difficulties, and breathing an atmosphere heavy with superstition and corruption, yet showed himself a good and a wise man:—

> O framed for nobler times and calmer hearts!
> O studious thinker eloquent for Truth!
> Philosopher, despising wealth and death,
> But patient, childlike, full of life and love!

MIMNERMUS.

Religion and Life.

SIR,—I discern a danger ahead. A young philosopher of to-day has been criticized by his friends because, when he is tired, he has a way of repeating an argument which has been controverted in the same words but in a louder tone of voice. Have you not, in your last, girded at me again for not saying what I mean by God, without noticing the reasons for reticence which I have given? They amount to this: that it is a question of personal knowledge of an invisible spiritual Being, and such knowledge cannot be acquired second-hand. I should be glad if you would refer to what I wrote on this topic. This much, however, I will add. Any Christian to whom religion is a reality has learnt that the Being whom he worships can only be known by those who wish to know Him. We don't quarrel with this law, because it is bound up with the fact of our friendships with each other. If A gets leave to introduce B to C, it is because C wishes to know B. If C denies any such wish, A will be well advised to save himself the trouble of an introduction, because he knows C will not get to know B even if he is introduced. Still less would he get anything out of the introduction if he started with the conviction, or perhaps only the affirmation, that B had no existence. I once knew man who met an acquaintance in Bond Street, and the latter, after shaking hands, said, "Do you know, it is a funny thing, but I thought you were dead." A tactless remark, you will admit, and it led to their intercourse ceasing. The other man judged that if his acquaintance knew and cared so little about him, it would be a waste of time to continue any further relations. But if this gentleman had been convinced from the start that the other didn't exist at all, the acquaintance would never have got so far as it did; and no amount of well-meaning talk on the part of a third party would have helped matters in the least. That is how we stand. You assume that what we mean by God is a projection of our minds which, like other such things, we could explain if we liked. I ask you to consider that to us He is a Person, infinite and unspeakably wonderful, and that the account of Him given by many that He is a projection of our minds is wrong, because it contradicts our consciousness; just as it would have been absurd if anyone had told Disraeli that Gladstone was a projection of his brain. I daresay Disraeli often wished it were so; but none the less he would have thought the statement so mad that he would not have dreamt of trying to prove the opposite by any explanation whatsoever.

There is a further reason. Suppose the man who was told Mr. Gladstone did not exist was a passionate admirer of his, would he not feel that to controvert the allegation by descanting on his character, or his influence, or his personality, would be a gross violation of the respect due to a great man?

"Very well, then," you will say, "if I know nothing about God and you can't tell me anything, our friendly controversy comes to an end." Not so. I am only just coming somewhere near the heart of the positive side of the matter. So far I have been speaking from the bare Theistic standpoint. If that were all, I should go on to show that in your own convictions there is a great

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deal of unconscious Theism. But your repeated challenge induces me to leave that very interesting and relevant topic and give you a more definite answer from the Christian point of view. Vague as my answer has hitherto been, it is as clear, I fancy, as that of any of the greatest Pagans. You would get very little more from Plato.

But when we come to the Christian Gospel a profound change comes over the situation. Jesus never explained anything in order that an unsympathetic audience should be convinced against their will, that was the last thing he wanted, because He knew it would do far more harm than good. He is the greatest force for good in all history, because He dealt with men as free persons, and only drew them by persuasion; and His persuasion was amazingly powerful because it was the expression of a limitless love for man. His character is so sublime that among all nations and peoples it has been worshipped as divine. Those of us who reckon Him as divine—that is, God Himself become Man—are no longer groping in darkness as to the attributes and qualities of God the Father. We take it for granted that the justice, the love, the severity, the amazing combination of womanly tenderness and heroic courage which Christ showed are qualities which belong to the Deity; but being exhibited as they were by the human Jesus, they become tokens to us of what human nature at its best can achieve.

That is one point, only one, which makes the whole difference to our outlook on life. By itself it is enough to irradiate the prospect with a boundless hope. But in persuading men to conceive of God as a Personal Father bent on saving mankind, or rather, on enabling mankind to work out its own salvation, Christ appealed to a quality in us which he called Faith. What is faith? I promised to tackle this question.

Let us define it as the power to believe the best of persons and things and to act on the belief. It is the power which is at the back of every good action and every sympathetic thought, and every tactful word. It also is the secret of every friendship, of all good management of men, of every discovery in science, and in fact of civilization itself, for it inspires all noble endeavour and counteracts men's inherent tendency to conflict and distrust. It is essential to the whole higher life of humanity. Christ offered the Jews this higher life on certain conditions. That life is offered to us now, and men vary strangely in their answer. Two men once lost their way in the forest, and after wandering till they were terribly hungry, stumbled upon a cottage. No one was inside, but they saw a loaf of bread on the table. One says: "Here we are; this will keep us alive, anyhow." The other, who had been familiarized with the frequent harm done by people jumping to conclusions, said: "Wait a bit: there is no proof that that is not poisonous." The other replied: "Certainly, there is no proof; but if we wait for one we shall die. You may do what you like, I shall eat." Thus the quality to which Christ appealed is simply the opposite of lunacy in ordinary life; and though He offered something infinitely greater and better than rescue from starvation, where that quality were wholly wanting, He could do nothing at all.

E. Lyttelton.

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures, the world will give you reproaches but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law which give others security becomes an enemy to them.—*Goldsmith.*

Acid Drops.

Now that Dr. Liebknecht has been liberated it looks as though in the Germany of the near future he will occupy a very high place. Cheers have already been given him as the President of the future German Republic. Dr. Liebknecht is a Freethinker, he has been a consistent opponent of militarism all along, and he will be remembered for telling the Prussian Diet a plain and wholesome truth, that "the militarizing of schools converts them into training stables for war. You educate your children to be war-machines." We said at the time that these were golden words, and we repeat that now. And we commend the saying to those of our own country who are so anxious to introduce military drill into *our* schools. Hands off the child is wholesome advice to both the soldier and the priest.

Said Sir Oliver Lodge at the Liverpool Royal Institution:—

> "Man's soul consists of the ether which holds the material body together. When the material body is worn out the ethereal body is as good as new, and by putting on some material concomitant can communicate with us still.

We congratulate Sir Oliver on having solved a very vexed question. If only we knew how he knows, and what precisely he means now he does know, we should be more content.

Mr. R. D. Holt, M.P., is either a humourist or one who understands human nature. According to the *Daily Express* of October 30, he told the Unitarian Association at Manchester that "One way to secure larger congregations would be to offer a glass of beer to every person who attends service devotedly and respectfully. The question seems to us to resolve itself into "How much beer is required to induce a properly respectful feeling towards a Church service?"

Just as we expected, the Sunday Observance Committee are protesting against Sunday band performances in the Glasgow Parks. They want to have the monopoly of providing entertainment for the people in the shape of Church services, a form of entertainment which is not appreciated by the majority of the citizens.

The band performance on the Glasgow Green last Sunday was well attended. The audience was orderly, and seemed to appreciate the music provided. A performance is to be given on the Green each Sunday afternoon up till November 17. Why should they not be continued in the Winter Gardens during the winter? It is to be hoped last Sunday's experiment will convince the Town Council of the demand for Sunday band performances in the parks during the summer months.

Speaking at Coatbridge at a meeting of the Hamilton Branch of the E.T.S., Mr. Anderson, Stonehouse, said that the Shorter Catechism should be at once abolished from the schools. It doctrines were antiquated, its teaching method was unsound, and it was no help in attaining the real object of religious training, namely, the improvement of character. Mr. Anderson strongly objected to the teaching of dogma or speculative opinions. The meeting passed a resolution opposing any attempt to impose religious tests on teachers.

Under the auspices of the New Operatic Club an excellent concert was given in the Alhambra Theatre, Glasgow, last Sunday evening in aid of the Glasgow Prisoners of War Fund. Sir John Ure Primrose, Bart., in moving a vote of thanks to the theatre management and performers, expressed the belief that such a delightful performance as they had listened to consecrated the Sabbath, and that, in any case, the cause for which it was promoted fully justified it. The theatre was filled to overflowing, and hundreds were unable to gain admission. Were there any Churches in the district crowded out last Sunday?

Lying before us as we write is an official account of five punishments inflicted in one camp during October on men

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for offences connected with Church Parade. Three are cases of men who returned to barracks without going to church; one absented himself; the other laughed on Church Parade. Evidently the officer thought religion no laughing matter. He probably agreed with the clergyman who thanked God there had never been a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon in his church. We hope all these five will be duly impressed with the importance of religion.

The Congregational Board of Wolverhampton has written to the Town Council protesting against its erecting a War shrine provided by public subscription. We welcome the protest. This is one of the many dodges of the Church to exploit a public occasion in its own interests. People subscribe because they are desirous of expressing their appreciation of those who have fallen in the War. Then a Church shrine is erected, and the result exhibited as a sample of attachment to the Church. It is really an exhibition of the crafty and unscrupulous methods of modern religious organizations.

In Wolverhampton some of the Free Churches are following the Sunday evening picture performances with a religious service. We should much like to hear the comments of the audience.

The Rev. David Watson, of St. Clement's, Glasgow, writing to the Press, says while the Church must always remain non-political and non-partizan, it is in full sympathy with the just and legitimate aspirations of organized labour, and necessarily so, seeing her membership is so largely composed of the industrial classes. A perusal of *Christianity and Slavery* might enlighten the Rev. David Watson as to the attitude which has been adopted by the Church in all ages towards a betterment of the conditions for the working classes.

Professor Henderson asks: "What is your gospel which you wish to preach? Are the Churches themselves agreed as to what it is? Is there, then, no message with which the Church of Christ can with one trumpet voice proclaim as its message to this war-torn world?" What a wail after two thousand years of Christianity! Why doesn't he join the Secularists, and work for the uplifting of Humanity, which proclaims the message of love, brotherhood, and liberty?

Principal Sir Donald MacAlister, Glasgow University, says that the missionary efforts in China and Japan will receive new opportunities and a warmer reception than heretofore. Does he think China and Japan will forget all about the Christian barbarities of the War? He may be right about a warmer reception.

From the *Daily Express*:—

> An Army chaplain, meeting a Jock who had taken "a drop too much," offered to guide him to barracks. On the way Jock became discursive. "Ye ken, chaplain," he said, "ma faither is a very releegious man, and I'm that way inclined masel'. Noo I'd like to ha'e a bit argument wi' ye on predestination."
>
> The padre was much amused. "Hadn't you better wait until you are sober, Jock?" he replied.
>
> "Hoots, mon," said the Scot, "I don't care a d—— about predestination when I'm sober."

Considering that, on the authority of the Bishop of London, this War is God's War, and, on the authority of nearly all the clergy, we are fighting God's fight, Providence has behaved very shabbily in giving us the present epidemic of so-called influenza. And, strangely enough, it appears to be more fatal to those below thirty years of age—the fighting age—than those above it. That is God's way of showing his appreciation of our efforts. Some Christians will doubtless get consolation from the fact that people are suffering worse in Germany and Austria. But it is poor comfort, anyway, and we pity the mind that sees comfort in that direction, just as we pitied those who were gloating over the increasing number of child victims in Germany due to the blockade. These things are inevitable in war-time, but we ought at least to have decency enough not to rejoice at their happening.

The clergy emphasize the blessings of poverty in the pulpit; but they prefer the fleshpots of Egypt in private life. The late Rev. E. W. Tarbox, a Baptist minister, of Winchester, left £13,564, and the Rev. F. Bishop, of Torquay, left £11,927. These amounts are not large, but they do not spell poverty.

Mr. H. G. Wells may be religious, but he "wears his rue with a difference." In his latest novel, *Joan and Peter*, he says: "Progress is a religion in itself. Work and learning are our creed. We cannot make terms with any other creed." And, again: "Every step on the way to the world state and the real unification of men will be fought by the priests and the stagnant men." There will not be much joy in heavenly circles over this repentant sinner.

"The Christian religion is two thousand years old," said the parson, proudly. "Just so," replied the sceptic; "it looks its age, and needs re-upholstering."

With the object of increasing the stipend of a Surrey vicar, an effort is being made to raise £5,000 from among the parishioners. Prayer, it is said, can move mountains; but it cannot "raise the wind."

Rochester Cathedral has now a lady bell-ringer, a lady organist, and a lady verger. Presumably, the congregation is mainly composed of ladies also.

The Rev. Dr. Kelman, Edinburgh, in addressing the Office-bearers' Union of the Glasgow U.F. Church, said that, believing as he did in the reality, and the worth and the permanence of the Church of Jesus Christ, he could not be blind to the fact that in all our cities there were vast numbers who passed through their lives without knowing anything of the Church, and who did not wish to know anything about it. People to-day were not compelled to go to church, as in past generations, and that was a healthier state of society. It seemed to him there must be something wrong somewhere when such vast masses were passing the church door. He believed the cause of non-churchgoing was that they in the Church did not manage to interest vast numbers outside it. The whole atmosphere of our Church somehow had failed to catch their imagination. The secret of reality was intelligibility. How often had the Church kept dangling over our masculine young men a heaven they did not care about. Until the heaven the Church taught the young men to aspire to had got some young blood in it, and was a heaven that would make them feel strong and free and glad, it would never interest them. What a scathing indictment of the Church from within while others are proclaiming to the world that the War has been the means of causing the people in general to look to the Church for guidance in their spiritual troubles! The fact is, the Church is at sixes and sevens, and doesn't know where she is; but she is making a bold effort to be on the winning side, as usual.

Defenders of the Design Argument will read with interest that at an inquest at Grimsby it was proved that the deceased had an enormous heart, weighing over two pounds as against the normal eleven ounces.

The late Dr. W. Boyd Carpenter, formerly Bishop of Ripon, was buried in Westminster Abbey. Some years ago, when it was suggested that George Meredith should be buried there, the dear clergy informed the public that the place was "full up."

The Guild of St. George will be distressed to hear that the new ten-shilling Treasury note contains a picture of Britannia in place of the "C 3" saint.

At an inquest on a Chelsea resident it was stated that the deceased had been treated by Christian Science practitioners, and that the treatment consisted of prayer. At the last an ordinary doctor was sent for, but did not reach the house until death had taken place. It was admitted that the Christian Science practitioners were paid for their services.

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The "Freethinker" and the War.

We are writing what follows in redemption of a promise made several weeks since to friends and readers who were wondering what we would do in face of the last advance in wages and prices.

When these advances occurred we thought that at last we should be compelled to vary our policy, and increase the price of the *Freethinker* to threepence. But during the past three or four weeks a change has come over the situation. The War seems nearing the end, and peace is likely to break out at any hour. In these circumstances we have decided to keep the *Freethinker* at twopence. We have held it at that price during more than four years of War, and it would be a thousand pities to have to give in at the end. We do not like giving in.

But on this decision there are several things that may be said. Heavy as the expenses have been hitherto, they will be heavier during this last year; for even though fighting ceases at once, there will be no drop in prices for some time. Wages will certainly not drop for nearly a year—if at all. And paper looks like being dearer in the immediate future. Our pre-War price for paper was just over £20 per ton. Our last paper was bought at over £130 per ton, with a warning that the next lot would be £10 per ton dearer.

Altogether the *Freethinker* is costing between £800 and £900 per year more to produce than it did when War broke out. This will give readers some notion of the difficulties we have to face—and overcome.

Thanks to our many friends these difficulties are being met. Those who have been sending along their waste paper have been giving us very real and valuable help. And we still need all we can get.

The Sustentation Fund has been well supported, as will be seen. The response has been better than last year, and we may be excused the conceit (if it be conceit) of taking this as a renewed expression of confidence in our work and general management. We appreciate this confidence more than can be put into words, all we can do is to transform appreciation into deeds.

The deficit of last year has been more than cleared off, and we should, following our usual rule, have closed the Fund by now. But so many of the subscribers have urged us to keep the Fund open longer, on the ground that it will ease the burden by meeting some of the loss as it accrues weekly, that we have decided to do so.

We still feel that the resolve to keep the paper at its old price was a sound one. The proof is that the circulation steadily improves. When we wrote in September, we mentioned that the circulation, besides making good all losses, was some 1,300 copies weekly better than it was in 1914. We have now improved on that, and are steadily climbing towards the completion of our second thousand new readers. And we don't intend to stop there.

The great thing we have kept before us is the fact that the *Freethinker* exists mainly as an organ of propaganda. And it has done more in this way than many people realize. It gives its services and space to all Freethought propagandist work absolutely free, taking nothing in the shape of subsidy or payment from any source. In addition, it has distributed large quantities of literature to soldiers and sailors, as our readers know, with good results. The publishing side of the work has also been resumed and extended.

For myself, I have the utmost confidence in the future of the paper—so much confidence that I have sunk a very large sum of money for use in purchasing supplies, and in issuing new publications. When I say that, it must not be understood that I am a man of means, although what little I could scrape together has gone that way. But it is chiefly borrowed capital, for which I am personally responsible. That, indeed, is one of the pressing difficulties—want of capital with which to undertake fresh enterprises. One cannot buy stocks of paper and issue new publications without capital, and I am pleased and proud that friends have had confidence enough in me and my plans to advance funds sufficient to meet immediate needs. As the plans I have in view are worked out, all this will right itself in time.

So the *Freethinker* will, short of something in the nature of a catastrophe, remain at twopence. Nothing will be placed in the way of its increasing sales, or its increased usefulness. All over the country friends of the paper are working with a will. We cannot mention them all by name; they are too numerous. But what has been done could not have been done without their help. We are all fellow-workers in a great Cause; the prominence of some is, perhaps, accidental; and when the War is done, and we get back to normal conditions, we are sure we shall all have reason to rejoice at the result of our united efforts.

Chapman Cohen.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 10, Liverpool; November 17, Birmingham (N. S. S. Conference); November 24, Leeds; December 1, Ferndale; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea; December 8, Ferndale.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—Previously acknowledged, £411 11s. 7d. Clifford Williams, 10s.; R. Hankey, 9s. 6d.; E. Elmes, 5s.; H. R., 2s. 6d.; T. Jones, 2s. 6d; R. Benn, 3s.; "Ajax," 2s.; New Reader, 3s.; W. Berry, 5s.; L. Morgan, 2s. 6d.; D. Hayes, 1s. 6d.; L. H., 2s.; Ex-Wesleyan, 3s.; T. Underwood, 1s.; W. T. Phillips, 6s. 6d.; W. Wilson, 5s.; T. Murphy, 2s. 6d.; E. J. Brown, 9s. 6d.; Three Troedyrhiw Readers, 13s.; S. Chapple, 5s.; Tom and Tim, 5s; Swansea Branch N. S. S., £1; Per Sec. Manchester Branch, 10s. Total, £418 0s. 7d.

Mr. Clifford Williams, of Birmingham, and one of the Society's Vice-Presidents, in forwarding his contribution to our Sustentation Fund, says that in his opinion the response to our appeal is an indication of the advance we are making. He adds: "The foregoing, coupled with the opening of new Branches, the increasing interest manifested (especially here in Birmingham), shows conclusively how we are progressing; and the barometer of public opinion, so steadily rising in our favour, proves how well justified has been your enthusiasm and optimism, backed up by your ability."

J. Hardie.—We take the will for the deed, and know you *are* doing all you can. No one can do more. We are glad to hear that by your outspoken confession of belief you have broken down a deal of opposition. We venture the opinion that something depends here upon character. With a poor character, frankness invites attack; a better one defeats it.

G. Finch.—We are greatly obliged for your letter. We will bear the matter in mind and write you when the proper occasion arrives.

E. J.—Send in the names of the soldiers and we will see to the rest. Of course, our parcels are sent out post free.

T. Zeiss (Shoreham).—There is no Branch of the N.S.S. near you. We are sending parcels to address given.

R. Berry.—We have the *Bible Handbook*, *Infidel Death Beds*, and a number of other things marked for reissue so soon as circumstances allow us do so.

G. E. Webb.—We quite endorse all you say as to the relative value of the Freethought *versus* the Christian ideal. But have you not missed the sarcastic note in our comments? For the rest our argument was that the same fundamental human nature is common to both Christians and Freethinkers, and that the better aspect of the Christian's nature is really injured by his devotion to Christianity, and by the influence of supernaturalistic ideals.

W. H. Briden.—Parcel sent. Hope it will prove useful.

R. Roberts.—We know nothing of the value of Pelmanism. It is well advertised—whether that shows virtue or enterprise we are unable to judge.

W. J.—We don't see how the question can be further discussed with profit to anyone concerned.

J. Griffith.—Something of what you desire is being done. Mr. Cohen is quite willing to pay Merthyr a visit if a suitable hall can be obtained. Thanks for good wishes.

E. Lyte.—We have handed your letter to one of the parties concerned.

J. Chapple.—Please send the papers along. We are obliged for good wishes.

We have another offer from a reader who is desirous of sending a weekly copy to someone who is not already a reader. We shall be glad to receive an address.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day in Liverpool, at the Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street. The meetings will be at 3 and 7 o'clock, and there is likely to be discussion on both occasions. It has been found impossible to secure a larger hall, owing to the occupancy of other places by the military, etc.; but the Clarion Cafe is a good-sized, comfortable hall, and at any rate is the best that can be obtained in present circumstances. There is room for a strong forward movement in Liverpool, and after the War we feel sure it will be attempted.

This is the last opportunity we shall have of calling attention to the special N. S. S. Conference at Birmingham. A good gathering of delegates and members is expected, and we think all Branches will be represented. The meetings will be held in the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, Birmingham. The morning meeting opens at 10.30, afternoon at 2.30.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd visits Sheffield to-day (Nov. 10), and lectures in the Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street, at 6.30, on "The Value of the Bible in National Life." Admission is free.

The freedom of the press is with the *Freethinker* a vital principal, and we have never concealed our dislike to the way in which the censorship of books and pamphlets have been carried on during the War. We have received from the Glasgow Socialist Labour Press, a statement which deserves some public attention. According to the statement of the Secretary to the Press, over three months ago the Press was raided, and the place closed for merely *printing*, not publishing, some works to which the military authorities took exception. Mr. Bell, the Secretary, affirms that no explanation of this action was furnished until October 8; even then, it is claimed, the reasons given were of a misleading character. At any rate, the policy of seizing printing plant and closing printing offices is of a very questionable character. It is punishing for an offence that might be committed in the future. Hitherto, English law has proceeded on the principle that an offence must be committed before a penalty can be inflicted. And any other policy in relation to publications is a covert attack on freedom of speech and of the press. To close a man's business and seize his printing plant because he has printed something to which objection is taken, and to do it without open trial, is a travesty of justice.

Thirty-nine new members were admitted to the N. S. S. at the last Executive Meeting, and permission given to form a new Branch at Rhondda. This makes the fourth Branch of the Society started in South Wales within the last two years, and there are more to come. At the end of the month Mr. Cohen is lecturing in new districts in South Wales, which will, probably, lead to further good results. When the War is over, and something like normal conditions return, an equally determined attempt at organization must be made in Ireland and Scotland. Both places are ripe for it.

The success of the two Pioneer four-page leaflets, *What Will You Put in Its Place?* and *What Is the Use of the Clergy?* has been so pronounced—large editions of both have been sold—that Mr. Cohen has written four more, making six in all. These are now in the press, and we hope to issue them in the course of a week or so. They are all specially written with a view to propaganda.

The Rationalist Press is issuing a very useful tract for use during the forthcoming General Election, on the question of Compulsory Church-going in Army and Navy. The tract calls attention to the injustice of compelling men to attend a religious service in which they have no faith, and cites from various chaplains and others as evidence of the feeling of the men against the practice. We wish the tract the widest circulation, and feel sure it will do much good. At present soldiers and sailors are the only ones who are compelled to attend a religious service, and we see no reason why enlistment should rob a man of what is regarded as a right in all civilized countries.

Mr. Percy Muir, of the Christian Evidence Society, who was announced to speak for the North London Branch last Sunday on "Internationalism" was, unfortunately, prevented owing to a bad attack of influenza. Mr. Storey, at practically a moment's notice, threw himself into the breach. He was opposed by Mr. Kelf, and a brisk discussion followed. It is hoped that Mr. Muir is making a good recovery, and will be able to deliver his lecture some time in the New Year.

South Wales friends will please note that Mr. T. F. Palmer is lecturing to-day (November 10) in the Workman's Hall, Ogmore Vale, at 2.30, and in the Gem Picture House, Maesteg, at 7.30.

Mr. John Drinkwater, whose play, *Abraham Lincoln*, has just closed a successful run at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, is lecturing in the same building for the local Branch of the N. S. S. on "Poetry and Conduct" this evening at 7 o'clock. We trust there will be a first-rate audience to receive the lecturer.

We note the death, on November 4, of Andrew D. White, ex-Ambassador of U.S.A., and author of *The Warfare of Science with Theology*. This work is in two large volumes, detailed and scholarly in character, and provides a very armoury of facts for all interested on the subject.

The Greed of Gold.

> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.—*Matthew vi.* 19-21.

I AM not fond of attending funerals. In the course of my career I have had to attend a good many; I have always gone, however, as a matter of duty, and never out of any desire on my part for visiting cemeteries or taking part in the ceremony connected with the burial of the dead. Indeed, although I live within easy walking distance of three large cemeteries, sometimes an interval of as much as a year or more will elapse between my last visit and the call of duty to attend again. A few months ago I received an invitation to attend a funeral which I could not very well decline. A distant relative of mine had died, and Uncle Joe and I were requested to attend the funeral, seats in one of the

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coaches being reserved for us. And let me say just here that the business of an undertaker has always appeared to me to be a very melancholy one. No matter how he feels, whether cheerful or sad, he always has to wear a woeful countenance. He must not smile while in the performance of his duty; and while trying to cheer up the bereaved mourners, he must be careful that he says the right word in the right place, and in the proper tone, or he may offend those whom it is his greatest concern to please.

We have witnessed many funeral reforms during the past fifty years. I am old enough to remember when "mutes" were employed to stand outside houses from which the body of the "dear departed" was to be taken to the cemetery. Two of these gentlemen with top hats stood there for an hour or two, each holding a staff in one hand and a truncheon in the other, and looking as miserable as they could, with often a group of youngsters on the pavement as spectators. All the male mourners also were expected to wear great, heavy, black cloaks and top hats with big black bands round them, and streamers hanging down their backs; dingy black gloves, that had been worn by hundreds of mourners, were served out to the male followers, and large handkerchiefs with thick black borders were used on such occasions; and I was quite glad when my eldest brother, at my father's funeral, declined to wear either the cloak or the long streamer round the hat, although I remember this action on my brother's part grieved my dear mother very much. But action of this kind was needed to lead to reform, and reform came in time, though it seemed a long time in coming. When, however, it did come, reforms came rapidly, and funerals are not such painful performances as they were in my youth.

It was a fine afternoon last July when Uncle Joe and I attended the funeral in question. The deceased gentleman, who was an uncle of mine on my mother's side, having been a Christian and Churchman all his life, was buried in "consecrated ground," and the Church of England Burial Service was read over his remains.

After the service, we returned to the house, where a good tea awaited us. There were no "funeral baked meats" that Hamlet refers to as being customary in his day. We were living in War-time, and our coupons did not admit of us faring too sumptuously. But I remember in my youth that after a funeral the mourners were supplied with a "high tea," and fared like aldermen at a banquet. In fact, it reminds me of the old lady who boasted that she had buried ten members of her family, and "every one of 'em, thank gawd, was buried with a 'am." After tea, there was the usual conversation, and then we all sat solemnly round the drawing-room table, while the will of the deceased old gentleman was read. It was very brief. He did not leave much money, but all he had he left to his widow, with the earnest wish that if any of the children, who were all married and fairly advanced in life, should need any assistance, that it should be provided at the discretion of the widow. Now, that is the sort of will, as they say in legal circles, "without any complications." When this little ceremony was over, Uncle Joe started the first topic of conversation by telling us about the will of a rich employer of his when he was quite a youth. This employer, who had amassed a considerable fortune by sharp practice, made a will in which he left several large sums to charitable institutions, a large sum to the church of which he was a member for a stained glass window, but he left very little to his widow and children; but, instead, he left a large sum to a lady to whom he had been paying a good deal of attention, and a further sum to the two illegitimate offspring of the aforesaid lady.

When Uncle Joe had finished his interesting narrative, I thought I would have a sly dig at my respected relative's religious beliefs; so I pointedly asked him if he considered that his old employer was really a Christian.

"A Christian!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, "of course he was; a nominal Christian—and a bad one at that. Of course, there are bad Christians, just as there are bad Freethinkers. You will not deny that there are bad Freethinkers?"

"Certainly not. But if a Freethinker is bad there is no hope for him in this world, and he does not expect any in another. Every man has to suffer the consequences of his own misdeeds. In the case of the Christian, he hopes to get forgiveness in the next world, and a promise is held out to him in the words of Scripture: 'There is more joy in heaven over the return of one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentence.'"

"In this case," responded Uncle Joe, "there was no evidence that my old employer ever did repent, and the probability is that he went his way to perdition."

"What, after giving a stained glass window to the church? Surely, not?"

"Oh, but the Church could not give him pardon for his offence. Don't you remember those lines of Claudius in *Hamlet*:—

> May one be pardon'd and retain the offence
> In the corrupted currents of this world
> Offence's guilded hand may shove by Justice;
> And oft the wicked prize itself buys out the law,
> But it is not so above. There is no shuffling,
> There the action lies in its true nature,
> And we ourselves compell'd
> Even to the teeth and forhead of our faults,
> To give in evidence.

"A fine passage, indeed, Uncle Joe. I did not think you were a student of Shakespeare. I am glad, however, to know it. But remember, Claudius was a villain and a murderer, and in that very speech was arguing for the efficacy of prayer to blot out sin, even the crime of which he was guilty. But we were talking about Christians amassing large fortunes contrary to the teachings of their Lord and Master."

"I know we were," said Uncle Joe. "Christians are like other people, they have their weaknesses as well as their strong points."

"I have observed that very often. Why some of the bishops have left enormous fortunes, notwithstanding the injunction of their Master to 'Lay not up for themselves treasures on earth,' etc. And many of the clergy have accumulated large sums, and in their wills have left none to charitable objects."

"Yes, I know it, and I deplore their inconsistent conduct."

"They seem to forget altogether the teaching of Jesus—I went on: 'Blessed be ye poor'; 'Woe unto you rich'; 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.' Some of them assuredly seem to think that the camel will be able to squeeze his hump through the needle's eye. Or do they really in their hearts say: 'A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush.'"

"Oh, don't say that. That is a very old joke—in fact quite a chestnut," said Uncle Joe, rather maliciously.

"Very likely; but it's true nevertheless. Why, only a week or two ago my friend, 'Mimnermus,' gave a list of amounts left by ten bishops and two archbishops in the *Freethinker* amounting in the aggregate to the large sum of £611,154, certainly a considerable burden for these poor divines to stagger under while preaching the doctrine of the blessedness of poverty to their credulous followers."

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"Yes, that's the sort of ridicule one expects from Freethinkers. You never hear that kind of thing from Christians."

"Oh, indeed; that shows that you are not acquainted with the methods of the Christian Want-of-Evidence Society and other similar bodies. But suppose we leave the bishop and the clergy out of the question, and deal only with the ordinary layman—look at the colossal fortunes many of them lay up? Take all their investments in 'War Loans,' all their deposits in banks, all their insurances, etc., surely all these are in direct opposition to the teaching of making no provision for the future? 'Take no thought for the morrow what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, or wherewithal she shall be clothed,' etc. The fact is we must make provision for the future or we should perish. And, therefore, the Christian, like the Freethinker, ignores such teachings in his daily life, and acts upon teachings that are more practicable and suitable for the times in which he lives."

At this point we branched off into a discussion on food prices and the War, in which the ladies present took part, then a little port wine for one's stomach's sake for those who cared to imbibe, a nice refreshing cup of coffee for those who were total abstainers, a little further talk on various subjects and we rose to take farewell of my dear old aunt, the widow, who had lost one who had been a partner to her through a very long and happy life, and the members of her family who had lost a good father, and the community a very honest, straightforward, and respected citizen.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Soldiers of Freethought.

> And if ye cannot be saints of knowledge, then, I pray you, be at least its warriors. They are the companions and forerunners of such saintship.—*Nietzsche.*

AMIDST the hatreds and rancours of this World-War, Nature, to the thoughtless, irritates and provokes with her impassive "neutrality." There is an almost irresistible impulse in every man, which only *true* education can remove, to regard himself as nature's apex, and the world as his justification. This is a well-known characteristic of the child-mind, and unfortunately for civilization, the majority of us remain "children," thanks to "pap" served out to us in press, Parliament, and pulpit.

True knowledge, again, begets humility of intellect; the seeker after truth, if he is honest, realizes the elusiveness of his quest, and is content to follow the lonely dark pathways, leading he knows not whither, handing on the torch which lit him to posterity. The thinker grapples with Nature's problems, and himself her manifestation, knows from his studies, that if he and his kind only *will*, she can be made to attain greater heights. The danger lies in this latter class abnegating their natural instincts, and relegating to the "mob" the most important functions conducive to the life and progress of society. This reticence, this "conspiracy of silence" on the part of the more thoughtful is a real menace to the future.

We listen in vain for the views of a John Morley. On the greatest of issues we are treated to the unceasing platitudes of the Bishop of London and Mr. Bottomley. I must confess to a bias in favour of what is termed "Apostolic favour" in religious parlance. A Bradlaugh will effect more change in a lifetime than a score of his more compromising brethren. Unfortunately, *iron men* are as rare as candour in a priest, but we weaker ones, in our acquiesence in the present order of things, do not encourage their production. The great liberations of the past will have lived and suffered in vain if we fail to continue their work in the same fearless spirit and remain "slackers" to the cause. To live comfortably and happily is not the ideal of the *true* Freethinker, in fact he cannot be "happy" unless he is striving—striving for what—for that serenity of spirit which can brave bigoted, derisive, mobs, and can suffer poverty, sickness, and even death, in in his lonely search for richer worlds. It is the distinction of finer spirits to find joy in such a life, as the applause of the gallery, and "saved souls" is the "joy" of men like the Rev. Dr. Sunday and Mr. Bottomley. Life, bounding, red, radiant, life must be our war cry; let us shout it in the ears of the preachers of death!

Religion in the past has proved itself a deadly enemy of life; it sucked dry the noble forms of the ancients, and left a crafty, cunning, anæmic, priesthood to sing their mournful songs of death through the dark ages. Once, again, it extinguished with its book-worship the promise of the Renaissance. History affords us countless examples of the danger of that "latent superstition" Mr. Cohen so gravely warns us of. Do not let us share the complacency of the consumptive who is most hopeful when death is near. Read the jesting criticisms of the "Nazarenes" by the great Pagans of antiquity—where is their jesting now? A repetition of an historical catastrophe, such as the worst periods of the Middle Ages, is improbable; but who, bearing in mind the prosperous army of star-gazers, Spiritualists, and Catholic journalists, can say it is impossible?

In the work of our little paper lies the nucleus of a healthy endeavour for even the most obscure. In that way will saner influences sweep through the land, overwhelming the tottering strongholds of priestcraft, statecraft, and hypocrisy—that is, *if* every man to himself "be true." The answer to Chesterton's cheap gibe at Swinburne's *Songs Before Sunrise*, "the sun which never rose" rests with *you*.

E. A. (Johannesburg).

Correspondence.

HERBERT SPENCER AND THE UNKNOWABLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Without presuming to intervene in the discussion between Dr. Lyttelton and yourself, may I point out that Dr. Lyttelton is mistaken in supposing Spencer was unable to see that the statement, "God is unknowable," involves a contradiction? Spencer admitted the contradiction, and endeavoured to explain it. In *First Principles*, Part I., chap iv., he quotes with approval the arguments of Hamilton and Mansel to show that the Absolute is unknowable, but to these he adds a qualification, which is, briefly, as follows: Though these propositions must be accepted in their entirety when viewed from a purely logical aspect, when contemplated from their psychological aspect, they are found to be imperfect statements of the truth. Besides that *definite* consciousness of which Logic formulates the laws, there is also an *indefinite* consciousness which cannot be formulated. Besides complete thought and incomplete thought admitting of completion, there are thoughts impossible to complete which are yet real in that they are normal affections of the intellect. "To say that we cannot know the Absolute, is, by implication, to affirm that there *is* an Absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn *what* the Absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption *that* it is."

In the Postscript to Part I., Spencer is still more explicit. After referring to criticisms of the assertion that the Ultimate Reality is unknown and *unknowable*, he writes:—

> .....The second objection is not thus easily met. It is doubtless true that saying what a thing is not, is, in some measure saying what it is;.....Hence it cannot be denied that to affirm of the Ultimate Reality that it is, in a remote way, to assert some knowledge of it, and therefore involves a contradiction.

But against this he contends that, as our intelligence is limited to the relative, and we are obliged to use words moulded to it, we cannot speak of the non-relative without introducing into our propositions meanings connoted by those words—meanings foreign to a subject-matter which transcends relations.

Much as we may admire the great work of Spencer, probably most of us find it difficult to adopt his Agnostic position, as, if we take this standpoint, everything becomes mysterious, inscrutable, and contradictory; nothing is intelligible. For example, Spencer tells us that the man of science, more than any other, truly *knows* that in its ultimate nature nothing

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can be known; that things in themselves cannot be known to us, and that knowledge of them, even if it were possible, would be useless. Again, having given an example to illustrate the meaning of such words as "explanation," "comprehension," "understanding," etc., and having clearly shown that they all involve merely the successive inclusion of special truths in more general truth, he concludes that the deepest facts cannot be understood. For, if the process is unlimited, then, since infinite time would be required to reach it, an ultimate explanation cannot be reached. While if, on the other hand, the process is limited, then, since the most general truth does not admit of inclusion in any other, it does not admit of interpretation; explanation must finally bring us down to the inexplicable, and comprehension must become something other than comprehension before the ultimate fact can be comprehended.

The mistake here appears to me to lie in supposing that when all facts have been included in some general truth, there still remains something to be done. Instead of regarding the most general truth as inexplicable, we should surely regard it as the *end* of explanation. We have completed what we set out to do. Beyond this point explanation becomes, not impossible, but, in the terms of the case, simply meaningless. If, when this point has been reached, the mind is still unsatisfied, it must seek for satisfaction in something other than explanation; comprehension must, indeed, become something other than comprehension, but *not*, as Spencer contends, for the ultimate fact to be *comprehended*. He seems to have forgotten the canon he has laid down.

J. A. Tomkins.

THE TASK OF FREETHOUGHT.

Sir,—I note that in the *Freethinker* for October 20 there is another letter bewailing the lack of constructive policy on the part of the Freethought movement. Might I point out that those who indulge in so many regrets about the critical methods of Freethought are evidently taking a wrong estimate of the matter? True criticism, and that is what all serious Freethinkers aim at, is not entirely destructive. The object of criticism is to destroy the worst and bring into relief the best that is to be found in the subject under criticism. And in order to do this it is frequently, if not always, necessary to add fresh knowledge to what is saved from destruction, or it is necessary to give a new interpretation to facts from which false interpretations have been cleared.

It should not be very difficult for the average Freethinker to realize that in clearing his mind of obsolete and illogical intepretations of the known facts of the universe, and replacing them by accepting rational interpretations, he is doing something constructive as well as destructive. It is this double-sided critical work which the Freethought Movement aims at on a large scale. That much has been accomplished in this way can be realized by those who will read the works of Draper, Buckle, Lecky, or the masterly *Short History of Freethought*, by J. M. Robertson. Surely the circulation, throughout society, of the results of modern science and of rational views of life, is a constructive work of which Freethinkers may be proud.

That much improvement in the conduct of our meetings is to be desired I think most of us will admit. But that is a matter which rests very largely with each Branch Society, and will be determined to some extent by the material resources of each Branch.

We must not allow lack of ceremony at meetings to blind us to the fact of the great constructive work which is being done on intellectual lines. A work which has made itself felt in society, and will continue to be of social benefit.

E. Egerton Stafford.

Obituary.

Death is busy in our midst, and it has dealt a heavy blow to Mr. and Mrs. James Neate in the death of their only child, James Albert, at the age of seventeen and-a-half years. Delicate from his birth, the boy's parents had given themselves to their son's upbringing, and no child ever had more devoted parents. The reward of their efforts lay in seeing many of the dangers of their son's early childhood overcome, and the promise of a healthier maturity given. Unfortunately, he was stricken with the prevailing epidemic on October 25, and succumbed to pneumonia on the morning of November 2. Mr. Neate is a very old and one of the most devoted members of the N.S.S., a menber of the Executive, and of the Board of the Secular Society, Limited. Friends can offer nothing but sympathy in the face of such a tragedy, but we are sure that they will possess that in full measure from all who read these lines. Owing to the pressure under which undertakers are working, we are unable, at the time of going to press, to give either the time or place of the funeral.

—C. Cohen.

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, F. A. Davies, "A Visit to the Western Front."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Free Trade Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval Station): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Ratcliffe, "God, Freewill, and Immortality."

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Miss Margaret McMillan, "New Elements in the Education Bill."

OUTDOOR.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells, Saphin, Dales, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. John Drinkwater, "Poetry and Conduct."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, A Lecture, "Moral Sentiments and Religious Beliefs."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, "A Confession of Faith."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "God and the State"; 7, "The New World and the Old Faith.

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. St. Rhone, "How to Improve the Relationship of the Sexes."

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Value of the Bible in National Life."

Ethical Movement Meetings.

Caxton Hall, Victoria Street.

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS at 3 p.m.

NOVEMBER 16.

Mr. JOSEPH McCABE.

"The Danger of Religious Reaction after the War."

Chairman: The Hon. JOHN COLLIER.

Reserved Seats: Course Tickets, 5s. and 2s. 6d. Single Tickets, 2s. and 1s. Tickets from Union of Ethical Societies, 19 Buckingham Street, W.C. 2.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Do We Know God?—The Editor	589
Futile Claims.—J. T. Lloyd	590
The Perils of Thought.—Mimnermus	591
Religion in the Schools.—S. C.	592
A Naturalist's Paradise.—T. F. Palmer	596
Some Reflections on a Recent Tract.—W. H.	597
Notes From Ireland.—Desmond Fitzroy	598
To a Bereaved Mother.—R. G. Ingersoll	598
James Albert Neate.—W. H. Thresh	599

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Do We Know God?

There is an important distinction between describing symptoms and diagnosing causes. If I go to a doctor and tell him I have a pain in the head, or in the stomach, he will listen to me with respect and take my word for it. But if I proceed to tell him precisely what is the cause of my pain he will, in all probability, treat my diagnosis with contempt. When the founder of Christian science informed the world that a boil on the back of the neck was unbelief made manifest, she described a fact and expressed a conviction. The fact was the boil, the personal conviction was that the boil was an expression of unbelief. No one would question the fact or the *existence* of the conviction. They would say that the conviction was a mistaken one. Sitting quietly in my room I may have a conviction that someone is in a neighbouring apartment. The conviction is genuine, but it may be due to no more than an attack of "nerves." States of mind are indisputable and ultimate psychological facts. It is their trustworthiness, their correspondence with an external reality that furnishes the occasion for doubt or denial.

* * *

Hallucination or Truth.

Now, in the discussion between myself and Dr. Lyttelton, we appear to have reached a point where what has just been said seems relevant to the question at issue. Dr. Lyttelton says that the question of belief in God is that of "personal knowledge of an invisible spiritual Being," and that such knowledge "cannot be acquired secondhand." Well, there is a sense in which *all* knowledge is and must be of a personal character—that is, the thing to be known or the idea to be accepted as true, must be brought into direct personal relation with my consciousness. But, then, I fancy more than this is meant. What is meant, it seems to me, is that I must accept the existence of God as being a fact, because some Christian informs me that he has direct personal knowledge of such a being. But in that case am I not accepting a belief in the existence of God at secondhand? Am I not doing exactly what Dr. Lyttelton says cannot be done? Either that or the matter is ruled as altogether outside the realm of discussion. For you cannot discuss the *existence* of a personal conviction. If a man has a personal conviction that the moon is made of green cheese, there is no room for discussion on that. If the Kaiser really was convinced that he was God's agent on earth, or our bench of bishops convinced that this position was reserved for England, we cannot question the genuineness of these convictions; we can only discuss their rationality, or how far the conviction can be proved to be in harmony with fact. And if we cannot bring a personal conviction to some such test as this, in what way are we to discriminate? How are we to distinguish a conviction that expresses a truth from a delusion or an hallucination?

* * *

Conviction versus Accuracy.

Now, it would clearly be both useless and impertinent for me to deny that Dr. Lyttelton has a conviction that he possesses personal knowledge of "an invisible spiritual Being." On that head he must be the supreme authority. So, also, if we were writing in 1618, instead of 1918, we should have to make the same concession in face of the assurance of certain people that they had personal knowledge of "Old Nick." But the existence of a conviction is one thing, the reliability of that conviction is another and a different thing. If I did not take it for granted that Dr. Lyttelton has the conviction he states, this discussion would never have commenced. But, equally, if the reliability of the conviction is not to be called in question, discussion is impossible or unprofitable. The illustration concerning knowledge of a fellow human being seems beside the point. If I do not wish to make the acquaintance of B through A, certainly A would be foolish to introduce B. But there is no question of B's existence; or, if there is, A can soon settle that, leaving it open whether I desire a further knowledge of B or not. But, in the case of God, it is the very existence that is in question. And it is surely unsatisfactory to be told that someone else has knowledge of his existence, but that knowledge cannot be imparted, nor even be made the subject of discussion—it must be taken for granted, or accepted by C because D affirms that he is in personal touch with him.

* * *

Freethinkers versus Christians.

I have said before that in the Freethought philosophy of life there is a logical place for the Christian; but in the Christian philosophy of life there is no room for the Freethinker. Dr. Lyttelton's insistence upon a personal knowledge of God for all who desire it is an illustration in point. When will Christians bear in mind that in dealing with Freethinkers it is not a question of adepts *v.* the uninitiated, of adults *v.* children, or of a higher civilization *v.* a lower one? When will they realize that we understand their position in a way in which they cannot understand ours? We have been where they are; they have not been where we are. We do not represent a stage in a mental pilgrimage, the end of which is Theism. It is they who stand for a stage in a mental pilgrimage, the end of which is Atheism. The Christian can tell us nothing concerning his faith that we have

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not felt and experienced. And we know that this sense of contact with an "invisible spiritual Being," such as exists in the finer type of Christian, is no more than an expression of a sense of identity with a larger social whole. In political life we see the same thing expressed as patriotism, and, in sociological jargon, in a sense of "solidarity." It is again a question of, first, a wrong interpretation, and, second, an exploitation of a common human quality. A sense of a larger life which carries us outside the range of narrow egoistic desires, and a consciousness of being part of that larger life, are good things. And the Atheist knows that in divesting these evolutionary products of a wrong interpretation and in freeing them from harmful associations, he is giving them freer scope and more profitable action. We know exactly how the Christian feels in these matters. His position represents a past stage in our own mental development.

* * *

The Exploitation of Man.

May I say without offence that I quite fail to see the bearing of the eulogy of Jesus, and the definition of faith, on the present discussion? That Jesus was "the greatest force for good in all history" is a statement that Dr. Lyttelton would find it hard to justify, I think. And that "His character is so sublime that among all nations and peoples it has been worshipped as divine" is hardly in accord with fact. The historic fact is that it is not the *character* of Jesus, but his *power* to save people from damnation, that has been the principal feature of the Christian crusade through the centuries. And if we are to accept the definition of faith (it is, I think, open to question) as "the power to believe the best of persons and things," we can agree that this is all Dr. Lyttelton says it is, so far as its good influence on human relations is concerned. But what has this to do with faith in the Christian *Christ* or belief in the existence of God? Our quarrel with Christianity is not that Christian teachers have not appealed to good, and sometimes the highest, qualities of human nature, but that they have exploited these qualities, and squandered them in a useless or injurious manner. Without trust and confidence in one another, social progress is impossible; but this trust and confidence has no necessary connection with religious belief. It is rooted in the gregarious instinct of the race, it is strengthened and developed by the work of every generation, and it will remain even though every spark of religion dies, as it now remains with those who have definitely discarded all belief in God and a future life. Faith in man is historically not the outcome of belief in God; it is rather its negation. So long as man believes in the overruling power of the gods, he remains a slave mentally and socially. It is only as belief in his own powers and capacities develops that belief in gods weakens. And part of that development is expressed in the discovery that qualities which have hitherto been interpreted in terms of belief should be properly expressed in terms of the common social life of the race.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Your very citadel is but a mud fort, fenced about with a few rotten bamboos; it is taken, and in its very midst we have planted the flag of truth, and it flies there and has not been touched.—*Charles Bradlaugh.*

The philosopher Antisthenes, as the priest was initiating him in the mysteries of Orpheus, telling him that those who profest themselves of that religion, were certain to receive perfect and eternal felicities after death: "if thou believest that," answered he, "why dost thou not die thyself?"

—*Montaigne.*

Futile Claims.

THE Rev. Dr. J. A. Hutton, of Glasgow, enjoys a great popularity both as preacher and writer of religious articles. Scarcely a week passes without a contribution from his pen gracing the columns of one or other of the Nonconformist journals. The organ most frequently favoured, perhaps, is the *Christian World*, in the issue of which for November 7 there appeared a notable article by him, entitled "A Light in a Dark Place." All Dr. Hutton's articles are based upon or suggested by some Biblical incidents or passages, and, as a rule, the papers open with a few general observations. That is true of the article just mentioned. We are told, indeed, that the Bible is "a book of guidance, a book of moral navigation" in a world which is denominated "a dark place." To this general observation we unhesitatingly return a general denial. In point of fact, the Bible is not "a map of life, a chart of the sea of things, with all the rocks and sandbanks marked," nor is it consistent with itself in the guidance it offers to the pilgrims of the earth. It contains two conflicting ideals of life, the sacerdotal and the ethical, and both are recommended with equal fervour. Naturally, Dr. Hutton ignores the discrepancies and contradictions of Holy Writ, which the Higher Critics delight in pointing out, and quite as naturally he summarizes in his own words what he wishes us to regard as the gist of the Book's message on the subject of life. According to him, God in the Bible assures us that we are "perfectly safe if we keep to the rules," or, in other words, if we "remain humble and do not presume." Among other things, God is represented as saying to us:—

> When you are at a loss or at a standstill, do not lose courage. 'Tis downward-looking that makes men dizzy. At such a moment, some sign will be given you, the flashing of some light at sea, or the appearing of some friendly star, some sign which you will understand.

The fundamental idea is that this world is a dark place that must receive light from another sphere; "a place of sicknesses and obvious cruelties, a place of apparently unjust and careless events, a place in which things go on and on in a horrible callousness, in which tides ebb and flow, and the sun rises and sets, and stars look down, with no apparent concern for our personal feelings, with no sympathy or respect for our tears and agonies and cries."

Having admitted so much, Dr. Hutton is fully aware that he is face to face with a puzzling problem. If the world in itself is thus dark and miserable, though it is God's world, and if man, though God's child, is incapable of directing his steps in and out of it, what about the essential goodness and love attributed to the Maker of both? This is how the reverend gentleman endeavours to meet the difficulty:—

> If the Bible bids us believe in God's love for us and interest in us, it does so with its eyes open and aware of all that passes in this world. Whatever the faith be which the Bible urges upon us and beseeches us to make the light and principle of our life, it is something which has taken account of the evil that is in the world, the pain, the disease, and the cruel play of chance. Therefore, let no one suppose that the evil which he sees in life, or the hard things which he himself has experienced, may be given as a reason for denying God, or hesitating to believe. On the very contrary, it is because life holds these difficult and staggering things that, by an impulse of heart, we protest that there is something more and something other, and we lift up our eyes in faith.

Surely, Dr. Hutton does not expect that anybody in his senses will be convinced by such flimsy argumentation. "Something"—always undefined—is a favourite term

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with the reverend gentleman, which occurs several times in every article he writes, and which he offers as an explanation of some terrible and very clearly defined reality. It matters not how strongly or how bitterly we may protest against things as they are, the fact that we protest affords no indication whatever that there is "something more and something other" in store for us. Mere protests are worse than useless unless they ripen into determined action or translate themselves into resolute upward-gazing and stepping. To describe the very protest against things as they are as "the breaking of the sea of eternity over the threshold of time" is at once to employ an unfortunate metaphor and to be hopelessly vague, for in the next sentence the spiritual life is likened to "a fire which glows within our hearts," which fire the waters of the eternal sea would naturally extinguish. Besides, "for every fire there is needed the dull material for burning, but there is needed also a wind from heaven," not waves from any ocean. Now, assuming the existence of "the fire of a believing life," of what practical use has it ever been or ever can be? Things are what they are in spite of the fact that a believing life has been burning for thousands of years. The Gospel Jesus predicted that, if he were lifted up on the Cross, he would draw all men unto himself. The record tells us that the lifting up actually happened, but the confidently promised result has not been realized. Christianity has been a woeful disappointment both as to the extent of its expansion and the benefits it has bestowed upon the regions where it has outwardly triumphed.

Dr. Hutton's reasoning at this stage is obviously fallacious: In his estimation the supreme thing in human life is the fire of faith, and man's chief duty is to get that fire duly kindled and to keep it burning brightly to the end; but this cannot be effected without the "dead difficulties of the world and of experience." These dead difficulties and obstacles exist, seemingly, for the sole purpose of producing the life of faith and piety; and in the overwhelming majority of instances they exist utterly in vain. Only in an insignificant percentage of the human race does the fire of faith burn at all, and even the few in whom it may be said to be "gloriously kindling" do not show any moral and social superiority over the huge majority who know it not. Dr. Hutton informs us that a world which presented no difficulties to faith would destroy faith itself; but he omits to explain how and why, in a world teeming with all sorts of difficulties and obstacles, the fire of faith is conspicuous only by its absence. Thus the theological argument is as absurd as it is fallacious. Take the following sample:—

> The Christian faith in God is the energy of God within us playing upon the contradictions of this present world. Faith is the indomitable perseverance of love, feeding on all things and triumphing over all things. It is the song of the nightingale out of a dark world. It is the spirit of music, of hope and gratitude and reconciliation, which, far from being quenched by life's darkness, in life's darkness finds its purest understanding of itself. Let no one say that life and the world contradict faith. It is not so. What they mean who say such a thing is that life and the world, considered by themselves, are dark. But faith is built upon darkness. Faith is the final wisdom of the soul—its escape in God when the dark waters would overwhelm it.

What gives character to that extract is the strange mixture of truth and error contained in it. Nothing could be truer than the admission that "faith is built upon darkness"; and the darkness remains and increases in consequence. It is equally true that faith is a cowardly attempt to escape from the evil that is in the world without abolishing it; but such an escape, when most successful, is purely emotional, imaginary, not real. True life consists not in fleeing from difficulties and obstacles on wings of supernatural faith, but in waging a deadly war against them, in heroically endeavouring to roll them clean away. Theoretically, at any rate, a Christian is a person who takes shelter behind a God of love and mercy that he may not perish with the wicked world, a modern Noah who sails in a Divinely devised ship and therefrom beholds the destruction of an ungodly race in the dark waters of a wrathful flood. It necessarily follows that the escape is not only sought in a cowardly spirit, but also of no genuine benefit to anybody concerned. The world's betterment is an extremely slow but perfectly natural evolution, the very opposite of a mighty miracle wrought by supernatural grace. Sometimes Dr. Hutton himself seems to recognize the truth of this statement, as, for example, in the following passage:—

> Life for you and me and all of us, one by one, is a pathway, a road from one place to another, from the cradle to the grave, and it is a road which leads right through the heart of the world. Our business is to get through honourably, learning all the way. We are born with the instinct to walk. We are born with the desire to set out. We are, that is to say, a bundle of coiled-up springs of action. We are each a home of energy, purpose, life.

But that is only a gleam, a moment's flash, of common sense, which soon gives place to the orthodox attitude of loyalty to the superstitious Word which has done so much to retard the genuine progress of the world. Dr. Hutton is professionally the slave of the Bible, and he always starts from and never fails to return to it. He believes in two worlds, the actual and the ideal, and so do we; but he believes further that both are of Divine origin, that both were created by the God of love who is now urging us all to flee from the one and find our home in the other. To us, on the contrary, the actual world is the ideal in the making, the sole makers thereof being ourselves.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Perils of Thought.

> Understand that well, it is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being, to be free. Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, on this earth.
>
> —*Thomas Carlyle.*

Mr. Charles T. Gorham has put Freethinkers under another heavy obligation. In a previous work, *The Spanish Inquisition*, he has already told of the disastrous effects on social life and intellectual progress which were produced by its organized cruelty. In the present valuable and scholarly treatise, *The Mediæval Inquisition* (Watts & Co.), he again goes deeply into the subject, and gives us the result of his long and laborious study. No such history has till now been issued in England in so easily accessible a form. To his special knowledge of his subject, Mr. Gorham adds a wide range of general reading, and in this work he writes with a lucidity and a precision that adds materially to its attractiveness.

Few books that I have read have so entranced me; so lifted me up at times in admiration of man's heroism; so thrown me down at the vision of his ignorance and cruelty. The acts of the Inquisition are realities that no special pleading can remove. To read the tale makes one shudder, as if awakened from an awful nightmare. The Church of Rome made laws in the thirteenth century, enacting that heretics should be outlawed, that those who did not recant should be burnt. From that time onward the stake was a familiar form for the suppression of heresy, until the heretics became too

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numerous to be murdered. It was not until the nineteenth century that the Inquisition was abolished in Spain.

The enlightenment of the Inquisitors was only equalled by their humanity. Pope Innocent VIII. issued a Bull in which he asserted that plagues and storms were the work of witches. The Church condemned the theory of the Antipodes, and the books of Copernicus, and other scientists, were placed on the Index. Anatomy was forbidden. Out of this terrible twilight of knowledge a few great intellects shine like beacons: Roger Bacon, Giordano Bruno, Galileo. Their names flame out now to accuse their persecutors.

Mr. Gorham bids us face the conclusion that civilization was long retarded by the action of the most powerful Christian Church. Here are his words:—

> To us who live in the twentieth century it may appear very plain that priestly domination could not be favourable to improvement in morals or in knowledge. Prevent people from thinking, and you prevent them from improving. They lose the desire to improve; they become incapable of improvement; they neither know nor care for the pleasures of knowledge; they relapse into a state resembling that of animals. Can it be supposed that this has no effect upon their morals? And the class which puts forward the claims in question becomes equally debased. Selfishness, ignorance, and cruelty become as marked in the shepherds as in the flocks they are supposed to lead, with the additional vice of a tyrannical arrogance born of class privilege and the claim to superhuman authority.

This is Mr. Gorham's theory, and it has been carefully worked out with much learning and ingenuity. The chapter in which he deals with Catholic criticism, and which he heads, "The Gentle Art of Whitewashing," is of extreme interest. And his clever rejoinder to Catholic apologists should help to direct more attention to a writer who deserves an extended popularity. Historical writing, except that undertaken by university professors, is not too common in England. Mr. Gorham's brightly written volume, a noteworthy contribution to the subject on which he writes, should ensure a welcome that may induce him to further efforts in the field he has so fruitfully explored.

MIMNERMUS.

Religion in the Schools.

THE educational authorities of a large city in the provinces have recently established a day trades technical school for boys of ages varying from thirteen to sixteen years. Unlike other schools of a similar type, this one is opened with prayer. How long it lasts, how it is performed, and in what manner its efficiency is intended to be ascertained, the writer is unaware, though perhaps the latter will be worked out on one of the efficiency ratio machines installed in the mechanics laboratory.

However, some one in high circles has seen fit to condone, and very likely compelled, the giving of instruction to these youths, in the very questionable art of leaning upon the Almighty for guidance. As the school is understaffed, it might be that He is being politely requested to act as a "stop gap" until, as Micawber would say, "Somebody turns up."

How it is expected that these incantations will influence the welfare of the youths for good against evil it is impossible to say. Ostensibly these youths are to be given some kind of a useful scientific training to fit them for gaining a livelihood in the years to come. Now the nature and character of this training is based on the results of sound science, and the accumulation of a vast experience which has withstood the test of time and service.

How much, then, has prayer contributed to the progress of either? Do our scientific and commercial men *pray* for results? (The reason for the italics is that some people might hastily conclude that the latter certainly *do prey* for results). Would a physicist, for instance, go down on his knees and pray for supernatural inspiration in order to be able to solve, say, problems in low temperature research, or in the structure of the atom, or in the nature of solid and liquid solutions? Would an engineer pray for a solution to his difficulties with steam turbines, or electric motors, or petrol engines, or stresses in bridges, aeroplanes, docks, etc.? Of course not.

Everybody knows that prayer is never invoked under these and similar circumstances, for the simple reason that nobody believes it to be of any value whatever. What irony it would be to *pray* for the practical solution of, say, a thousand bullets, a second machine-gun, or a gyroscope that will be supersensitive to the vibration of an enemy ship's screw propeller going "dead slow" a hundred leagues away!

Yet if the leaders, and lesser men, too, of science and industry never require the services of the shaman's art, why do some pious hussies persist in thrusting it into the minds of schoolboys as a necessary corollary to their other studies? Do they think the youths will thereby be better able to solve, or puzzle out, the intricacies of quadratic equations? And how much assistance will it give them when they come "up against" a stiff piece of differentiation or integration, or (if they proceed that far) a knotty differential equation?

Will it make the mysteries of "work" any easier for them? Or will it enable them to understand the difference between "work" and energy—or laziness either?

Fancy a schoolboy praying for the solution of the bending moment of a loaded beam, or a pulley block and tackle, or geometrical plans and elevations, sections, and developments! He is more likely to get inspiration (in the "seat") from the business leg of a pair of compasses. Tom, Dick, and Harry, who have done their work, would laugh at Omega invoking the aid of the gods, and they would most likely tell him he ought to have gone in for a parson, and not an engineer. Most probably he would be sent to "Coventry," with the present of a soother as an indipensable companion.

And the reference to parsons shows that verily the mind of youth sometimes gives utterance to the most astute and ironical truths; for *they* seem to estimate pretty accurately, somehow, the value of a parson's services in civil life.

Evidently, then, prayer is not the stuff to give to growing youths. When they begin to realize that they are passing into the stage of manhood, they feel a healthy need for independence and self-assertion. Such virtues are a sign of physical, mental, and moral health, and they should be encouraged and developed so far as is humanly possible.

The way to do it is to develop their education along lines that will engender self-confidence and self-respect in their own power to say "I conquer." Explain to them the principles of Science—Geometry, Physics, Mechanics, Mathematics, etc.—by all means; help them when necessary to clear difficulties away; but don't warp their developing understandings by hinting to them, in the course of a preliminary canter in the hocus-pocus of prayer, that anything will come (from the Almighty) to him who waits, without the fundamental necessity of hard and strenuous thinking and reflection beforehand. As one who has been through the mill can safely prophesy, "It won't": and the Almighty will never get a correct answer to any problem for them unless they first obtain it themselves by their own exertions. More briefly, God helps those who help themselves; but God help those who don't.

S. C.

Can you tell me why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalise the heart? They are orderly; they may be just; nay, I have known them merciful: but still your children of sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril snuffing putrescence, and a foot-spurning filth.—*Robert Burns.*

It is curious to remark that nearly all men of sterling worth are simple in their manners; and yet nearly always simple manners are taken as a sign of little worth.—*Leopardi.*

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Acid Drops.

The War is at an end! God's day, to quote the Bishop of London has come to a close. For over four years the world has been illustrating on a gigantic scale the failure of Christianity as a civilizing force. Nations nurtured on Christianity, saturated in the Christian tradition, have shown how little Christianity did to smother the primitive savage in humanity. It is hard not to believe that some good will come out of the four years of horror. Thrones have vanished, and others are insecure. The king business has undergone a decided slump, and the Christian Churches have had one of the severest blows ever dealt them. The hollowness of their claims have been made plain to thousands, and their faith will have departed for ever. The king and the priest, springing originally from the same nest, are alike under a cloud, and the one institution cannot long survive the other. The two together contain the seed-plot of Militarism. The three have flourished together; let us hope they will perish together. The way should now be clear for the advent of man.

The War is over, said Mr. Lloyd George, "Let us thank God." In the name of man, for what? Are we to thank God for the twenty millions of deaths the War has cost the world? Or for the fact that we have had over four years of one of the most brutal wars in history? What has God done in the War, anyway? When homes were being burned and women outraged, God was silent. When passenger ships were torpedoed, God remained dumb. Human endurance, human perseverance, and human bravery have brought the War to an end. For all that God did, the War would have gone on for ever. A God worth talking about would have prevented the War ever occurring. Our priests will tell us that God worked by moving men's minds to crush the German peril. The defence is an accusation. If God could do that, why could he not order the minds of the creators of the War to move in a different direction? Really, the less said about God the better. God does nothing. That is certainly one of the lessons of the War.

Immediately after the Prime Minister had announced to Parliament the terms of the Armistice, the House of Commons adjourned to St. Margaret's to return thanks to God for the victory. We suggest that a fitting memento would be a record in all the churches of the millions of killed and wounded, with photographs of the ruined, shattered countrysides, as evidence of God's fatherly care for his children. There is reason for the Allies feeling grateful to those who achieved the victory. There would have been reason for the Germans feeling grateful had they been victorious. But God is the Father of both Germans and British. And imagine the absurdity of thanking him for helping one lot of his children to slaughter another lot. Such conduct on the part of an earthly parent would land him in a police-court.

The War is a punishment for our sins say the dear clergy. The Law Courts show that bigamy charges and crimes of violence are largely on the increase.

The late Dr. Boyd Carpenter, formerly Bishop of Ripon, was a royal favourite, and was much in request at fashionable weddings. He used to say: "I am not only a carpenter but a joiner, too." In this he resembled the founder of his religion.

"Which business takes the greatest variety of coins over the counter?" asks a London editor, and adds: "the Young Men's Christian Association's record in France would be hard to beat.

The following "In Memoriam" notice appeared lately in a Scotch daily: "No news, none at all. He's dead. That's all." Very true, when you come to think of it.

Glasgow Branch of the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in a report, point out that last year 19,814 ill-treated and neglected children were protected by the Society's Inspectors. And this is supposed to be a Christian country. How does this record compare with the countries that have not adopted Christianity as their standard?

The Very Rev. Dr. Wallace Williamson says the day after an effective armistice was declared every church in the country should be opened and the people invited to enter and render thanks to God. He looked forward with grateful and hopeful heart to the proclamation by the Government of a day of thanksgiving and dedication after peace was signed. Wherein do the people of this country owe thanks either to God or the clergy? Does the Rev. Dr. Williamson already forget that the clergy got themselves exempted from doing their share to help the country during her hour of need? If so, the people are not likely to forget the sorry figure cut by the young, able-bodied ministers strutting about the country while they allowed others to go forth and die in order that they might live.

Now we are getting at the truth regarding the great part played by the Y.M.C.A. At Lanark Presbytery meeting, The Rev. Mr. Hunter said the appeal for more help for the Y.M.C.A. huts should be made to men who had some knowledge of the grocery trade and were able to hand out provisions and wash up floors and counters, and not to ministers who had not been accustomed to this kind of work. He did not complain so much of the kind of work as the amount of work he got to do. If he wasn't content to serve and wash up for Tommy, why didn't he go and fight alongside of him?

A writer in a London newspaper suggests that the Junker press used to scream against "the decadent French" years before the War. Maybe, that was so; but the French clericalist press did so for a generation.

Lloyd's Sunday News tells a story of a child who, looking out of the window on a wet day, asked: "Mother, what does God have on when it rains?"

"Never in the world's history has Christianity been practised on such a scale as in the trenches," say the *Daily Mail*. Does our contemporary imagine that the opposing soldiers are kissing one another?

"It is beyond the power of God himself to make that which is past as if it had never been." This pretty piece of theology appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* over the signature of Sir Hall Caine.

The newspaper press is supposed to have some slight educational value. A leading London paper recently had a lengthy paragraph concerning the "luckiest destroyer" in the Navy, and suggesting that this immunity from disaster was due "to the ship's mascot, a monkey known as Jenny." Is it not clear that the editor's concern is not education, but circulation?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is the creator—after Edgar Allen Poe—of Mr. Sherlock Holmes. And a facility for writing detective stories and unravelling self-created mysteries seems to have placed him in a position of authority with regard to what will happen to man after death. At least, that is the only reason we can discern for his utterance of Spiritualism being taken so seriously by the newspapers. Sir Arthur has informed us that he can produce a number of parents who are convinced that they have held converse with their sons killed during the War. We are not at all surprised. Mothers sorrowing for the loss of their children, and already believing in a future life, strike us as admirable material for the spiritualistic medium; but an impartial outsider will hardly take them as valuable or impartial witnesses. It is as clear a case of the hope and the wish being father to the thought as one could desire.

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Sir Arthur says that he has been on the quest for thirty years, which would imply that he was hoping to find what he has found. With so many people dying every day of our existence, it appears to us that the fact of a continued existence—which must be either true of all or none—should, long before Sir Arthur was born, have been one of the accepted and unchallengable convictions of the human race. That it is not so makes it at most a questionable hypothesis. Sir Arthur says that Spiritualism is the greatest revelation of the last 2,000 years. We would remind the author of *Sherlock Holmes* that supposed converse with the dead is not a new thing. The belief exists with savages, and we know the grounds on which that was based, and how mistaken these people were. If the belief was not justifiable then, and was not justifiable at later periods, we really see no reason for accepting it as sound now.

We agree with Sir Arthur that religion has broken down. We would prefer to put it that it has been found out. It broke down long ago. But it is almost comic to find this used as a stick wherewith to belabour Germany. We are told that Lutheranism has given us "these Prussian devils" and Catholicism "has given us the Bavarian." But it was only the other day that Luther was the great heroic figure of Protestantism. Both that and Catholicism exist outside Germany. We are the last to deny that the influence of both forms of religion have been bad; but why restrict the evil influence to Germany? Or, if it has been bad there, how comes it that it has been good elsewhere? As a reasoner, Sir Arthur strikes us as decidedly poor, and his efforts are not calculated to impress one with the value of his judgment in matters connected with a supposed life after death.

In a case concerning a horse at Bristol, it was stated that the animal, which was described as a "jibber," in a fortnight ate the cushions of a trap, two rungs of a ladder, a halter, some webbing, and a whip. This record was beaten by the whale mentioned in the Bible, which swallowed a prophet and provided him with unfurnished apartments for three days and nights.

Canon Hannay, in his new book, *A Padre in France*, tells the story of a chaplain who preached to a battalion before going into the firing line, and who selected for his subject "Tithes Considered as a Divine Institution." Canon Hannay adds that he is sure the story is not true, but he regards it as significant that it should be told at all.

The *Daily Chronicle*, referring to the Revolutionary Period of 1848, stated that many of the European thrones rocked, and "even the Pope fled disguised as a footman." It must have been a shock for His Holiness to leave off his petticoats.

In the Prisoners' of War debate in the House of Commons, Captain Craig, referring to those who object to reprisals, said: "In times of peace Christian ideals are all right, but ——" The concluding words were inaudible in the general laughter aroused by the frank admission of this facing-both-ways of Christians.

The Rev. T. R. H. Stebbing is ambitious. He has written a book on *Faith in Fetters*, in which he appeals to the "National Church to purify itself from a dense load of ignorance and prejudice." He will be delighted to hear that Freethinkers have been engaged in this pleasing pastime for centuries.

At a meeting in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, called for the purpose of considering ways and means to increase the wages of the Scottish ministers, it was resolved that the meeting do everything in its power to raise the salaries of the clergy to at least £250 per annum with a free manse or sum equivalent. A discharged soldier enquired: "What about the discharged soldiers who were in the workhouse after having been invalided in the service of their country?" No notice was taken of this pertinent question, and now we have the spectacle of the men who fought and bled for their country being neglected while the clergy who stayed at home to keep the women company are to have an increase to their salaries. Is this how patriotism is to be rewarded?

The creation of bishoprics goes on apace, and we are wondering if the astute ecclesiastics perceive the coming of Disestablishment, and probable compensation. If they do not stop, the Church will resemble the Army of the Principality of Monaco—more officers than men.

The late Canon Cooper-Marsdin left the residue of his estate (about £10,000) for the founding of a new bishopric in Yorkshire. Perhaps he thought that would save him from the fate of poor old Dives.

What curiosities these Christians are! The Church Army is appealing for waste paper; the Salvation Army wants money; and the Young Men's Christian Association will be grateful for anything from billiard-tables to bank-notes. They all use the medium of advertising, just as if they were ordinary tradesmen or theatre proprietors. And, with characteristic modesty, they publish their good deeds before men in the largest type they can command.

The Bishop of London is visiting the troops in Salonika. An inspired correspondent in the *Church Times* says he intends to give to the soldiers "a message from God." We fancy they would prefer a packet of cigarettes, but what will happen if some soldier asks the Bishop to authenticate his message?

Preaching at Stevenage Parish Church, Canon Morgan Smith paid a tribute to the religious character of the *Times*' articles, and also to those "behind the great newspaper." The religious nature of Lord Northcliffe's operation is, we hope, widely recognized.

The long-advertised revival of religion appears to be taking some extraordinary shapes. Among the new publications of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge is a series, entitled *Pioneers of Progress*, and the books include monographs on "Galileo" and "Alfred Russel Wallace." At this rate of annexing famous names in support of Christianity, we may expect to find Bradlaugh and Ingersoll included among pillars of the Church.

Pastor Fort Newton, of the London City Temple, says "God is more popular to-day than he has been for a long time." Which "god" does the pastor mean?

It is not an extravagant calculation that, in England alone twenty millions a year are spent on religion. The figures fall glibly from the tongue, but just try to realize them! Think first of a thousand, then of a thousand thousand, then of twenty times that. Take a single million, and think what its expenditure might do in the shaping of public opinion. A practical friend of ours, a good Radical and Freethinker, said that he would undertake to create a majority for Home Rule in England with a million of money; and, if he spent it judiciously, we think he might succeed. Well, then, just imagine, not one million, but twenty millions spent *every year* in maintaining and propagating a certain religion. Is it not enough, and more than enough, to perpetuate a system which is firmly founded, to begin with, on the education of little children?

Here lies the strength of Christianity. It is not true, it is not useful. Its teachings and pretensions are both seen through by tens of thousands, but the wealth supports it. "Without money and without price," is the fraudulent language of the pious prospectus. It would never last on those terms. The money keeps it up. Withdraw the money, and the Black Army would disband, leaving the people free to work out their secular salvation, without the fear and trembling of a foolish faith.—*G. W. Foote, "Flowers of Freethought."*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 17, Birmingham (N. S. S. Conference); November 24, Leeds; December 1, Ferndale; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—December 1, Swansea; December 8, Garw.

C. F. Bennett.—We do not think a leaflet on the Church of England's appeal for five millions would repay trouble of printing or of distribution. It would not get into the right hands. Your experience of Church schools in the case of your boy is not encouraging. But is there not a public school in your neighbourhood? Letter returned.

G. Crookson.—We are continually worrying agents for their delays in distributing the *Freethinker*. It is due to no fault at our end, and their excuse is "shortage of labour." However, will write about the delay.

R. Gunn.—We are pleased to have your appreciation of our work.

A. Radley.—Thanks, may write on the matter, but there are many things claiming space and attention at the present.

We have to acknowledge the sum of £2 10s. from Mr. F. J. Gould, to be spent in distributing parcels of literature among the troops. We shall be pleased to receive names and addresses to which these will be acceptable.

S. Clowes.—We are used to struggle, but such letters as yours does what can be done to make the fight easier. One doesn't work *for* appreciation, but it is none the less cheering when it is spontaneously offered.

C. H. Hill.—The comments were based on a report in a newspaper sent us by one of our readers. We do not preserve these after use, and so are sorry we cannot give the date you require.

J. O. M.—We deal with the Bristol slave trade in our *Christianity and Slavery*. We do not think the books you name have any commercial value, and books on chemistry should be of a very recent date.

J. James.—See "Acid Drops."

J. H. Kennard.—Florence Nightingale was not a declared Freethinker, but her views on religion were of a very heterodox character, and her beliefs were denounced by Catholics and Protestants alike.

H. P.—We note your remarks about the French sceptics. We were talking over the matter with one of our contributors a week or two ago, and may do something in the near future.

W. J.—Perhaps you had better take our reply to Dr. Lyttelton in this week's issue as an answer to your friend's question.

Mrs. H. Rosetti.—We are sending literature to addresses given.

F. W. Lloyd.—See "Acid Drops." Sir Oliver Lodge only adds more words, without adding any verifiable facts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £418 0s. 7d. Artisticus, 5s.; F. J. Gould, £2 10s.; T. Teasdale, 2s.; S. Clowes (fifth sub.), 3s; R. Gunn, 5s.; Philip Weines, 2s.; J. Pugh, 5s.; G. Smith, £3 3s; T. Griffiths, £1; H. Bull, 2s. 6d. Total, £425 19s. 1d.

Correction.—"Per Sec. Manchester Branch," in last issue, should have read "E. C. Turner, per Sec. Manchester Branch."

This Fund will close on December 17.

Sugar Plums.

The War is over. That is the great fact of the moment. When a certain character at the close of the French Revolution, and who was full of reminiscences of the period, was asked what he did, his reply was: "I lived." So the *Freethinker* may say: "We have lived." There are still hard times ahead, but the *Freethinker* has lived through the hardest period ever experienced by any Freethought journal, and comes out of it stronger than it was at the opening of the War. It has a larger circulation and a more assured influence than ever. For this we have to thank our readers who have helped loyally and generously. The War of brute force is over. The war of ideas goes on.

Next Sunday (Nov. 24) Mr. Cohen lectures at Leeds. It is a long time since Mr. Cohen visited that city, and large meetings are anticipated. The meetings will be held, afternoon and evening, in the Victoria Hall, which, we are informed, seats about 2,000 people. Admission is free, but there will be a number of reserved seats. Mr. Cohen hopes to meet a great many Freethinkers from surrounding districts.

We are pleased to say that the sales of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and Slavery* has established a record. A first edition was printed, large enough, it was thought, to last until normal times returned. The demand during the first two or three weeks' issue was, however, so great that a second edition was prepared, and is now on sale. Of the first edition, published two months ago, a very few copies remain. And we are glad to note that the booklet is still selling steadily. The work evidently met a real need among Freethinkers and inquiring Christians.

From Salonika, Private Kennard writes:—

> With reference to religion in the Army, I am happy to state that I have invariably been excused Church parades, and my identity discs were stamped "Atheist" after calling the officer's attention to Army Council Instruction, No. 179, Jan., 1916. I look forward to the dear old *Freethinker* each week, and after reading it pass it along to my chums. It has lead to many interesting discussions, especially in hospitals, where soldiers get more leisure to read and think about philosophical matters. Sometimes one comes across an amusing case. Here is an instance. I had a chat with a comrade who stated that he had practically given up Christianity but refused to even look at the *Freethinker* because he did not wish to lose what little faith he had got! Such a person seems hopeless to me, but it shows only too well what religion can do in the way of cramping a man's intellect and moral courage.

S. M. R. writes:—

> Now that the War is over, I hasten to congratulate you and the *Freethinker* staff on having so successfully weathered the storm. The conduct of the paper under your guidance, and through such a trying time, has been admirable. A broad human sanity has marked it, that must have gained many new friends, and still further endeared it to old ones. It required no small amount of courage and ability to face the situation that is now happily at an end, but you have shown yourself equal to the occasion. You already have the confidence of Freethinkers, and have fully earned their congratulations and thanks.

We can only repeat what we have already said—we did our best. And we hope we shall never be found doing less.

We have decided to fix December 17 as the closing date for the Sustentation Fund. This is a month longer than we intended, and we have delayed the closing date at the request of friends. But by December 17 we have no doubt that all will have sent who intend sending. And some always wait till the end.

No power of genius has ever yet had the smallest success in explaining existence. The perfect enigma remains.

—*Emerson.*

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A Naturalist's Paradise.

IV.

(Concluded from p. 573.)

THE avifauna of Borneo embraces the Argus pheasant, flamingos, parrots, peacocks, pigeons, eagles, vultures, and many melodious songsters, with the swift celebrated throughout the Eastern World as the builder of an edible nest. This structure is immensely appreciated by the Chinese as an ingredient of soup. Three species of swifts prepare these remarkable nests, but the nest most highly prized is that of *Collocalia fuciphaga* or *esculenta*. This nest is a cup-shaped structure, and consists entirely of "a tough, gelatinous, translucent substance, which exudes from the bill of the bird as it builds." The physiological processes involved in this singular form of nidification are not yet understood.

Much as our swallows nest under the eaves or in chimneys, the Bornean swifts construct their cradles on the walls and roofs of caves. These favoured retreats form part of the native estate inherited by descendants. The white nests—those most valued—are usually found in low sandstone caves. The inferior nests are dark in colour, and are mostly erected in the capacious limestone caves at a height of about 100 feet from the surface. Three times in one season the birds are deprived of their white nests, while the darker nests are gathered twice only. During the nest harvest the natives dwell in temporary houses within the caves, and when their collections are complete the Chinese merchants purchase them. Dr. Hose states that the price paid for the black nests is about 100 dollars per hundredweight, while the white nests realize the princely sum of thirty or forty shillings per pound.

Human sacrifices to the spirits were once common among the Pagan peoples, and, apparently still, these occasionally occur, although now strictly forbidden. The Kayans formerly sacrificed slaves at the demise of a chief, so that they might accompany his spirit on its perilous voyage to the other world. As human victims are no longer available, the matter is compromised by placing a man's effigy at the head, and that of a woman at the foot of the chief's coffin as the ruler rests in state before burial. A third figure is commonly attached to the tomb, and this simulates the slave who paddles the chief's canoe to the spirit land.

Like the ancient Hebrews, the Kayans were long accustomed to the employment of a living human creature as a firm foundation for a new habitation. Into the opening designed to receive the first pile of the edifice, a fowl is now cast, and then the end of the pile is thrown on the fowl and kills it. The bird is a substitute for what was once a girl sacrifice, and, even now, declares Hose, "Kenyahs and Klemantans sometimes carve a human figure upon the first of the main piles of a new house to be put into the ground."

Independently of European influence evidences of the humanization of their religious rites may be detected among the native tribes. It is highly probable that human beings were once offered to the gods to secure a good harvest of edible nests. Buffaloes and birds are slain and deposited in the caves where the swifts place their nests. In one season of scarcity the natives returned to their darker superstition, and a slave was sacrificed as a propitiary offering in Brunei. In other parts of Borneo the human victim has been replaced by pigs and buffaloes at times when the gods are appeased.

The savagery so long associated with the head hunting observances of the native races was mainly religious in character. The sea Dayaks are certainly a remorseless people, but the fiendish customs so freely attributed to other Bornean stocks appear grossly exaggerated. Most merciless cruelty has disgraced religion even among ourselves, and were we solely judged by the torture and persecution of past ages, Europeans would seem as ruthless as the head hunters of Borneo. As Dr. Hose and Professor McDougall reminds us:—

> After our own race had professed Christianity for many generations, the authority of Church and State publicly decreed and systematically inflicted in cold blood tortures far more hideous and atrocious than any the Kayan imagination has ever conceived.

Like other uncivilized peoples, the Pagan Kayans populate their environment with spiritual entities of good and evil intent. Some of these ghostly beings are embodied in plants and animals, while the mountains, streams, caverns, and other natural phenomena are also the habitats of spirits. Animism is universal, and the fertility of the soil, lightning and thunder, storm and sunshine, disease and disaster, are all the handiwork of the ubiquitous gods.

In addition to these lesser divinities that preside over the course of Nature, and decree the prosperity or poverty of the people, there reigns a supreme regulator—Laki Tenagan—whose position above the inferior deities is similar to that occupied by the Greek Zeus and the Roman Jupiter in relation to the minor gods of the ancient world. Some of the departmental deities appear to be divine ancestors, and various subtribes still claim descent from these spirits. Chiefs recently dead are regarded with reverential awe, but those that died long ago are viewed as spiritual beings of more exalted rank. Hose and McDougall favour the theory that the Kenyah thunder-god is a deified chief. This noisy spirit is known as Balingo, and "all the Kenyahs and many Klemantans seem to claim some special relation to Balingo, while one Madang (Kenyah) chief at least claims descent from him" (*Pagan Tribes*, vol. ii., pp. 11, 12).

Possibly the leading god, Laki Tenangan, himself has been developed from a defunct chief. We naturally expect the customs of the island to be transferred to the ghostly realm. In Borneo, in addition to the local village chiefs, there is a supreme ruler whose will is law in times of strife. It is, therefore, no source of surprise to discover that "The social system of the superior powers should be modelled upon that of the people who acknowledge them."

Despite the terrible depredations of the ferocious crocodiles which infest the rivers and lagoons, the attitude of the tribes of Sarawak towards these dreadful creatures is more or less friendly. Superstition is mainly responsible for this, and excuses are usually made for the sanguinary reptile when he seizes a human creature. Either the guilty crocodile has been incensed by the misconduct of his victim, or the outrage has been committed by some strange reptile, and not by the friendly crocodiles resident in the neighbouring waters. Yet, with naive inconsistency, the crime is regarded as something demanding reprisals. The blood feud is aroused, and the reptile's aggressive action must be atoned for by the death of at least one of the crocodiles. The animal has the strange habit, it is said, of clutching the corpse of its victim for a short period before devouring it, when it carries its prey into a swampy inlet of the running river. A party vowing vengeance now explores the neighbouring creeks, and measures are devised to prevent the homicidal creature from escaping into another stream. Should the crocodile be discovered in company with his prey, he is promptly slaughtered, and the blood feud ceases. But when the hunt proves abortive, the natives scour the river, and usually succeed in

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slaying one or more of these beasts. The criminal, they consider, has now been punished for his transgression. But, save in circumstances such as these, the Kenyahs never molest the crocodile, and its flesh is strictly sacred.

The white-crested carrion hawk is a bird of profound importance in Borneo. This hawk is addressed and invariably referred to among the Kenyahs as Bali Flaki, and it is always consulted by the natives before they embark on a distant journey. Very elaborate are the rites associated with this ceremony, but no European can divine their precise meaning, supposing them to possess any. We gather from careful observers that the views of the natives themselves on these subjects "are hardly less vague and diversified than those of more civilized worshippers."

Two images of Bali Penyalong, a supreme divinity, stand near together, and before one of these the high priest postures and mutters, and then decapitates a fowl and smears its blood on the image. Other fowls are successively sacrificed, and then one of the priestly attendants gashes the throat of a young pig, and as its blood spurts forth, the priest scatters it over the image. Meanwhile, writes Dr. Hose,

> the score of men standing round about put their hands, some on him, and some on one another; maintaining in this way physical contact with one another and with their leader, they joined in the prayer or incantation which he kept pouring forth in the same rapid mechanical fashion in which many a curate at home reads the Church service.

Other rites of a kindred character having been concluded, the party arranged for the projected journey is deemed secure from disaster, and the priest departs to cleanse himself from the blood with which he is liberally adorned. Thus is the favour of the hawks secured, and they will certainly protect the travellers from danger and death.

The majority, and perhaps all uncivilized peoples, attribute to the lower animals, or even to plants, such mental qualities as they themselves possess. The hawks and other Bornean birds are regarded by the natives as omen animals, and the hawk appears to officiate as a messenger to the principal god. Before the ceremonies already summarized begin, the flight of the hawks is eagerly observed; and the requisite omens obtained, the ceremonial is performed. The hawk's pre-eminence among birds in the native religion has doubtless arisen from its weird and mysterious habits.

It has been contended that the hawk's sudden emergence from the deepest blue of the heavens, its hovering instincts, its habit of circling in the sky in a seemingly purposeless manner, its custom of flying onward in front of a boat as it moves along the river, or rapidly sweeping through the air towards the boat, screaming as it approaches, all support the theory that these combined peculiarities suffice to explain why the natives, whose lives from the cradle to the grave are ceaselessly environed by virgin forest, waterfalls, and treacherous streams, should attach undue importance to the hawk and other mysterious creatures.

The Bornean theology is largely a reflection of the experiences of the people in their primitive home. As the authors of the *Pagan Tribes of Borneo* conclude, we are studying savages who are "extremely ignorant of natural causation, yet intelligent and speculative, and always looking out for signs that shall guide them among the mysteries and dangers that surround them." It is a fair inference that the people regard the hawk as an emissary of the supreme sky god.

> For this being is vaguely conceived by them as dwelling in the skies whence the hawk comes, and whither he so often returns. And then we may suppose that the messenger himself has come to be an object of worship in various degrees with the different tribes, as seems to be the rule in all religious systems in which servants of a deity mediate between him and man.

T. F. Palmer.

Some Reflections on a Recent Tract.

The National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases, a responsible body recognized by the Government, has, with commendable courage, inserted in an evening paper, a little treatise on the danger of venereal disease, setting forth the value of early treatment. Such facts as are contained therein cannot have too wide a publicity; but the publication of this little document should help, in some degree at all events, to discredit in certain circles some rather widely held points of view.

There is a type of mind which insists that the ills of man are a device of the Almighty invented for the purpose of effecting the moral governance of the universe. To persons who hold this philosophy of history venereal disease has always been one of God's masterstrokes.

If we are to believe these singular people we must suppose the methods of the Creator to be as follows. With the admirable intention of maintaining the race, the individual is endowed with a set of instincts which allows him to take an intelligent interest in this plan of the ages. But, alas, some people become too enthusiastic in this work, and they are neatly laid by the heels, and their ardour is cooled in a manner that may be read up in expensive medical works, but which can hardly be described in these pages.

The world is kept morally clean and sweet by the activity of an army of microbes, which, directed by the generalship which cast Satan out of heaven, attacks men, women, and children with a malignancy the militarists may admire and copy, but can never hope to surpass. It is a little strange that the Kaiser has never tried to inspire his soldiers with a quasi-Biblical quotation like: "Consider the gonococcus and be wise."

But it appears from the pamphlet that the little germs require time to effect their work. And here it is that the methods of Providence (if venereal disease *is* one of the methods of Providence) may be made of non effect. The Committee do not put much trust either in prayer or repentance, although, of course, these sources of solace are not forbidden to the victims. The words of the Council are so admirable that I shall quote them. "The table also shows, 'the longer one waits, the greater the risk.' It is far better not to take the risk at all, but those who succumb to temptation should immediately seek medical advice."

It appears, then, that moral laws may be broken in two ways; that is to say, if you are foolish enough to indulge in this rather irrational proceeding. You may do so blindly and ignorantly, when they are very like to break you; or you may be circumspect, and, like the one thousand one hundred and eighty mentioned by the Council, seek the doctor one hour after your fall. If you do this, the chances are that God's battalions will be broken up by the doctor's barrage. And even if, as happened in one case reported in the pamphlet, the enemy succeeds in breaking through, he can be counter-attacked by the man of science, and within two days thrown out.

Such facts make it impossible for some people to believe that God works by means which can at once be so fiendishly cruel to the ignorant and so easily circumvented by the wise. Yet it would be a mistake to think

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that this particular delusion of mankind will die either easily or quickly.

It can be argued that science may hoodwink God in time, but not in eternity. His plans may be laid in ruins here, but not in heaven. And it is as well to remember that the belief in heaven is a belief of a majority in these Islands, and is likely to remain so. And when we reflect that many of these people honestly think war has been sent by God as a judgment on the wickedness of man (and science has not yet been able to find the antidote to this particular poison), the only effect of such a pamphlet as that of the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease is to make the greater part of our believing countrymen tremble at the thought of what will happen to those poor fellows who evade the just punishment of God in the consultation rooms of a doctor, when finally they come to stand before the Great White Throne.

W. H.

Notes From Ireland.

If there are any Freethinkers in Ireland they are mostly daubed a sickly white with the hypocritical veneer of acquiescence, as men hide diamonds, pearls, and precious things in ugly, untouchable safes. But they are the body of an organization that has yet to be moulded, directed, consummated. At present they are inaudible for their silence. But the unseen workings are in readiness to pump the vital blood of infinitude through the arteries and capillaries of the soul. All that is required is a Bradlaugh *and* a Foote *and* a Voltaire. Whoever he is must be plucky. Wanted a leader! a leader powerful enough to overcome the Almighty at his best; no salary, no war bonus, no commission, no thanks; a poppied grave. Any takers?

You people in England cannot even dimly realize the extent of the religious blight that hinders the efflorescence of the soul of this little nation. One has got to attend any service at any chapel on any Sunday to form a conception of the horrible credulity that obtains even in the capital. Mass is held every half-hour on Sunday, yet the chapels—and our chapels are vast—are full to overflowing at each oblation; every pew is crammed, every passage and aisle and porch is crammed with silent worshippers standing. The men behind the *Leader*, the *Irishman*, and all the rest of the Sinn Fein publications are members of the One True Church almost to a man. But there is hope in one or two directions. There is a tiny coterie of poets, painters, artists, and literary men in Dublin, every one of whom is a "free lance." But the arrows of their talent are never pointed openly against the Church; they are afraid of their reputation being jeopardized.

There is, however, one chink that permits the ingress of modernism—the Abbey Theatre. Not a few of the plays produced at this theatre are alarmingly heterodox. A week ago we had Shaw's "The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet." By Jove, how the clerical stomach must have experienced the pangs of indigestion and heaved some of its greasy cargo of luscious complacency at this sermon against religion! The plays of J. M. Synge, too, are barbed with the wittiest and most beautiful irony—an irony more delightful, because less bitter even than Hardy's. He speaks of—

> Prayers ascending naked to the saints of God.

Referring to the souls in heaven, he describes them as—

> Gazing through the bars of paradise.

With regard to the Pope and celibacy, he makes one of his characters say—

> Shure, the Holy Father must be very lonely on his golden throne.

We quaff a glass to the health and continued vigour of the manager, Fred O'Donovan, and his little band of courageous, pioneer actors.

Romish priests have succumbed to the "Flu."

DESMOND FITZROY.

To a Bereaved Mother.

[In the summer of 1885 a San Francisco mother lost her son, an only child, who had gone on a brief journey. His death was sudden, and the mother was apprised of it by telegram. Having been brought up in the Calvinistic creed, her natural sorrow was turned into an agony of grief by the fear that her unconverted son was suffering in hell. Her friends were apprehensive that her reason, if not her life, would be destroyed. One of them begged Colonel Ingersoll to write something that might possibly relieve her mind, and the result was the following letter, which she read "through blinding tears," and which brought her (in her own words) "the first peace I have known, real peace, since the terrible blow."]

MY DEAR MADAM,—Mrs. C. has told me the sad story of your almost infinite sorrow. I am not foolish enough to suppose that I can say or do anything to lessen your great grief, your anguish for his loss; but maybe I can say something to drive from your poor heart the fiend of fear—fear for him.

If there is a God, let us believe that he is good; and if he is good, the good have nothing to fear. I have been told that your son was kind and generous; that he was filled with charity and sympathy. Now, we know that in this world like begets like, kindness produces kindness, and all good bears the fruit of joy. Belief is nothing—deeds are everything; and if your son was kind, he will naturally find kindness wherever he may be. You would not inflict endless pain upon your worst enemy. Is God worse than you? You could not bear to see a viper suffer forever. Is it possible that God will doom a kind and generous boy to everlasting pain? Nothing can be more monstrously absurd and cruel.

The truth is, that no human being knows anything of what is beyond the grave. If nothing is known, then it is not honest for anyone to pretend that he does know. If nothing is known, then we can hope only for the good. If there be a God, your boy is no more in his power now than he was before his death—no more than you are at the present moment. Why should we fear God more after death than before? Does the feeling of God towards his children change the moment they die? While we are alive they say God loves us; when will he cease to love us? True love never changes. I beg of you to throw away all fear. Take counsel of your own heart. If God exists, your heart is the best revelation of him, and your heart could never send your boy to endless pain. After all, no one knows. The ministers know nothing. And all the Churches in the world know no more on this subject than the ants on the ant-hills. Creeds are good for nothing except to break the hearts of the loving.

Let us have courage. Under the seven-hued arch of hope let the dead sleep. I do not pretend to know, but I do know that others do not know. Listen to your heart, believe what it says, and wait with patience and without fear for what the future has for all. If we can get no comfort from what people know, let us avoid being driven to despair by what they do not know.

I wish I could say something that would put a star in your night of grief—a little flower in your lonely path—and if an unbeliever has such a wish, surely an infinitely good being never made a soul to be the food of pain through countless years.—Sincerely yours, R. G. INGERSOLL.

"The Curate."

SEE how he trots, emBibled—saintly man!—
To meet "deserving poor" at Sunday-school;
Anon he sits with spinsters, on a stool,
Smelling a "will," as any lawyer can;
Rubbing his hands, he works his wily plan.
You'll hear his voice wherever ladies are,
His silly talk delights the gay bazaar,
Giggling, he finds the apples in the pan.
"Endue thy ministers with righteousness"
He drones, as if it broke his heart to say't;
At "O Lord, save the King," he's simply great;
With genuflexions, rather more than less,
He circumnavigates the silver plate,
The dregs of wine he drains with eagerness.

D. V. T.

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James Albert Neate.

By His Schoolmaster.

The news of James Albert Neate's death stunned me. I saw him last on the 11th of September in front of the Royal Exchange. He was very anxious to know how I was getting along, and seemed concerned because I was wearing glasses. His sympathy was quite characteristic. Little did I think as I bade him good-bye that I should never see him again. I was fond of Albert, and I admired him greatly; he was so considerate, so transparently sincere.

When he came to my school he was very nervous, and physically weak. His health had been, and was then, I imagine, the despair of his parents. Love and money had been lavished upon him. His mother told me of her belief that Albert would one day be quite strong. I doubted it. For a short time in school he was quite a recluse. I was his only chum. Little by little, however, his nervousness disappeared. He began to enter into games with zest, and rapidly became a favourite. A nickname was given to him, "Old Nattie" (Nattie being another word for neat in school parlance).

After the free spirit of the school had removed his nervousness, the intellect of the lad began to assert itself. His mind advanced at such a rate that at times I feared it. Normally he was, as we North Country folk say, "old-fashioned."

But his thinking was abnormal. I don't think I ever met a youth with such an assimilative brain. He had an unusually large head. Had he been physically as well as mentally strong, he would have made himself useful in the world. Another noteworthy feature in his composition was courage. Albert at once condemned a thing if he thought it to be wrong. And there was no lack of reasons in the condemnation either. In this respect I saw in him a budding Freethought propagandist, a chip off the old block. Mr. Cohen said: "No child ever had more devoted parents." Let me add: No parents ever had a more devoted son. I knew how they loved him, and I knew how he loved them. This blow is a terrible one to Mr. and Mrs. Neate.

Having done the best that could be done they will be resigned, I quite know. That so many fondled hopes and such deep devotion be devoured by death is a terrible tragedy. He will live on the treasure-house of memory. Alas! what a number of my scholars are no more. Many are now lying somewhere in the graveyard of Europe. A good deal of my thirteen years of loving labour lies buried as a secular teacher there.

W. H. Thresh.

Birmingham (N.S.S.) Conference.

Delegates and members are reminded that the morning session of the Conference to be held to-day, November 17, at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, will commence at 10.30 sharp. The entrance is in Hurckley Street. The meetings are for members of the N.S.S. only. Delegates must show their credentials and members their current cards of membership at the door.

I am advised that it will be prudent for visitors to Birmingham to bring travellers' ration cards, which can be obtained from their local food controller, as, owing to War conditions, the supply of manna cannot be relied upon. I invite them to meet the President and myself at the Queen's Hotel, New Street Station, on Saturday evening at 7 p.m., when I shall be glad to give them any further information. Don't forget to wear the pansy badge.—E. M. Vance, *General Secretary*.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

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Obituary.

Our readers will regret to learn that Mrs. G. W. Foote has experienced another loss in the death of her niece at the age of twenty-six, and who had been a member of her household since her girlhood. The deceased was of a bright and cheerful disposition, capable, and for some time had been engaged in one of the departments of the War Office. Returning from business a few days before her death, she complained of violent pains, took to her bed, and, in spite of all the most careful medical attention and nursing could do, died on November 6. Both Mr. and Mrs. Foote were greatly attached to her and she to them. Her death leaves a sad gap in the home of which she was a member. The remains were cremated at the City of London Crematorium on November 11.

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, C. Kelf, "The League of Nations." Open Debate.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7.30, Mr. F. Shaller, "Freewill."

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "William Morris and the New Industry."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Yates, Kells, Dales, and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Barnsley Branch N. S. S. (Irving's Studio, 48 Sheffield Road): Wednesday, November 20, 7.30, "Thomas Hardy."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): Meeting cancelled owing to the Influenza Epidemic.

Maesteg Branch N. S. S. (The Gem Cinema, Maesteg): Mr. J. C. Thomas (Keridon), 2.30, "The Art of Squaring the Circle, or Solving the Insoluble"; 7, "Why Truths Die Hard."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Miss Constance Brooks, "Ivan Turgenev."

Rhondda Branch N. S. S. (Morley's Restaurant Perth): Important Meeting, preparatory to Mr. Cohen's visit.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. W. C. Anderson, M.P., "Charles Stuart Parnell—The Uncrowned King."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
The War After the War.—The Editor	601
Theism.—J. T. Lloyd	602
Mother Church's Modest Request.—Mimnermus	603
Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."—Keridon	604
The N. S. S. Special Conference.—Chapman Cohen	608
Religion and Life.—E. Lyttelton	608
What is Nature?—The Owl	609
God's Church.—G. E. Fussell	610

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

The War After the War.

The War of armed force is ended; the war of ideas is about to begin. This war calls for not less courage and persistency than the other, but more of both qualities. For it is folly to assume that these four years of strife, ending as it has done with a sweeping triumph over the Central Powers, have destroyed that antagonism of ideas which existed before the European War opened. So far as this is concerned, the War is no more than an interlude. Absorption in the War, its dominating presence, may have blinded many to this; but the state of war is not and cannot be permanent. A war may rage round fundamental issues, but when the war is over the older and permanent conflict is resumed. The destiny of a political group may be determined on the field of battle; but the destiny of the race is determined on a battlefield where ideas take the place of high explosives, and ideals that of opposing armies. On the one side, our task is now to harness energies for four years spent on war to the more profitable arts of peace. On the other hand, we have to lift the fighting capacity of man from the level of brute force to that of ideas and ideals.

* * *

The War and the Churches.

Ours is the best of causes, and we are fighting the worst of religions. In fighting Germany, we were at war with a people that had been under the influence of Militarism for half a century. But the countries which waged that war, and which, by their policies of conquest and intrigue, and the piling up of armaments, had been for generations sowing the seeds of war, have been under the dominating influence of the Christian religion for over fifteen centuries. If two generations of training had sufficed to make Germany what it was, what might not more than thirty generations have made the world had the influence of Christianity been in the right direction? But when the War came it is safe to say that, while laymen were shocked at the outbreak of such a War, the Churches, both here and in Germany, took it with a callousness that carried its own condemnation. Both here and in Germany the clergy threw themselves into the War with an energy that surprised their friends and disgusted even their enemies. They showed the reality of their gospel of love by the readiness with which they preached the gospel of hate. They might have made it their business to stand as the representatives of those higher aspects of life that are always endangered during a time of war; they left the leadership in these things to other hands. With rare exceptions, the pulpits have, during these four years, pandered to passion and catered for prejudice. They have preached rigorously from the prophets, but have remained silent concerning the profiteers. They did advise us to cultivate potatoes in our back gardens, but they said nothing as to the need for a revision of the whole English land system. We hope Freethinkers will see to it that the record of the clergy during the War is not forgotten. They will do their best to bury it as the War recedes into the past. We must see to it that it enjoys a "blessed resurrection."

* * *

"Reconstruction" and the Churches.

It will not be denied that up to the present the Churches have lost heavily by the War. That is admitted, and lamented, on all hands. But it is certain that they will make desperate efforts to recover some of their lost ground; and already the air is thick with schemes and talk of Reconstruction. At the moment Churches are busy with thanksgiving services, praising God for ending a war which no God worth a shillingsworth of incense would ever have permitted. The Church of England is appealing for five million pounds, and the perennial fool-crop, combined with those interests which desire the people to be kept religious, may well supply a large part, if not all of this sum. How much the Archbishops of York and Canterbury intend subscribing out of their annual £24,000 we are not told. Nor the Bishop of London, out of his £10,000. But we recall that this latter gentleman explained that he had invested all he had in War Loan, and thus with rare Christian patriotism preserved his capital, and placed an extra tax of five per cent. on the community. And when the Church gets its five millions it will, as announced, use it for providing more clergymen—when already there are more than needed; for paying workers among the poor, who will thus play the game of doles and palliatives and so prevent radical reform; and maintain its schools, and give an inefficient Sectarian Education as against an efficient State system. In other words, the nation is invited to contribute five millions to be used against the best interests of the nation itself.

* * *

Freedom for All.

Now it seems that with the General Election upon us there is an opportunity for Freethinkers to help, as Freethinkers, in the work of "Reconstruction," about which so much is being said. Whatever is the ultimate form of Government adopted in Russia (one would like to get at the truth about the situation), it is fairly clear that a State religion there is doomed. And in a reconstructed Germany there will be no State religion. A State religion has already been abolished in France, with benefit to the nation. Is there any reason why England should not follow suit? In the modern

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State a governmental religion is an anachronism. Religious equality means the absence of State patronage of religions. And Freethinkers when they are asked, as they will be asked, for their vote, might legitimately make the removal of this injustice one of their test questions. Only one, because there are others. But if that one is answered satisfactorily it will logically lead the way to a satisfactory answer to others. It would probably mean the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, and would leave God to look after his own offended majesty instead of that duty being undertaken by a policeman. Blasphemy laws are always cruel: we have reached the stage when they have become supremely ridiculous.

* * *

Religion in the Army.

There is also the question of religion in the Army. There are two ways of dealing with the soldier. The fashionable method is to be interested in the man because he is a soldier. We prefer to be interested in the soldier because he is a man. And there is a world of difference in putting either the uniform or the man in the first place. Ever since the War broke out we have protested publicly and privately against the stupid and objectionable Church parades in the British Army. Soldiers themselves object to it. There is more cursing when soldiers are marched to church than over any other Army function. A soldier may dispense with the religious oath of allegiance when he joins the Army, and has the right to be registered as Atheist or Freethinker. Thousands have taken advantage of both regulations, and it has had quite an educational influence. But to take a man into the Army as an Atheist and then march him to church as a Christian is a piece of absurd tyranny that could only flourish in this country. In a civilized country freedom of worship is the right of every civilian. Is there any reason why a soldier should be treated as less capable than a civilian of selecting his religion? Soldiers now have the vote, and we suggest they should use it, and civilians should help them use it, in extracting a pledge from Parliamentary candidates that joining either Army or Navy shall not rob a man of the elementary right of deciding for himself whether he will go to church or stay away. This election is certainly the most favourable opportunity for raising the point, and we hope it will be raised all over the country.

* * *

Religion and the Child.

Then there is the question of Secular Education. And here another factor comes into play. Woman has now a vote, given to her by Christians, under pressure, on the avowed ground that she has helped in a War. And the Christian view of woman as an inferior being is so ingrained that even now she may not vote until she is thirty years of age. Still she has the vote, and if anyone is more than another directly interested in the training of children it is she. We have, we are pleased to say, a large number of lady readers, and they are not the least zealous of our helpers. To them, and of course, to the men, we would earnestly appeal to see that this question is brought before the candidates. Bearing in mind the plans of the Government with regard to religion in the schools, it is imperative that as large a number of members as is possible are returned to the House of Commons definitely pledged to Secular Education. And the case of France will help them here. France owes its recovery from the catastrophe of 1870, largely to its acceptance of Gambetta's message "Clericalism, that is the enemy." We must have the resolution to do ourselves what France has already done. Clear the priest out of the schools. We are asking for no sectarian or party advantage. And we desire none. We believe in the power of education, and we believe in the prevalence of justice. If the world is really to be made "safe for democracy" we must say to both the priest and to the militarist "Hands off the child." Give the child a chance; for in the child lies the hope of the future.

Chapman Cohen.

Theism.

Dr. F. L. Patten, a distinguished American divine, treats Theism as if it embraced Polytheism and Pantheism as well as Monotheism; but the late Professor Flint, of Edinburgh, in his scholarly work, entitled *Theism*, excludes from his definition of the term both Polytheism and Pantheism, maintaining that there are but three Theistic religions—the Mosaic, the Christian, and the Mohammedan. According to Dr. Flint, Theism provides Nature with a Creator, the nations with a Governor, and men with a Heavenly Father and Judge. Doctrinally, that is perfectly sound, no doubt; but doctrinal soundness does not necessarily carry with it its own truth. In the latest and best accredited science there is absolutely no room for a Creator, the fact of evolution implying the denial of the idea of creation. The history of the nations negatives the hypothesis of a Divine Governor, however earnestly a few individuals here and there may believe in his existence; and surely, if there is no moral Governor to keep the Universe in order, men cannot legitimately boast that they have a Heavenly Father and Judge on whom they may rely for a just and loving treatment. An entirely logical dogma may yet be utterly false. Never was a more logical body of divinity elaborated than Calvinism, but the defenders of Calvinism are to-day few and far between even among the most orthodox. As a doctrine, Theism may be beautifully self-consistent and have much to recommend it to certain temperaments; but of its truth there is no convincing evidence whatsoever. There are those who assert that they possess and enjoy personal knowledge of an invisible spiritual Being, whom they love and worship as ideally perfect, but they frankly admit that this is a knowledge which they are powerless to communicate to their fellow-beings. Curiously enough, however, such people completely fail to verify their claim to such knowledge by the display of either intellectual or moral superiority to those who indulge in no like profession. Their contention is that God can only be known by those who wish to know him. We allude to that contention merely for the purpose of remarking that it does but scant justice to the so-called invisible spiritual Being. By what right does anyone lay down terms on which alone he can be known? If there be a God who is the loving Father of all mankind, is it not his bounden duty to make himself known to every one of them? Is it conceivable that *he* does not wish to reveal himself to the offspring of his heart? As a matter of simple fact, that is absolutely inconceivable, and its inconceivability involves the non-existence of such a Father.

The all-significant fact is that no God has ever done anything to justify the belief in him, or to justify himself as an object of belief. The Old Testament was composed by men who believed that Jehovah was the greatest and mightiest of all existing Deities. In early times it was universally taken for granted that they were all equally real, though not all equally powerful. Like all other mythological writings, the Bible abounds in descriptions of the wars of the Gods, in which Jehovah was not always victorious. On one occasion, at any rate, he was made a prisoner and carried off to a hostile land, where terrible disasters overtook his captors. In

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the sixth chapter of the Book of Judges a highly suggestive instance of the rivalry between Jehovah and Baal is recorded. Gideon built an altar to Jehovah and called it "The Lord in Peace"; but his father followed the cult of Baal, and had raised an altar to his name. Jehovah, being very jealous, is represented as commanding Gideon to throw down the altar of Baal and cut down the tree or pole under which it lay. Poor Gideon lacked sufficient courage to perform the nefarious deed by day, and so he went and did it at dead of night. The devotees of Baal, when they discovered in the morning what had been done, were furious, and, on learning who the culprit was, angrily demanded his life. Their interview with Gideon's father is exceedingly instructive:—

> Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son that he may die, because he hath broken down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the asherah that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal; or will ye save him? He that will plead for him let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning; if he be a God, let him plead for himself, because one hath broken down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath broken down his altar.

A true philosophy underlies those words so solemnly uttered by Joash. Largely influenced, no doubt, by parental affection, he perceived the essential injustice of his undertaking the responsibility of punishing a sin, if a sin, against Baal. The wanton destruction of the altar was clearly an act of persecution. Jehovah is pourtrayed as anxious to establish his supremacy by violence, to suppress all rivalry by brute force; that is, to forbid, in the most autocratic fashion, the exercise of any religious liberty whatever. In Joash's opinion that was the quintessence of unfairness. He himself believed in and worshipped Baal, the pulling down of whose altar was certainly an insult to all his followers; but the fact that the offender was his own son opened his eyes to the truth that vengeance belonged alone to the Deity concerned. *If he be a God let him plead for himself.* Unfortunately, no invisible spiritual Being has ever done that. Such a convincing proof of divinity has never yet been given. God is eternally silent and inactive, profoundly unconcerned amid the most horrible happenings. Men may bless or curse him, praise or blaspheme his name, affirm or deny his existence in any terms they please, and he utters not a word, affords not the least sign of approval or disapproval. The amazing thing is that the writers of the Bible even assert the truth of this statement concerning every deity but their own. It is Jehovah alone who is pictured as performing silly and sometimes cruel miracles in proof of his divinity. But in those ancient miracles only an extremely small number of theologians believe to-day, though they are all still convinced that they, and they alone, must plead for God. When asked for some evidence that they have really been entrusted with so tremendous a mission they can adduce none. Though they pretend to speak in God's name and by God's authority of their appointment as Heaven's ambassadors, they hold no certificate, no form of authentication, beyond their own mere word. Neither by their superior knowledge, nor by the transcendent wisdom of their declarations, do they furnish the slenderest evidence that they are authentic spokesmen of a Supernatural Being.

Besides, both professors of divinity and preachers of the Gospel disprove their own claim by their fundamental disagreements with one another. Scarcely any two of them see eye to eye on the most vital points. The multiplicity of theological schools or factions discredits every one of them; and they all alike ignore the great principle so clearly stated by Joash: "If he be a God, let him plead for himself." Full well do they know that he either will not or cannot do so, with the result that they appoint one another to plead for him, which they do in a ridiculously contradictory and self-condemnatory manner. The God they thus undertake to defend never breaks his silence, never interferes, never shows his hand. The Kaiser called him his "avowed Ally," and the *entente* nations declared that he was fighting with them; or, rather, that they were fighting with him, while he gave absolutely no sign. Divines, like Professor David Smith, unblushingly maintained that the Allies were but the vultures by means of which he was punishing the German nation. The heartlessness of the Christian God none can fathom. We have been repeatedly assured that the adoption of the policy of Secular Education in the Government schools would result in the conversion of the British nation to Atheism, and in its consequent reversion to the worst forms of barbarism. In reality, God is the creature of the theologians, made in their own image and after their own likeness, and it is they alone who produce and perpetuate the belief in him. Our only consolation is that, in spite of all their frantic efforts, the God-idea has just been dealt its deadliest blow and suffered its most terrific setback.

J. T. Lloyd.

Mother Church's Modest Request.

> In England men are full of opinions and empty of information.—*Eden Phillpotts.*

Dropping their role of splendid isolation, the authorities of the National Church have decided on a newspaper campaign in order to raise money, and Canon F. Partridge has kindly consented to act as treasurer. He has not the happy knack of the astute advertising staff of the Young Men's Christian Association, or of the Salvation Army, but he is quite as thoroughgoing in his zeal for the preservation of privileges, and his pious platitudes should be welcome reading to the zealous churchpeople who read the newspapers. With all the glory of Gothic capitals, he assures the public that "The Church of England is the Church of the Nation," and he asks for a very modest minimum subscription of five million pounds, so that the Church can "extend its religious activities as they require to be extended."

Five million pounds is, we are reminded, "the smallest sum which will enable the Church to bring the funds for its normal work up to an efficient figure," and one of the most important items in the programme is the matter of religious education. The Church wishes to maintain her schools—at public expense—because such schools aim "to produce good Christians, and in the effort produce good citizens." The Church further holds "that education without a definite religious basis is no education at all."

Further, the advertisements state that "the Church is understaffed. Its clergy are underpaid. There is no monetary attraction to draw men to the ministry of the Church. The War has deprived the Church of more than 2,000 clergy." The advertisements make no mention of the fact that thirty-nine ecclesiastics of the Church share £180,700 annually; the majority of them having seats in the House of Peers, and being addressed as "my lord." The clergy pretend, professionally, to be entirely uninfluenced by financial motives. Yet the vast majority of these manage to evade the blessings of poverty, and to leave large sums of money when they die. Recently, in this paper, a list of the wills of a dozen ecclesiastics was published, amounting in the aggregate to £611,154; and it is a matter of common

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knowledge that the vicarages are by no means the worst houses in any towns.

As for the claim that "the War has deprived the Church of more than 2,000 clergy," it must be remembered that there are about 25,000 Church of England clergymen, and that they were exempted from military service. A caste apart, when they joined the fighting forces, they did so as Army chaplains, with officers' pay and safe duties. One result of their appearance in the Army and Navy is that the soldiers and sailors are the only British subjects forced to attend religious services; a piece of petty tyranny that is more worthy of the twelfth century than the twentieth.

The circus rarely fulfils the expectations of the rainbow-hued posters on the walls, and the rosy testimonials of the value of the Church as an educationalist are discounted by the report of the Archbishop's Committee on *The Teaching Office of the Church* (published by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge). This committee included two bishops, a number of clergymen, and some saintly ladies associated with religious institutions, and the report is sufficient to turn the raven hair of any Anglican clergyman snow-white, and curl it afterwards. The committee points out that "there is much truth in the charges of intellectual and social failure on the part of the clergy:—

> Freedom of research has been discouraged, the minds of the clergy have been cramped, and their authority weakened. Many people, especially among the clergy, owing to intellectual sloth and indecision, never seriously endeavour to make up their minds on disputed questions—such, for instance, as Biblical criticism. Sometimes they shut their eyes and refuse to allow that such questions exist at all.

Referring directly to the question of religious education the Committee says:—

> We have failed also to discriminate sufficiently between the Christian standards of character and conduct and those displayed in the historical books of the Old Testament. As a child's religious conceptions deepen, many of the Old Testament stories challenge his developing conscience.

The report of the Archbishop's Committee is like the skeleton at the Egyptian feast. It discounts the fears so vividly expressed in the display advertisements. Indeed, we may well begin to wonder if the dear clergy are not needlessly alarmed about Secular Education, as they are unnecessarily worried about clerical poverty.

To give an additional five millions to the National Church is simply to perpetuate a priestly despotism. Under the glamour of the Gregorian chants, wax lights, stained glass windows, antiquated liturgy, and vestments, is a tyranny none the less real because thatched by ecclesiastical stage properties. Such despotism meekly accepted by tens of thousands of nerveless Christians cannot be lightly regarded, especially when the average worshipper deems it profanity to call an ape an ape, if it but wear a clerical collar. The Established Church is no less intolerant than the Roman Catholic Church, and is as hostile to all modern impulses. A Church which includes King Charles the First among its "saints" and prays for fine and wet weather, is not entitled to the respect of liberal-minded men and women. A mere glance at the Parliamentary record of the Lords Spiritual is sufficient to carry its own condemnation. They voted against admitting Nonconformists to the Universities; against removing the civil disabilities of Jews; against abolishing compulsory Church rates; against permitting burial without Church service; against free education for the people. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison; or flogging in the Army and Navy.

With such prelates and such a record the Church of England has no right to ask for a minimum subscription of five million pounds. It is this record of reaction, coupled with a two-thousand years' old superstition, which explains the manless congregations of this country. To give millions of money to such an institution is simply to clang massy gold gates against the hopes and aspirations of the enlightened citizens of a civilized country.

MIMNERMUS.

Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."

III.

(*Continued from p. 574.*)

LET us next examine the logical barrage which Dr. McDougall sets up to ward off hostile attacks. His first "argument" is a question-begging metaphor, to wit: That the brain and its system of nerves correspond to an electric battery and its system of wires; that the mind is the magnetic field created by the passage of neural currents through them; and that the "soul" is the *ether*—the *medium*—which makes the creation of such a field possible.

Had this simile been put forward with an honest desire to assist the reader to form a conception of how consciousness arises, one would have welcomed it with gratitude. Though I am not a metaphysician, pure or impure, *who can slur over*, as if it had *no* significance, the fact that "organization" is a prime factor and a *sine-qua-non* condition of the evolution of life; yet I cannot believe that mind can arise from a substance which has *only physical* attributes. The "raw material" or essence of mind must, therefore, be either in the substance itself or in the medium in which it is developed. So the idea of a psychic ether would be quite a helpful conception if it had not been prostituted, in the act of presenting it, to the blind gropings of barbaric ages. That Dr. McDougall's motive is not to illumine but to obscure and mystify is obvious from the fact that he calls this psychic ether the "soul," and that despite the fact of his professed dislike to using compromising terms!

In fact, the application of this term to the medium is so distorting in its effect as to rob his simile of all logical justification. One is at a loss where to look for a supposed similitude, whether to the ethereal medium or to the magnetic field. The "soul" is usually assumed to possess individuality, immortality, fixity, and initiative power. The ether has no individuality, and, so far as we know, is entirely passive, while the electric field has no immortality or fixity—it ceases to exist when the currents cease and moves as the wires move. He apologetically admits that his simile is somewhat "crude." Crude, indeed, as used by him, it is not an analogy at all, but a farcical travesty of one.

And he is apparently conscious of it all, for so soon as the simile has done its assumptive and suggestive work, he flings it to the winds and goes off at a tangent to ask question-begging queries which belie every attribute of his analogical hypothesis. And well he may, for if he consistently carried out the analogy he propounds, he would have razed his "soul" castle to the ground. For if the mind be evoked into existence, as in the case of the magnetic field, by the passage of currents through the wires disposed in it, so must it, if there be any genuine analogy at all, vanish when the currents cease. Why, in the name of all reason, should there be any resemblance at the start and none at the finish? It would be difficult to beat this as an example of unabashed mystification, and only he who is hindbound in a

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pre-possession could ever be guilty of it. His question-begging queries are obviously intended to divert attention away from the natural lessons of his simile and to forestall them.

Had he desired a consistent metaphor to convey the implications of the term "soul," he would have found a gramophone more to the point. He could get out of that some kind of individuality, immortality, and fixity, without distortion or desertion. Or had his object been to illustrate the Buddhistic Nirvana, the phenomenon of magnetic induction, would have been more or less apposite. But to exemplify a "soul" with it, it is probably the most unsuitable metaphor that physical science could supply him for the purpose.

He had obviously forgotten or overlooked his oracular dictum that "mental structures precede bodily structures" when he requisitioned magnetic induction as a metaphor of the "soul." The magnetic field surely does not *precede* the starting of the current!

But there; a metaphysician, like a triune God, is not subject to the laws of logical or arithmetical consistency. Self-contradiction will be "accounted unto him," by believing Spiritists, for profundity of thought! Even a "believer" *without* evidence was pronounced "blessed"; a believer *against* evidence must be the very embodiment of bliss.

Let us now come to his question-begging epithets, phrases, and assumptions.

He speaks of "interaction" in the most naive manner, as if that did not beg the very question in dispute.

"Interaction" should be discussed *after* proving the *existence* of the alleged "interacting" objects. To talk about the "interaction" of imaginary entities is a piece of palpable question-begging sophistry.

"Interaction" is a *How* problem. And a "how" problem does not arise until its two terms—cause and effect—are demonstrable and indisputable facts.

When he has proved the existence of a "soul" entity, he may then, without disingenuousness, discuss its "interaction," and not till then.

KERIDON.

(To be continued.)

The Prayer of the Righteous.

THE fields are ripe to harvest—
The poppies, crimson, flare;
O Lord of *Peace* and *Beauty*,
Hear thou our *righteous* prayer.

From stately hall and palace,
Ancestral country seat,
O Lord of Death's red harvest,
We come, with praises meet.

Lo, here is peace eternal,
Marred not by hand of man;
And Beauty reigns supernal
Farther than eye can span.

This Paradise of Beauty
Is ours by lordly right;
We may not *fight* for Freedom,
But *hear* the guns at night.

Thy ways, O Lord, are wondrous,
Beyond the ways of man;
The chords of Hate's orchestra
Drown the sweet notes of Pan.

In Flanders, life's rich harvest
Falls 'neath thy sickle red;
Jesu, hear *our* righteous prayer
For blind, and maimed, and dead.

P. A.

Acid Drops.

Inferentially the Church of England being established by law is, in the eye of the law, the only true religion. And the King is perforce a member of the Church of England. In his case the religion goes with the post. It is not selected by him, it is chosen for him. So the King went to St. Paul's to thank God for having ended the War after permitting it for four years. Then having prayed with the legally true Church, the King next goes to the other Churches—the Free Churches—and prays with them. Now, there are still Mohammedans, and Jews, and Roman Catholics, and numbers of other sects in the country, and we see no reason why he should not go and pray with the rest. One appreciates the intense religious conviction there must be behind this indiscriminate and commercial-traveller kind of piety. And if there's a God, one wonders what he thinks of the whole business. Will he be bored, or amused, or just disgusted with this saddling him with the responsibility for the four years of war?

A Thanksgiving Service was held in Paris at Notre Dame. The Archbishop of Paris, preaching, said:—

> It is to be regretted that our own Government is not represented. A few days ago the British Premier, after announcing the Victory, cried, "Let us proceed to church to give humble and reverent thanks for the great deliverance of the world from its great peril." All the members of Parliament followed him to Westminster.

We quite imagine the Archbishop's regret at the French Government not imitating the stupid mumbo-jumboism of the English Prime Minister and the Members of Parliament. But France is France, and having won the war without God there was no need to thank him at the end. But England is England, and without a display of pious humbug some of us would feel that something serious had happened to the old country.

How the clergy have entwined themselves in social life is seen in a paragraph in an Essex newspaper, which announces that a clergyman is removing to another living. It adds that he is a member of the Board of Guardians and District Council, a member of the Tribunal, and Vice-Chairman of the Food Control Committee. Quite an example of Christian humility!

Mr. G. H. Roberts, Minister of Labour, speaking on the ultimate effects of War-work, said some people thought there might be the development of a definite third sex, something neither man nor woman. On the Continent, priests have been called the third sex for generations.

The piety of the Sunday papers is peculiar. Here is a quotation from a leading article in *Lloyds*: "1914 took this easy-going life of ours by the scruff of the neck, and rammed its nose against the Sign-Post of The Great Cross-Ways, with a thunderous Up—or down? Heaven—or hell? Choose! and choose quickly!" Even the Christian Evidence lecturer who spoke of "the footprints of an Almighty Hand" could not beat this outburst.

Christians are enjoined that when a man steals their cloak they are to offer the offenders their coats also. It may be that Benjamin Small had read this when he stole a bishop's surplice. If so, he has had a disappointment, for a Christian magistrate has sentenced him to three months in a little room in which to meditate on the difference between Christian theory and practice.

The Rev. J. Petrie, of the Glasgow Evangelistic Council, says that, in the midst of all the problems facing the Church, that of exercising the best and strongest influence upon the youth, especially about the age of fourteen and upwards, should not escape notice. There seemed little doubt that if the Church failed to provide adequately for the well-being of the young, guided and guarded by religious influence, the State would step in to undertake the work on a purely secular basis. Is this not already being done by the Welfare

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of Youth Scheme, which is already in operation in many of the public works, but which is not generally run on evangelistic lines, recreation and sport being the incentive to better conduct.

The Glasgow United Free Presbytery has passed a resolution expressing thanks to Almighty God for the signal victories achieved by the forces of the Allies and for the signing of the Armistice. On what particular occasion did God give the Allies his special help during the course of the War? Was it when he sent the fogs to cover up the tracks of the Germans when they played the tip and run game on the coasts of England?

The Glasgow Presbytery thinks also the establishment of a League of Nations would safeguard the best interests of the nations and promote the extension of the kingdom of Christ. How these ministers do love to drag Christ into matters he has nothing to do with. Was it the clergy or the politicians who first thought of a League of Nations? As usual, the clergy were left behind, but no doubt they will claim the honour. The real spiritual father of Wilson's celebrated fourteen points is Thomas Paine. Jesus Christ has about as much to do with them as Nebuchadnezar.

The Bishop of Peterborough says: "All countries are now acknowledging and doing homage to the democratic ideals for which Great Britain has always stood." Coming from a clerical member of the House of Lords the remark is not without humour.

"Church and dissent," states the Rev. R. F. Horton, "to use the old phrase, have found out, each for itself, that it has failed." This is very like killing two birds with one one brick.

The news of the Armistice filled nearly everyone with gladness, but there was at least one person who felt sorry. A writer in the *Parish Paper* of St. Jude's-on-the-Hill, Hampstead, said:—

> To me last Sunday was—what shall I term it?—a peculiarly distressing day. I mean, to see the eagerness and the hope expressed in so many people's faces and voices at the prospect of an immediate peace. Well, it was painful. I tell you that *any* parley with the enemy at this moment is a crime before God, and an armistice a cruel mockery of the dead—and of the living. America fights by our side. And on the shoulder-straps of her men are three letters. Those three letters must be America's only answer to Germany as they are ours—Unconditional Surrender—Absolutely. Let Hindenburg and Ludendorff publicly surrender their swords and the Allies occupy Berlin and Vienna. If this be refused, then, by all that is holy, Fight on! Fight on!

Fight on! The slaughter of a few more thousands, the devastation of more miles of territory matters nothing. Fight on! It is much easier to rouse the beast in man than to put it to rest. And religion only aggravates its restlessness.

The Rev. Dr. Watson, Glasgow, says they would be insincere if they did not plainly say that they believed God had led them to victory. What about the generalship of Marshal Foch?

The Glasgow Corporation Libraries are now to be open on Sundays. Why not the picture-houses also?

Bernard Shaw once said that the only excuse for beating a child is that one does it in a temper. There is a Liverpool society—the Corporal Punishment League—that thinks otherwise. A circular we have received obligingly lays down regulations for the whipping and smacking of children. You are to whip the children over your knee, and in a "humbling way," so that the child "will feel shame as well as pain." You must take time in uncovering the child, "so that it may feel the disgrace the more." There should be intervals between the whippings, and a "short, broad, medium strap" may be used. Above all, "the only sure way to make your children have respect and obedience is to whip them."

The leaflet is not a humorous essay; it is written in all seriousness. The address of the Society is 121 Limekiln Lane, Liverpool, and help is solicited. Testimonials from unnamed mothers are also given. No names are given—nothing but the "Hon. Director, to whom letters are to be addressed." This same gentleman says that his views and his methods have "had the approval of clergymen of all denominations." The last is illuminating. And we feel as though we should like to convert ourselves into a Corporal Correction League for the benefit of the Director and his backers.

"Flag-day" collections appear to be a better way of "raising the wind" than reliance on prayer. At Southend-on-Sea recently a day was devoted to the "Southend Town Missionary Saturday Collection."

Truth crushed to earth will rise again. Sometimes it gets up in quite a hurry. Then Mr. Bonar Law says "Economic policy is not a religion. It is a question of common sense." The exclusion of religion from the sphere of common sense is delicious. We wonder whether he reads the *Freethinker*? He might do worse.

Bigotry is not dead, but only sleeping. A new Ethical Society at Blackwood, Monmouth, has been refused the use of a building in which to hold meetings. Gallant little Wales should be more progressive than Dunghill-on-the-Snazle.

The following news item should flatter the clerical dovecotes: "Taken ill in his room at the Law Courts, Captain Crawford, an elder Brother of the Trinity, died shortly afterwards."

The Salvation Army is concerned with many things besides salvation. Commissioner D. C. Lamb, head of the Emigration Department of the Salvation Army, has just returned from a visit to the United States and Canada, and will report on emigration schemes for women and ex-service men.

Speaking at Westminster Chapel on the subject of Temperance, the Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett said: "I pray the Church will come to have fire and flame enough to burn it to death." Will the Church commence with the "communion port"?

The retiring Lord Mayor, speaking at the Mansion House, said he was in favour of stricter Sunday observance. Isn't the City dull enough on Sunday?

Now is the Time.

THE War has given the Churches one of the greatest shocks they have ever received. Thousands have, in consequence, definitely left it for ever, and other thousands are in the act of breaking away. The Churches are lamenting their plight, and not without reason.

But their adversity is our opportunity. Of the many thousands who have broken with Christianity, we have captured a number, but these represent but a small percentage of the whole. And we want them all, every one; male and female demand we them.

And this is where every one of our readers can help. Every one of them knows someone who is a likely subscriber to the *Freethinker*. See that he, or she, gets a copy without delay. Or send along the address, and we will see to it. It is really not difficult to secure new readers, and most of them will rise up and call you "blessed."

We are in for a season of mental readjustment. Old beliefs are in the melting-pot, and people's minds will be more than usually receptive to new ideas. Now is the time for us to strike; we shall not have so favourable an opportunity for a long time, and we must make the most of it.

We want those new readers, and we want them at once. We are getting them all the time; but our appetite grows constantly. And every fresh reader means a new helper in the cause of human progress.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 24, Leeds; November 30, Maesteg; December 1, Ferndale; December 2, Llwynypia; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—December 1, Swansea; December 8, Garw.

L. J. Lee.—We are sending parcel of literature. Pleased to learn that the *Freethinker* is so eagerly read in your camp. Thanks for your promised help in the future.

R. Lee Bliss.—A capital letter, but we don't suppose it will have much effect on the Canon. The only way to stop him is to cut off his supplies by educating the people.

W. Barlow.—It is the spirit that counts, and you have nothing to reproach yourself with on that head.

E. B. Side.—We value congratulations from you and yours.

A. B. Hardy.—There are some points in your letter than can only be decided by yourself. But so long as teachers are compelled to give religious instruction the plan you adopt appears to us the best in the circumstances. The injustice is done, both to teacher and child, by having religion in the schools at all. Anyway, we are very pleased to see you are doing what you can towards popularizing the cause of secular education, and wish that all teachers had the same courage We hope to visit Edinburgh one day, and to have the pleasure of meeting you.

H. Bull.—Improvements in our meetings, such as you suggest, are mainly questions of organization and growth in numbers. Something in the line you desire may develop as the first grows and the membership becomes more numerous.

J. F. Cordon writes that it was only on changing his newsagent that he overcame the delay in getting the *Freethinker* delivered, and advises others to adopt the same plan where the paper is not regularly delivered. We hope that our readers will bring some pressure to bear. The *Freethinker* is published at a regular time, and delays in delivery are in no way connected with the office.

H. O. Boger.—It is rather difficult to say how much of the profession of faith in the Bible, or the Church, or miracles, by men like Galileo, was due to caution in offending the Church. One must bear in mind the convenient distinction that a thing might be true according to theology and false according to science.

F. W. Walsh.—Shall appear next week.

W. J.—We cannot undertake to answer a questioner until he is satisfied with the answer. That is a quite hopeless proposition.

W. (Glasgow).—See this week's "Views and Opinions." We may deal with the subject 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."

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Nov. 24) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Leeds Town Hall. The hall is a very large one, but the local Freethinkers seem determined to fill it, and we hope they will be successful. Admission is by silver collection, but there are reserved seats at 1s. and 2s. 6d. There will be two meetings, at 3 and 7 o'clock, and arrangements are being made to accommodate with tea those visitors who come from a distance. Those who wish to join in the tea should write Mr. A. Radley, 9 Grosvenor View, Blackman Lane, Leeds.

Next week Mr. Cohen visits South Wales. He is to lecture in the Town Hall, Maesteg, on November 31, at Ferndale on December 1, and Llwynypia on December 2.

We summarise elsewhere the proceedings of the Special Conference held at Birmingham on Sunday last. It says something for the revival of interest in the work of the N.S.S. that so many delegates travelled—under existing hotel and railway conditions—from so far North as Glasgow and West as S. Wales, to be present. The interest is there, and it must be made the most of; and there seems a common resolve to do this. The arrangements made for the Conference by the Birmingham Branch were excellent, and it added to the indebtedness of the Conference to find a tea provided at the expense of the Branch. In these days, the act showed a thoughtfulness that was greatly appreciated by all present.

The tract on "Compulsory Church-going in the Army and Navy," issued by the R.P.A., is now ready, and can be had on application to 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C. Copies will be sent post free, and it is hoped that use will be made of the tract during the Election.

The Manchester Branch is holding its first Social at the Small Hall, Downing Street, on Saturday, November 30, at 6.30. Whist drive, music, and dancing. Tickets 2s. each, including refreshments. Members' friends welcome. Will intending patrons please drop a p.c. to the Secretary, 446 Gt. Cheetham Street, E., Hr. Broughton?

Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman, who is the Secretary of the Divorce Law Union, and a prospective Parliamentary Candidate, will open a discussion at the St. Pancras Reform Club under the auspices of the North London Branch of the N.S.S. on "Marriage and the Church." The subject in this lady's hands is certain to be dealt with in an able manner, and we hope North London Freethinkers, particularly ladies, will see that the meeting-place is crowded. The discussion commences at 7.30.

We are asked to announce that Mr. E. C. Saphin lectures to-day (Nov. 24), at the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Street, Southampton. His subject in the morning is "The Sun, or Genesis and Jesus"; evening, "Christian Ritual and Art Explained." We trust that Southampton Freethinkers will do their best to make the meetings a complete success.

We are sorry to see that our admirable contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, has been getting into trouble with the Censor. Under the special law of May, 1918, no less than three issues of the paper have been witheld from dispatch through the post. This is a serious matter to a paper which depends largely upon the post for its circulation. The action has been taken on the ground that the paper was prejudicial to the conduct of the War. As the *Truthseeker* has been avowedly and fervently pro-War right through, and has supported all important Government measures, we think with editor Macdonald that religious influences are simply utilizing the War as an occasion for injuring a Freethought journal. We can rely upon our American brethren putting up a good fight in defence of their paper, and now that the War is over, the bigots will have to find some other mode of attack. It is useless expecting them to use honourable methods while dishonourable ones are available.

We are asked to announce that our contributor "Keridon" will be lecturing at Salford, Manchester, on November 27. Subject: "Why Faiths Die Hard." We are unable to give fuller particulars as none are to hand.

The Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, is occupied this evening (November 24) by Mr. Clifford Williams, who will lecture on "The Madmen of the Gods." Freethinkers should make it a point of bringing along a Christian friend or two. The meeting commences at 7 o'clock.

Owing to various circumstances, we are withholding until next week acknowledgments of contributions to our Sustentation Fund. Intending members will please note that this Fund closes on December 17.

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The N.S.S. Special Conference.

THE Special Conference of the N.S.S. ordered to receive and consider the report of the Special Committee appointed to draw up a constitution for the Society met at Birmingham on Sunday last. There was a good attendance, the Society's Branches being well represented in addition to individual members. This, in spite of the difficulties and inconveniences attending travelling at this period.

With one or two minor alterations the report was adopted by the Conference. There is no need to print here the full constitution, much of which of necessity follows the usual lines. Moreover, these rules will be printed and available. The important alterations are: (1) All officials will, in future, be elected by the Annual Conference. The source of authority thus becomes in fact, as well as in theory, the whole body of members; (2) The country is mapped out in geographical areas, each area nominating either one or two members for the Executive, whose election will lie in the hands of the Conference. A Treasurer will be appointed, and the accounts will in future be audited by a certified accountant. The constitution also provides for the appointment of a press representative, and general and local organizers.

It is hoped that by grouping the country into areas closer co-operation between the Branches in each area will follow, and thus result in more sustained and effective work.

The Executive will in future (after the Whitsuntide Conference) consist of not more than fourteen members, with President, Treasurer, and Secretary. I think everyone will agree this is quite large enough for real business.

I feel sure that the constitution as drawn up provides the basis for a healthy and progressive organization, and that all well-wishers will do their best to make it a complete success.

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President, N.S.S.*

Religion and Life.

SIR,—I am sorry that the slowness of our War postal service made my last letter late as it must have given you some extra work. Your article, however, contains an indictment of Christianity too common to pass over, though I cannot, at present, give to it more than a brief notice.

You speak of defending Christianity by pointing out that Christians are not worse than other people, though they sometimes talk as if they were. In other words, you assume, as very many critics do, and as you began this discussion by doing, that the one grand test of a religion is the character of its votaries. But on what is this assumption based? You will observe there are two ways of dealing with your contention. One would be by arguing that Christianity has produced a special and noble kind of virtue which cannot be ascribed to any other influence. I have avoided this plea so far, because to defend it adequately would be a very lengthy business. But I cannot help referring you to a booklet by the Rev. J. K. Mozley, called *The Achievements of Christianity*, which can be bought for 1s. 6d. from most booksellers (S.P.C.K. The Haymarket). I appeal to the fair-mindedness of yourself and your readers not to neglect this temperate, well-written essay. We are, all of us, I hope, in quest of truth, and here is a statement in its defence too weighty to be ignored.

The other way, which I propose to adopt, is to consider the *relevance* of the test of character. I must remind you that I have twice invited you to answer my rejoinder, viz., that you employ this particular test for Christianity or Theism without scruple or hesitation, though you do not employ it for such a creed as Patriotism. Perhaps I have not made my argument clear. You may object that Patriotism is not a fair parallel because it only professes to produce patriots, not virtuous men; but Christianity, if it does not produce virtuous men, produces nothing. Now, granting this for the moment, I repeat that you single out religion for a test which ought consistently to be applied to Patriotism, and that the latter is an exact parallel to the former for the purposes of this argument. For consider: we reckon Patriotism a good thing. Then, supposing a vast number of patriots behave abominably, we still reckon Patriotism as good though we detest these particular patriots. Would you not call the sixty millions of Germans patriots? Would you not admit that many of them in the name and in the sincere service of Patriotism have behaved infernally, and brought their country to ruin? Certainly you would. That is to say, you discriminate justly between the wrong-headed and the right-minded votaries of Patriotism, and no matter how numerous the former may be your belief in Patriotism is just where it was before. As a principle it is sound, and its soundness is not undermined by the hideous things done in its name. I call that good sense, but why do you draw exactly the opposite inference in the case of religion?

At the same time, I am not disposed to press for an answer, because this is only an interesting bit of logomachy, not really so near the centre of the subject as we were last week. In other words, it is not a necessary tenet of Atheists that Christianity has failed to produce virtue, though a great many may think so. But, as I hope to show later, my plea is not part of the defence of religion on which I rely. It is a challenge of your intellectual consistency on a side issue, and I am anxious to get back to my main business which is to show what the Christian Gospel is, only remarking that the Founder of our religion evidently thought that His doctrine rested on other foundations than the character results on His professed followers, for he prophesied that there would be a great deal of sham Christianity. Thus the decay of Christian faith is not a proof of the falseness of His teaching but rather the reverse. It should be noted also that no other founder of any religion, or even religious sect, has ever begun by telling his followers that much of the support which was going to be given to the movement would prove to be hollow and insincere.

In your last issue you raise another point where a correction is needed. You justly remark, in reference to my argument about introducing one person to another, that the belief in A of the personal existence of B is no proof of that existence being a fact. The belief may be an hallucination. Certainly. But I used the illustration for a different object. It was to explain why I did not accept your invitation to state what I meant by God: not at all as a reason why you should admit the existence of God. My plea was that any such statement, even in the case of human personalities whose existence no one doubts, would be a waste of time.

Now for a different part of our vast subjects. I cannot state what I mean by God, but I can point out what the belief in Him, purified by the teaching and work of Christ, has done for mankind.

It produced a new virtue, in that perhaps the most loveable of all. We call it Humility. What I have to say on this point is supplementary to Mr. Mozley's book, and is an answer after all to your first challenge.

What is Humility? It is a quality, the absence of which causes any character, no matter how gifted, or how useful it may be, to be instinctively disliked by all

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of us in our sanest moments. Where it is present it disarms opposition, exercises a powerful influence for good, and enables A to take the mote out of B's eye without hurting him, because it ensures that there is no beam in his own. It is, in short, a supremely attractive quality. But it was so rare before the time of Christ that there was no word for it in Greek, and no evidence that the quality was exhibited clearly enough to be recognized by anyone. Take, for instance, Aristotle's well-known sketch of his ideal man, whom he calls the Man of Great Soul: it is powerfully drawn, and not ill-equipped with graces, but wholly lacking in Humility. Yet we find St. Paul, directly after Christ's work was finished, steeped in the thought of Humility, exhibiting it most beautifully in his own character, and urging on his followers to strive unceasingly after it: though he was obliged to employ a word which had the sense of "mean-mindedness." But the thing denoted was so winning and loveable, and so new, that it triumphed over the disability of this inauspicious start, and won its way to general recognition.

Now, what are we to make of this? I can imagine that some would minimize the phenomenon and dispose of it by airy denials: pointing to the number of people who are free from conceit but are not professing Christians; refusing to regard St. Paul or St. Ignotius as more humble than Socrates. Or, again, there might be the usual quasi-scientific explanation, assimilating the extraordinary to the ordinary, as if some rather obscure cause like suggestion or telepathy had been at work. What is the Christian explanation, and how far does it fit the facts?

We say that no amount of subsequent failure can alter the fact that at the time of the infant Church a new ideal of character came before men's minds: and that some astonishingly potent spiritual influence was at work not only presenting the ideal, but enabling man, in spite of his propensity or haughty self-assertion, to approximate to it in several instances and achieve it in a few: and that this triumph over human arrogance has been won not by coercion but by persuasion. How?

Simply because the conviction that God humbled Himself from infinite glory to the lowest abasement to save us, as soon as it becomes living in the mind, makes conceit impossible. We bow before the manifestation of limitless Love and Power, and are fain to renounce all self-congratulation, when we realize that by the gift of a higher life we are given the power to rise above ourselves, yet remaining morally free.

Observe that the whole power of the appeal depends on the belief that He who died on the cross was divine: the Creator of this world. If He is regarded as not more than a supremely good man no explanation of the facts is possible: for if Jesus was only a good man, he was not an example of humility but of colossal arrogance. Only the full Christian doctrine could have worked any such result. Moreover, to deny this claim is to fly in the face of the only evidence in the matter which is worth anything; namely, the testimony of the "holy and humble men of heart." That testimony is invariable. Whatever conquest over pride they have secured they one and all refer to Christ, and what right have we to say they are wrong?

E. Lyttelton.

There are states of moral death no less amazing than physical resurrection; and a church which permits its clergy to preach what they have ceased to believe, and its people to trust what they refuse to obey, is perhaps more truly miraculous in impotence, than it would be miraculous in power, if it could move the fatal rocks of California to the pole, and plant the sycamore and the vine between the ridges of the sea.—*Ruskin.*

What is Nature?

Who'll dig his grave?
I said the owl
With my spade and shov'l,
I'll dig his grave.

Ornithologists say that the owl is a wise bird.....He certainly is a very solemn 'un.....Thus "The Owl" on the sum-total-of-things discussion.

Sir,—Mr. J. Fothergill's letter which appeared in the *Freethinker* (June 16) was very welcome, and gave me great hopes for the future. If he came to Aussie-Land, I would be very glad to see him, indeed, and I trust that he would be able to fulfil all his highest desires. What a wonderful man he must be! He is as delightful as Charles Lamb, as impressive as Carlyle, and as pessimistic as Schopenhauer, with, I may add, a good deal of his brilliant lucidity.

I have been giggling in a quiet way ever since I tried to explain the mystery of the universe, and when I wrote my short article on "What is Nature," I also tried to explain that the more you know, the more you find you don't know; or, as Herbert Spencer puts it: "The explanation of that which is explicable but brings into greater clearness the inexplicableness of that which remains behind."

But let us "get back to Nature"—an expression I have often heard people use, and I wanted to know what it meant. The answer isn't so easy as you might think. However, I ran a string of talk through it, and when you come to think a thing like this out, you soon get bushed, for you find it's a good deal of a tangle, but we ought to try and think it out, for the conduct of life hangs to it. I used to think I knew a lot, and by reading and studying hard, I would find out a lot more. But when I first discovered my vast ignorance, I sat me down and wept. I had no idea I was so ignorant. I wanted to know what all this muddle of things meant. But now I laugh, laugh, laugh consumedly, for I have discovered the jest of life. It is a wonderful jest, indeed, and I don't worry any more, either about my ignorance, or anything else. In Mr. Fothergill's words, I am "indeed a puzzle—a 'Riddle of the Universe,' in fact." I admit this. We talk about Nature as if we knew what "nature" meant. But do we? I made the "unmitigated staggerer" that "Nature's Laws are phrases with contents that differ according to the intellectual status of the people who use them," and, I added, "there is no law." But what is law? Is law anything, really, except what always happens? You will need to think that out. Nature to an educated man means the observed order of things. But there is no "law!" All we can understand is that Nature is at work, and the man who talks about the laws of Nature as a pivot upon which to hang his whole philosophy is simply groping round in a metaphysical fog of his own devising.

I would like to discuss mind as a function of the brain, but I had better leave that for the present. Any form of thought apart from the brain is more than I can understand. But it may be owing to some weakness in my brain centres; you never can tell. The scientist tells me that the paper upon which I write is a mass of dancing electrons. Well, it does not look like it. Experience seems all against it; but I can only believe on the principle of coherence of experience, and this philosophy is strong enough to make me doubt all the seeming evidence of my senses. "Are things what they seem, or are visions about?" When one looks around and critically examines his position in the world, he finds, firstly, that it is impossible to prove the very existence even of himself; and, therefore, that it is impossible for

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him to verify any evidence of external objects that may come to him. Let my friendly critic look into his mind rigidly and critically; he will find nothing but a series of recollections and presentations. As for anything he can label "J. F——" as such, anything of his own, and quite distinct from other men or other objects, he will look in vain for it. He will find that his every action is dependent upon some cause preceding it. If, therefore, "J. F——" can find no honest proof of his own existence, how can he be presumed to postulate Nature's laws, which only means that the same effects follow the same causes all the time?

The fact is that we appear to be in the grip of immeasurable and incomprehensible forces which we call Gravitation, Heat, Light, or more generally Energy, and that these forces go on their way with a supreme disregard of our convenience. If we oppose our little bodies to them, they silently destroy us. They have brought us into existence; they help us to live a moment; we grow old; they slay us, and we perish. Our own observation of a single day's newspaper shows the gruesomeness of it all, and that the unseen powers, so far as we can tell, appear to take no notice of us. A millionaire crushes thousands of people, robs millions, and accumulates every pleasure and comfort that this world can offer. An innocent little child wanders near a savage mastiff, and is horribly destroyed. What justice is there in it all?

The fact is that all thinking men sooner or later return to the despairing words of wise old David Hume. The whole thing is "a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery"; and if we open our eyes candidly to the truth, we shall see that Hume was right, for no one can thoroughly understand the miracle of life—the romance of existence.

Yes, Nature is kind, but she (or it) is also horribly cruel:—

> It spreadeth forth for flight the eagle's wings
> What time she beareth home her prey; it sends
> The she-wolf to her cubs; for unloved things
> It findeth food and friends.
>
> It is not marred nor stayed in any use,
> All liketh it; the sweet white-milk it brings
> To mother's breasts; it brings the white drops too
> Wherewith the young make stings.

Sydney, N.S.W. THE OWL.

God's Church.

"OH! there's the old lady going to church; or, I should say, chapel."

There was no reply.

"She's eighty years of age."

"Well! I suppose I shall be thinking of going to church when I am eighty."

"Yes, I expect so."

"But to-day I am going to the best church God made; the one with the blue sky over it instead of the vaulted roof."

An hour or so later the male speaker got out of a train at a little station, and walked into the road. It was just an ordinary road, with a few more or less tumble-down cottages on either side, and here and there, further on, a new villa or so. Still, the few people and the cottages were rural and pleasing, although the sky was dull, and not at all blue.

Down the road, over a little bridge, and along the side of a golf-course, thoughts of human company still spoiled the air. Cyclists passed, leaving dust and movement behind them. The walker hurried on, and tried to forget the road. Still, links and wayfarers were troublesome, and even two sparrows on the top of a gate, pecking craftily, did not rouse him. A crossway made more traffic and movement again. Energy was needed to decide which road to take, but one chosen haphazard led to a promise of quiet, bringing him at last to a footpath. No cyclists and golfers there! He passed a farmhouse with a gate bearing a warning to beware of the dog, which barked harshly, and through a field in which some full-blooded horses were galloping here and there. Then through another very large field with a sort of banked path. Not a soul or animal in sight! He breathed deep the soft, damp air. The sun tried to shine out for an instant, but failed. Grey clouds made the grass seem more green, and little pools from the heavy rain reflected the attempted glitter of the sunbeams and the greyness of the clouds.

At the other end of the field a railway embankment crossed it. Gates had to be climbed and men again to be met, but gratefully a still larger expanse of meadow spread away with the path through it. A humpy meadow! Water shone in the hollows and where the bank was broken, mud and slime lay thick. All things end, and tall hedge-row trees in the distance gave warning of a road. In the next field, too, were people. They were doing; only a short half-hour's respite!

Road again! Houses and human beings! Shrill voices of children! A crowd of cyclists, dusty, but happy! Gregarious these, and loving to recreate in crowds. Again an effort to choose a way, but soon a lonely path was reached again. A clump of elms, a stile, a narrow field! Another stile, a finger post! Decision! The clouds fly low, smoke-coloured and threatening. A thrush sings in one of the trees, which all are singing their own lay in the cool strong breeze.

Half-way over the next field a surprise is. Men have been doing, and are going to be doing here. A line of labelled pegs mark out some avenue in a new "estate." Estate forsooth, and it means the destruction of these tall hedges of hawthorn, and that great elm at least. Why must you be building ugly streets of uniform houses and gravel roads where once there were fields, my brothers? Is improvement so necessary?

Paths lead everywhere from these fields and one which leads to a church and house is chosen. Food is necessary, though the grey down of the clouds is floating by. Food is near a church, if it is not the universal church of God, and after food is the promise of a glorious afternoon. Away, then, to the church and consequent houses and "pub." Food and rest! The sun shines out on the whitey-yellow road. The passers look more cheerful.

More miles across fields, through muddy by-paths, where a primrose or two were found. Hedges in deep green! Sky blue, flecked with dark and light cloud! Road at last again! Cyclist, movement, and dust! A railway station with another incipient new estate. At last that feeling of fatigue so joyous that even human society is not disagreeable. A seat on a stile! A question of a passing rustic, genial beneath his tan and the touch of earth about him! Two more miles "across the field what I've just come thro', keeping to the right."

A melancholy railway station. Drab journey, and entry into home where everyone is "just going out." Thankful solitude again, and more food. Time for thought of the great religious service through which he has passed this day, and the weary footman sinks back into an easy chair, satisfied.

G. E. FUSSELL.

What is called a new philosophy or a new religion, is generally not so much a creation of fresh ideas, but rather a direction given to ideas already current among contemporary thinkers.—*Henry Thomas Buckle.*

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Correspondence.

EXPERIENCE AS AN ARGUMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—In these days when metaphysical research is occupying so big a place in the Western hemisphere it is curious to find Mr. J. T. Lloyd placing it on a level with "dogmatism." This attitude, to a reader of not very long standing, seems symbolical to the weakness of the "Freethinkers" position.

It cannot be denied that, even in the present age of scientific progress, there are certain facts that can only be investigated metaphysically. Is it not something more than a possibility that at the root of all religion lies a dim perception of those infinite things that we to-day are unable to comprehend, and cannot conceive of as being ultimately comprehensible.

It is impossible for us to conceive of space and time as finite, and yet the Infinite is necessarily beyond our knowledge. To this same sphere—that of the conceivable but incomprehensible—appear to belong love, life, truth, goodness. We do not and cannot know these in the absolute. That they are real forces is evident, and that they have actuated men of all times to pursue courses that have not demonstrably added to the sum-total of human happiness, and yet have, amid great physical torture, brought a sense of exhilaration to the sufferer, is admitted.

The great mistake of the rank and file to-day, as formerly, is the attempt to define the Infinite through a confusion of "consciousness" with "personality" and a belief in the permanence of the former (as little scientifically grounded, but as well metaphysically as the belief in infinite space) we have the origin of the belief in a personal God. This mistake has not been committed by the great teachers—Christ, Buddha, Confucius, etc. Insofar as they give us any definition at all, they are in such terms as love, truth, good—themselves indefinable.

Certain it is that for the thinker of to-day who flies to religion for a solution of such problems as the reason for the persistance of absolute memory in the subconscious mind, and the utility of a lifetime experiences if the *ego* on death ceases to be, you have nothing to offer.

Whilst the value of your attempt to shatter the fetters religion has placed on the average mind is apparent, it seems a pity that the *Freethinker* should be as dogmatic on matters outside the scope of mere rationality as are the religions it condemns.

J. Dowell Jones.

"The True Believer."

He breathes the air as other people do,
Likewise he sleeps and dreams the happy dream;
Yet, somehow, it is hard to catch a gleam
Of reason why he's not like me or you.

He walks and eats; he reads the papers, too;
In outward parts he *seems* like other men,
And yet there's something funny, now and then,
Some oddity that's ever peeping through.

What is this queer peculiarity?
Some explanation, surely, can be found;
In organ, limb, he's absolutely sound:
I wonder,—is it his mentality?

Alas! it is. It is, alas! too true:
He "looks to Jesus"—not like me or you.

D. V. T.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman, "Marriage and the Church." Open Debate.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John Russell, M.A., "Arms and the Child."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells, Dales, Yates, and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. E. Clifford Williams, "The Madmen of the Gods."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Delegates Report of Conference.

Leeds Secular Society (Town Hall, Leeds): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Challenge of Unbelief"; 7, "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?"

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Geo. H. Swasey, "My American Experiences."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Sanders, "A Visitor from the Beyond." Music and Songs.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Monthly Meeting.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "The Conservative Creed of Nationalism."

Southampton Branch N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): 10, Members' Meeting, Important Business; Mr. E. C. Saphin, 11, "The Sun, or Genesis and Jesus"; 7, "Christian Ritual and Art Explained."

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road, Swansea): 6.30, Branch Meeting.

Ethical Movement Meetings.

Caxton Hall, Victoria Street.

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS at 3 p.m.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Christianity and Human Nature.—The Editor	613
"Who Giveth Us the Victory?"—J. T. Lloyd	614
The Kaiser's Downfall.—Mimnermus	615
Faith and Food.—Arthur B. Moss	616
Religion After the War.—W. Mann	621
Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."—Keridon	622

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Christianity and Human Nature.

In the *Freethinker* for November 3 I wrote a defence of Christians against the statements of their religious friends. The defence was intended to be ironical, but some of my readers failed to detect the irony, for which I am quite ready to take full responsibility. I evidently failed to make myself clear, and that is, or ought to be, the unpardonable sin with a writer. But there was a serious purpose beneath the, perhaps I had better say, intended, irony of my writing. I wished to arouse in Christian minds a recognition of the truth that a great deal of the pulpit talk about religion and character is an impertinence and an insult. I quite fail to see anything but an insult in the saying that neither family, nor friends, nor country, nor humanity at large can rouse to the highest and nerve to the noblest without there is added the belief in God and Devil, in heaven and hell. I said, and I believe, that the Christian no more needs these extra incentives than does the Freethinker. And I put in a plea for the sanity and health of human nature, apart from all supernatural incentives of beliefs and for a fundamental unity of impulse and motive.

* * *

Creed and Conduct.

Therefore, I must confess to a little surprise on Dr. Lyttelton saying in last week's *Freethinker* that I "assume.....the one grand test of a religion is the character of its votaries." I neither assume nor believe anything of the kind. And I think I can defy Dr. Lyttelton to find in anything I have ever written ground for such an inference. In reply to the statements of Christians concerning the beneficial influence of Christianity on character, I have pointed out how certain deplorable actions have resulted from Christian belief, and that reply seems to me quite justifiable. But I have protested over and over again that, even though every Christian were a monument of virtue, it would not prove the truth of Christian doctrines or the sanity of Christian beliefs. There is no common denominator between good conduct and belief in the divinity of Jesus, the existence of God, or heaven or hell. Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked may be good work, but it will not prove the resurrection of Jesus; nor can you prove the existence of God by distributing coals and blankets. My case is that human goodness, in all its forms and in all its degrees of development, is independent of religion. My proof is that it exists in all its forms and in all degrees of development apart from religion. And my further statement is that, instead of religious belief leading to moral development, it is moral development that humanizes and modifies religious belief. Finally, I do not test religion by its influence on character. I only cite illustrative disproof of the statement that its influence is universally beneficial. My main charge against religion is that its doctrines are either demonstrably untrue or completely unverifiable.

* * *

A Question of Relevancy.

Dr. Lyttelton reminds us that to deny the claim that Christianity did work an astounding change in human character is to "fly in the face of the only evidence in the matter which is worth anything, namely, the testimony of 'holy and humble men.'" These "all refer to Christ, and what right have we to say they are wrong?" Now this raises a direct issue, and on it I have to remark simply that by itself the evidence is quite valueless. And here I must refer Dr. Lyttelton to my article of November 17, which I think is vital to the issue, and to which no answer has been returned. If human testimony possesses the quality of infallibility ascribed to it by Dr. Lyttelton how are we to discriminate the true from the false? And if the cloud of witnesses is trustworthy in this one case why not in others? Surely, unless we do question testimony, even when given by honest witnesses, we shall end by coming very near the ridiculous. All that Dr. Lyttelton's case proves is that a number of people ascribe a certain change of temper or mental attitude to Christ. That is too plain to admit of denial. It is equally true that other people quite as honest ascribe their recovery from certain diseases to "cures" that can be shown to be quite useless. What I have asked Dr. Lyttelton for is evidence that his witnesses were correct in their diagnosis of the causes of their own mental states. What he does is to repeat the diagnosis and to tell me that it was made by good men. It is not the honesty of the witnesses, but the relevancy of the evidence that is challenged. To deny the existence of the kind of testimony cited would be stupid. Every Salvation Army or revival meeting will supply instances. But it is surely futile to deny the possibility of error or the need for verification.

* * *

Is Humility Christian?

Here I am pulled up by the remark that faith in Christ "produced a new virtue"—Humility. Now that, I admit, if correct, is a remarkable, nay, a unique achievement. To give to an existing quality a greater or lesser value is not unusual; but to produce a new virtue is something unprecedented and unmatched. But as Dr. Lyttelton goes on to say the quality was so "rare before the time of Christ, that there was no word for it in Greek," perhaps, after all, what was intended was that Christianity, emphasizing the importance of humility, gave it a new value in the scale of human qualities.

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But is even this quite accurate? Dr. Lyttelton gives only a negative description of what he means by humility, and all I gather is that it implies an absence of arrogance and conceit, and the presence of gentleness. And here, surely, Dr. Lyttelton has overlooked the Buddha and his teaching. He does cite Aristotle, but omits Epictetus, whose description of a good man was one who is quiet concerning himself, despises praise, cares nothing for censure so long as his own conscience upholds him, and that he should neither blame nor accuse, is as fine as anything ever preached by a Christian. So also is Marcus Aurelius overlooked with his "Shall anyone hate me, let him look to it; but I will be gentle and benevolent towards every man, and ready to show even him his mistake." The Dhamanapada describes the good man as one who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with the violent, and free from greed among the greedy. Says Lao-Tsze, "I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize—compassion, economy, and humility." In the Book of the Dead the soul of the Egyptian cries, "I am not swollen with pride." "Avoid pride and arrogance," says Cicero. In the Talmud we have, "He who humiliates himself will be lifted up." Indeed, even amongst people such as the Fijians, the Tonga Islanders, and other primitive peoples, humility often has its place.

* * *

Preaching and Practice.

As a teaching, then, humility, in the better sense of the phrase, is not peculiar to Christianity. What of its practice? Was that more pronounced among Christians than among others? Why, in this respect, Buddhism and Confucianism leaves Christianity hopelessly in the rear. Dr. Lyttelton instances St. Paul. But Paul's character after his conversion, was exactly the same that it was before. The same zeal, the same qualities that made him an ardent persecutor made him a zealous propagandist. And when we are told that the winning quality of the Christian graces captured the world I am driven to ask, Where? There is not, so far as I know, a shred of evidence that the world was impressed by the mildness, the humility, or the wisdom of Christians. It was impressed by their fanaticism, their hatreds, and their quarrelsomeness. Look at the Christian nations since? Let anyone take a map of the world and mark the places "owned" by Christian England. Have these been "acquired" by humility? Is it, as Jesus said, a fulfilment of the Biblical "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"? Even beneath the professed humility of pope and priest and monk, is it very difficult to discern the most overbearing arrogance? Who but the Christian nations have covered the seas with battleships and the lands with armies? Whose example but theirs forced Japan into militaristic development, and is forcing China along the same road; and who but they have just concluded a war that has meant over twenty millions of killed and wounded? As a mere teaching, that of humility is not peculiar to Christianity. And one must surely close one's eyes to the records of the Christian peoples in all parts of the world before one can credit them with pre-eminence in the practice of a quality that was taught and practised before anything of Christianity was heard of.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

We are not endeavouring to chain the future, but to free the present. We are not forging fetters for our children, but we are breaking those our fathers made for us. We are the advocates of inquiry, of investigation, and thought. This of itself is an admission that we are not perfectly satisfied with all our conclusions—philosophy has not the egotism of faith. While superstition builds walls and creates obstructions, science opens all the highways of thought.—*Ingersoll.*

"Who Giveth Us the Victory?"

Now that God's children are no longer slaughtering one another in the name of their common Father there is universal rejoicing. United thanksgiving services are being held in all parts of the country. Free Church ministers are invited to preach in Anglican Church pulpits, and a few Episcopal clergymen have had the courage to represent the God of love in Dissenting Chapels. A new era of ecclesiastical confraternity is confidently predicted as one of the most beneficial results of the War. Preaching in the Central Hall, Manchester, Dr. Clifford informed his hearers that "God was really ruling the world," and that peace had come as the direct result of negotiating with the Almighty rather than with the Germans. "The State was as Divine as the Church," he maintained, "and he did not recognize any great leader as having been specifically designated by God until the advent of President Wilson." Dr. Jowett, speaking at the Free Church Thanksgiving Service at the Albert Hall, said that they were gathered there "to consecrate a great victory by thankfully acknowledging that the springs of that victory are to be found in the power and favour of Almighty God." It is our duty, according to him, "to hallow the remembrance of a mighty conflict by vitally relating it to a Providence which has enlightened our counsels and blessed our arms." Dr. Fort Newton devoted a whole sermon to showing that "it is not a secular but a spiritual victory, won not by human but by Divine might." These preachers are not appalled in the least by the fact that Almighty God has permitted British casualties to reach the grand total of over three millions. Dr. Newton does, indeed, admit that our hearts, while overflowing with wonder and joy, are "touched to wistfulness at thought of what it has cost in sacrifice of our best"; but the keynote of his discourse is gratitude to heaven for so glorious a triumph of right over might. He says:—

> The Lord reigns, and those who defied him are fallen. Thus much is manifest, if we have eyes to see and the inner clarity to divine the meaning of the hour. It is in this assurance, and with this insight, that we must face the crises of the future.

That extract alone proves Dr. Newton's unfitness for leadership. To characterize those who disagree with him as blind and inwardly dull is to betray the essential weakness of his case. We boldly assert that God's reign is either non-existent or a colossal farce; and we have as good a right to hold this opinion, to say the least, as the reverend gentleman has to hold his. During the last four years many who were zealous believers formerly have become deeply convinced Atheists. Very charitably Dr. Newton declares that such people have lost their way, but we are equally certain that they have found their way to an intelligent and intelligible interpretation of the world and its affairs. To them the War was no mystery, and the Germans have lost because, in the end, they were outnumbered and out-manœuvered by their enemies. It is perfectly true that the hour has brought many pressing issues, and that by far the most vital is "the inner contest which is to decide whether the ultimate outcome of all our struggle shall be a victory for faith or for unbelief." Already for many thousands in this country the outcome has been a distinct victory for Rationalism.

Let us examine a few of Dr. Fort Newton's propositions, as published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 20. The first is thus expressed: "Never in the long story of mankind has there been so august, so awful, a demonstration of the moral purpose of God in history." The reverend gentleman pretends not to be

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quite sure whether there are unbelievers or not, but is absolutely sure, if there are, that they, as well as men of all faiths, "must have felt amidst the rush at the end the peace that comes of knowing, as Carlyle would say, that 'the great Soul of the World is just.' If the mills of God grind slowly, they grind exceeding fine, leaving dust and ashes where iniquity sat enthroned." Here again the reverend gentleman is completely at sea. Men of no faith recognize no great Soul of the World, just or unjust, no Divine purpose running through all history, no "one far-off Divine event, to which the whole creation moves." The only purpose in the world is man's, and whether this is good or bad depends upon those who cherish it. Dr. Newton represents God as employing one set of his children to inflict punishment upon another set. Germans are God's offspring quite as much as the British and their Allies; and yet in the great War the latter suffered almost as severely as the former, while for nearly four years the Father of all seemed to favour those who are now said to have defied him. A million and a half of Germans met their death on the battlefield; but is not the reverend gentleman aware that seven hundred thousand Britons lost their lives by the sword, and that their Allies lost of their best on a similar scale? If God's object was to overthrow Pan-Germanism, or Prussian militarism, why did he for so long a period appear to uphold it? If he sits as king for ever, there is no escape from the conclusion, as regards human life, that, in the words of Omar Khayyam:—

'Tis all a chequer board of Nights and Days,
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.

It is easy for a preacher to affirm that God rules the world now that we have won the War; but what would he have said had the Germans been victorious, as only a few months ago there was every chance of their becoming? What about the victories won by Frederick the Great, who, in his way, was no less selfishly ambitious than William II., who has so ignominiously fallen? What about God's purpose in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870? Was the moral law triumphant in the result of that conflict?

Dr. Fort Newton declares further that the Divine purpose in history is social. He says that "if we had doubted this before we cannot doubt it to-day." The reasoning in support of this statement is puerile in the extreme. Bear in mind that the God whose moral purpose has been so overwhelmingly demonstrated by the War is said to be love, and the contention is that the ruthless killing of millions of fine young men has had the effect of enabling us to realize the solidarity of the human race. Listen:—

> No isle of the sea, however remote, but has felt the shock of this vast tragedy. No man, no woman, no child on earth but has had added burdens laid upon him, upon her, as a direct result of the War. Vividly we have been made to realize that for good or for evil—for evil certainly, if not for good—we are members one of another, tied together by innumerable ties. For better or for worse, in joy and in tragedy, it has been shown us that humanity is one, and that we are brothers to the last man of us, for ever. If the solidarity of the race has been held as a theory, it is now revealed as a fact.

And the God of love got up the bloodiest war on record on purpose to convince us that we are all brothers, members one of another. That is how the Heavenly Father brings home to his children the splendid design of universal service which he has prepared for them.

This leads the City Temple oracle to expatiate on the mystic law of vicarious suffering, which law he finds beautifully exemplified on the Cross of Calvary. He is persuaded that it is pre-eminently right for the innocent to suffer with and for the guilty. He plays upon the feelings of his audience by saying that no one can deny that law, "remembering our gay and gallant dead who gave all, and now lie 'dark to the triumph which they died to gain,' who suffered not for their own sins, but in obedience to a red law which runs through all the life of God and man, revealed in all its splendour by the Divine Sufferer on the Cross." Far be it from us to suggest that Dr. Newton does not believe all this, though it seems to us utterly incredible. It would be the sheerest folly to deny that the world is full of vicarious suffering, and that much of it is most honourably borne by those who are absolutely innocent; but it is an indisputable fact that the need for it, in the overwhelming majority of instances, is rooted in injustice and wrong. Had the world been ruled by a just and loving God, there could have been no war; and yet Dr. Newton holds that God reigns because we have won, which clearly indicates that if the Germans had been the conquerors it would have been a proof that God does not reign.

Towards the end of the sermon the reverend gentleman describes God, not as the ruler of the world, but as one of the fighters in it. He quotes the following verse:—

The sorrows of God must be hard to bear
If he really has love in his heart,
And the hardest part in the world to play
Must surely be God's part.

If God there be, he is surely the most unfortunate of all beings, his self-styled servants being his worst enemies.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Kaiser's Downfall.

Why squat here spinning crafty labyrinths,
Jetting your filthy network o'er the globe?
You think to bind the future? Poor grey spinner!
Fate, the blind housewife, with her busy broom,
Shall shrivel at one sweep your giant web,
And leave a little naked scuttling spider!

—*Israel Zangwill.*

The last of the great despots has gone. William, King of Prussia and German Emperor, who shook the mailed fist on the European stage for a generation, has gone amid universal execration. A king after Charles the First's own heart, the last of the feudal monarchs, he was the best-hated man in the world. Till the day of his abdication the Kaiser associated the Christian God with his rule, and invoked that deity as the witness of his authority. Democracy, which had frightened the White Czar, and which had overawed the Sultan of Turkey, crouched quietly at the foot of his throne. Now, he is unpacking, in a strange house in another country, from a handbag, the battered crown of Germany.

A country which builds upon an outworn superstition must, sooner or later, rue it. If there was one thing certain about Germany it was that it acquiesced far too long in this divine right of kings. A hundred years ago the poet Shelley pointed the finger of scorn at "king-deluded Germany," and the terrible aftermath was seen in the world-war promoted by a neurotic degenerate who imagined himself as an instrument of "God" divinely appointed to the task of establishing Teutonic supremacy. "There is only one master in this country, That is I," he said arrogantly, "who opposes me I shall crush in pieces." And again, "God will guide the German people through battle to victory, to the goal appointed to the German people by Providence." It was the language of Tamerlane, or

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that of the megalomaniac obsessed to the point of self-deification. It ended with the royal oak of the monarchical forest crashing to the ground and dragging the kingly saplings in its train.

The Kaiser was fond of referring to his great ancestor, Frederick the Great. William the Second was the ninth King of Prussia, and Frederick was the third. There the resemblance ended. Dining with Queen Victoria, after the publication of his history, Macaulay said "the queen talked of her poor ancestor, James the Second." "Not your Majesty's ancestor," replied Macaulay, "but your predecessor." William does not descend directly from Frederick, but from the great king's nephew, Frederick William, who succeeded him, and allowed his Army to fall into such a state as afterwards to become an easy prey to Napoleon at Jena.

As for William's "sainted grandsire," he was, to use Bismarck's caustic phrase, "a lathe painted to look like iron." His mental processes were slow, and not in the least clever, like so many present-day politicians. It is said that, whereas Bismarck required the largest-sized hat, his Imperial master was accommodated with one that would have fitted a schoolboy. The ex-Kaiser's versatility came to him through his mother, the Princess Royal of England, and the daughter of Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, the husband of Queen Victoria.

Powerful as he was, the Kaiser never realized one of his dearest ambitions. It was always his wish to be not German Emperor, but the Emperor of Germany. He found, however, the other Teuton princes less amenable than the democracy of his nation, and to the end he remained the uncrowned German Emperor, not the crowned Emperor of Germany. When the subject was discussed in the presence of Bismarck, the old statesman said, "Sausage is sausage, whatever the name." He had made a nation in twenty years, and was indifferent to mere titles.

Such a man as the ex-Kaiser brooked no rivals. When he ascended the throne, the mighty figure of Bismarck dwarfed him, and he dropped the pilot. Yet the revelations of the Moltke-Harden trial showed that the "god-inspired" monarch was the puppet of the subtlest and most insidious of influences.

It was the German military leaders, and the consenting Kaiser, who made the World-War, which cost millions of lives and countless treasure, and has shaken civilization to its base. And the God-anointed William was an infamous man. He might have spoken the word that would have saved Belgium from martyrdom; he might have spared the innocent passengers on the *Lusitania* and other ships; he might have respected the civilians in the French and English towns. He might have conducted the War in such a spirit that his name should not have become a hiss and a byword throughout the civilized world. The crowning dishonours of his soldiers were his also, for he was their over-lord. Napoleon passed through Europe like a tempest, but wherever he passed the political and social air was left cleaner and better. For a generation he was our incessant and untiring foe, but he fought us in such a way that Englishmen can hang his portrait in their houses, and stand with respect by the tomb in the Invalides. But William has fallen so low that there is none so poor to do him reverence.

Germany is immeasurably better without such a monarch as the God-anointed Kaiser. Freed at last, may the old German spirit awaken, and the finer elements of the Teutonic character restore her to her rightful place among the democracies of the world.

MIMNERMUS.

Faith and Food.

WE have now, I believe, all received our ration books, probably for the last time, on account of the approaching peace, and during the next few weeks we shall be considering how to use our coupons to the best advantage. Many of the people I come in contact with waste their coupons because they do not take the trouble to ascertain how to use them on all occasions, and what to buy with them and get the best value for their money. I can understand some Christians who believe in prayer and faith wasting coupons, supplied to them by the Food Controller for their advantage; but I cannot understand practical Secularists making such a blunder, especially as information can be so easily obtained. I have been wondering lately how some prominent Christians use their coupons. For instance, the Lord Bishop of London is a bachelor. He has four meat coupons to use per week. Now suppose he spends two meat coupons from Monday to Thursday, and has a fish dinner on Friday, he has only two coupons left for Sunday's dinner. We can imagine him discarding for the nonce his shovel, hat, and gaiters, and, attired like a modern young curate, gliding into one of Lyons' restaurants and spending half a coupon four days a week on a nice light meat dinner; or, if he felt especially hungry, venturing into one of Lockhart's establishments and going in for a good substantial meal of beefsteak pudding, cabbage, potatoes, haricot beans, and some rice pudding and jam, for about one shilling. But still he would only have two coupons left for his Sunday joint. Now, we cannot suppose for a moment that the Right Rev. Father-in-God would pool his coupons with those of his servants, and thus get a bit more from each of them, for that would be a distinct infringement of the order of the Food Controller. True, as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, in principle his Lordship is a Communist, and believes that Christians should have everything in common—except, perhaps, ten thousand a year and a palace to live in.

We know that it was said of old that a man with the "faith of a mustard seed could remove a mountain," and no doubt the Bishop's income and palace are obstacles that he finds no difficulty in removing metaphorically when ever occasion arises. If, however, he uses two coupons during the week on "uncooked meat," I repeat, he would only have two coupons left for Sunday's dinner, and unless he dealt with a butcher who extended favour to a high dignitary of the Church, which, in a Christian community, is almost an "unthinkable proposition," as politicians say, he could only get eight pennyworth of uncooked meat for his Sunday's joint. Now that would be distinctly hard on a Right Reverend Father-in-God. But suppose he had meatless dinners all the rest of the week, he would still only have one shilling and fourpence to spend on his Sunday's joint. And when we remember that a prime cut is something like one shilling and eightpence to two shillings a pound, the Bishop's messenger or housekeeper would not require a large handbag in which to convey it to the Episcopal Palace. What I want to know is, how by faith could the Lord Bishop increase the quantity of his uncooked meat if he dealt with a scrupulously honest butcher? And in what way could prayer and fasting help him?

Of course, I know that if the noble Lord Bishop were hard-pressed he might get some sheep's-heart, some tripe, or some black sausages without coupons, but we could scarcely expect him to do this on many occasions, especially as the food controller supplies him with four coupons a week to spend on "uncooked meat."

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But, joking apart, there is a tragic side to the great food problem that is not understood or appreciated by the vast majority of the people. People with small fixed incomes, large families, and with little or no War bonus, find it extremely difficult to get enough food to maintain a healthy existence. They may have plenty of coupons but not enough money to pay the high prices that are charged for the common necessities of life nowadays. Thousands of poor people, therefore, have to subsist on food that has very little nourishment in it, and I have noticed of late that hundreds of poor women and children appear to be very anæmic and weak, and I have no doubt that is one of the reasons so many of them have fallen an easy prey to that strange but malignant fever called "Spanish influenza."

Most of the poor people I refer to are very religious. They may not attend church or chapel with any degree of regularity or display many outward signs of piety, but the mere mention of the name "Infidel" or "Atheist" would nevertheless arouse such a feeling of horror and detestation in their minds that any rational person would be easily satisfied they had not outgrown many of the primitive superstitions of their forefathers. These poor people have plenty of faith; but as a man by taking thought "cannot add one cubic inch to his stature," so neither can these people by faith nor prayer add one pennyworth of value to their coupons, or one shilling per week to their scanty incomes. Some people say that the masses were never better clothed nor fed than they have been during the four years of this terrible War. That may be true. I, for one, will not dispute it. But it has to be remembered that from 1881 up to 1914 hundreds of thousands of children—nay, millions—have had to be fed first by voluntary efforts like "the *Referee* Children's Dinner Fund," and afterwards at the ratepayers' expense in the various schools throughout the kingdom. And though they prayed every day to their Heavenly Father to "Give us this day our daily bread," if it had not have been for the generosity of the ratepayers they would never have got it. And I expect in a few months' time, when their fathers return home from the Front, and find some difficulty in getting work at anything like a subsistence wage, the children will have to be again fed in the schools at the ratepayers' expense. And how does prayer or faith assist them in this case? I remember once reading a poem in the *National Reformer*, over thirty years ago, three of the lines indelibly fixed themselves on my memory, and I have thought of them many times since. The poem was by Dr. Arthur Lynch, the Irish Member of Parliament, who has proved himself such a fine patriot in this great War. The lines ran something like this:—

> The cry went up for bread,
> "O my lord, it's a frightful doom,
> To be praying for bread in a mother's womb."

And whatever people may say to the contrary, it is a painful fact that thousands of children have been fated to hunger from the very moment of their conception. Their mothers have been half starved, and they have come into a world in which hunger and misery have been their chief inheritance. Let us, in the name of Humanity, see that children in the future have a brighter prospect of a healthy and happy existence, and we may be sure that this result will be brought about, not by faith in the goodness of God or belief in the efficacy of prayer, but by the thoughtful consideration of human beings for the children of the struggling masses, whose health and careful training will help so much towards making them the useful, intelligent, and happy citizens of a brighter and happier world than most of us have ever known.

Arthur B. Moss.

Acid Drops.

Now that the War is over, and we have had prayers and thanksgiving services from the Christians engaged in it, some of them are settling down to business and getting ready for more war if necessary. Thus, the *Daily Telegraph* of November 22, reports that a three years' battleship building programme has been approved by President Wilson for the United States. The *Daily Telegraph* cites the *Central News* as saying:—

> Should Great Britain decline to limit the building of warships on the ground that she has large colonies to guard, then Congress would wish to be in a position to authorize the immediate building of big fighting ships. Should Great Britain consent to cut down her programme, then the United States would consent to limit her fleet to its existing strength.

The extent to which these Christian nations trust each other is quite touching. But why limitation of armaments? The only way to prevent war is the abolition of armaments. The other plan only makes getting ready for war a less costly process.

Miss Annie B. Weichick, in a letter to the *Daily Record* on the "Real Jewish Spirit," says the Church of Scotland would do better to leave the Jews to themselves to find their own way to heaven. If these believers in God cannot agree here, how do they expect to get on with each other when they meet in heaven?

To commemorate the signing the Armistice several friends of Stirling Royal Infirmary have sent substantial donations to the funds of the Institution. This is a much more sensible method of thanksgiving than going to church to thank God for what he didn't do.

Sabbatarianism is dying a slow but certain death. The *Church Times* for November 22 devotes a leading article to a discussion of "Sunday Newspapers," the first sentence in which is as follows:—"The time is past for protests against the existence of Sunday newspapers." So it is; but will not our able contemporary go a step further and frankly admit that the time *ought* to be past for ecclesiastical opposition to the Sunday opening of places of entertainment? Sabbatarianism is a crime against humanity.

A case of "clerical poverty" was revealed at the inquest on the Rev. F. T. Minchall, Vicar of Cotheridge, Worcestershire, who was found neglected and dying from want and exposure. At the inquest the Dean of Worcester said the "case was not one of real poverty, for the deceased had enough to live on, and he was taken to the infirmary as a paying guest."

At a debating society discussion in North London on "My Favourite Book," one speaker selected the Bible and another pronounced in favour of his ration book.

The newspaper advertising campaign on behalf of the five million pound fund for the Church of England is being conducted with a vigour worthy of a better cause. Advertisements have appeared in a very large number of papers, provincial and metropolitan, and, obedient to the nod of the advertising managers, the editorial comments have been laudatory. The result is that the Church has muzzled most of the newspapers; for what self-respecting editor can afford to offend a good advertiser? Oh, the divine comedy!

It is not quite clear what "the business men of the Church" mean to do with the five million pounds they are asking for, should they get the money. Are the poor bishops to get a bonus to help them keep their palaces in first-class condition? Or may the organists, choristers, and church workers look for a living wage in the near future?

Miss Maude Royden, in movingly eloquent words, exonerates God from all responsibility for most of the suffering in the world, which would cease if *we* but did our duty;

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but after carefully perusing the good lady's passionate tirade against the selfishness of society, we are bound to ask, "Where, then, does God come in at all?"

For stealing a shillingsworth of apples, a railway employee was fined forty shillings at Westminster. For a similar offence, Adam and Eve were not only punished, but their descendants were included in the punishment, and the effects are to be seen to-day. This is the orthodox view of justice.

Purple passages in the press are often a joy to readers. One of the best appeared recently in the *Daily Chronicle*, under the signature of the pious Mr. Harold Begbie. Describing the Free Church thanksgiving service held at the Albert Hall, at which the King and Queen were present, the writer said: "'Our Father,' led by Dr. Clifford, had new meaning." A hasty reader might assume that "Our Father" was crowded into a frock coat, and actually upon the platform.

Folly is like greatness. Some are born to it, and others easily acquire it. But whether a man is a fool through heredity or by acquisition, there is no need for him to advertise it—although that may be part of his folly; in which case his position is more than ever deplorable. Now, Mr. Arthur Mee, who was once connected with a child's encyclopædia, and who probably still thinks he is talking to children, tells the readers of the *Daily Chronicle* that the Allies have "saved mankind from the loss of faith in God." Mr. Mee should tell that to the marines, or to the soldiers, and he would undergo enlightenment. And Mr. Mee is as well informed as to the cause of the War as he is as to its results. "It is Professor Haeckel who helped to sow the seed of the war; it is the gospel of materialism according to Haeckel." Now, we are not defending Haeckel against Mee. That would be like protecting the sun from the glare of a candle. We are only exhibiting Mee. And one can imagine reasonable people reading such drivel and, if they believe in God, saying, "Thank God I'm not Mee."

But Mr. Mee writes, "deeper than we knew was the depth of the bottomless pit." And the man who can write that is capable of anything.

A Derbyshire clergyman, the Rev. G. Hazelhurst, recently declined to officiate in a marriage with a deceased wife's sister, although the husband had been a widower. He told the intending bride that such a marriage was "wicked and immoral." Subsequently the pair were married by a Wesleyan minister at Bakewell. It is a pity they did not go to the registrar. But it is a piece of impertinence for a Church of England clergyman, who is really a State official, to decline to carry out the law.

With the approval of Governor Burnquist, the Angelus, or daily minute of prayer, was adopted as an all-Minnesota observance about the middle of last month. If the course was pleasing to the Deity, he chose a strange way of signifying his approval, for a big forest fire followed, destroying a dozen Minnesota lives, and 100,000,000 dollars worth property.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

We know what Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, thinks of God, but it would be much more interesting to discover what God thinks of Dr. Fort Newton. The reverend gentleman professes to be on the most intimate terms with the Supreme Being, and to possess the minutest information as to his daily doings. If God there were, how hugely amused he would be by the following description of himself:—

> "Let us keep God out of the War," said an officer to me on a ship far out at sea. It cannot be done. He is here, as my dear dead teacher used to say, in the mud and litter of things, toiling, struggling, conquering. He is no spectator, no playwright, no looker-on at the human struggle. He is here in it all, through it all, sharing our bitterest woe.

Formerly, the divines were firm believers in the *omnipotence* of God, but henceforth it will be their duty to dwell upon his *impotence* and consequent helplessness. Dr. Newton says that "God is limited," and Dr. Newton *knows*.

Innocence is always interesting—even in adults. We observe that Lord Crawford said in the House of Lords it was evidence of good management that he, "as an ordinary newspaper reader, was quite unaware that any censorship existed." Censorship of the Press is a poor business at best, and if our censorship had been as straightforward as the continental system, and left blanks where the excised passages once stood, everyone would have been aware of what was taking place, and the innocence of Lord Crawford would not have been exploited. But by closing the gaps in the articles, people were both misinformed and befooled.

A concert in aid of the Glasgow Prisoners of War Fund is to be held in the La Scala Picture House on Sunday, December 8. Let us hope there will be a large turn-out, and so justify the demand that this class of entertainment would be available every Sunday evening during the winter months.

Notwithstanding the protestations of the large and influential deputation from the Churches and other Christian organizations, Edinburgh Town Council have decided to provide Sunday evening concerts in the Waverley Market for overseas soldiers. Quite a knock-back to the Church, and a good hint to mind its own business.

The pulpits of our land are now ringing with extravagant pæans of thanksgiving and praise, the predominant note in which is "The Lord our God has given us a glorious victory." But has he? Is it not a fact that so long as the Germans had superior numbers and equipment we were far from winning, but that so soon as we had unity of command and could concentrate a superior force against our enemies the tide turned in our favour, and the end of the War came into sight? Nothing in history is more certain than this, that if there be a God he "is always on the side of the big battalions."

The attendance of the King and Queen at a Nonconformist thanksgiving service is a sign of the times. The *Daily News* was jubilant, and remarked that "King George might worship at Westminster Chapel with almost as much fitness as at Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's, for if he is an Episcopalian in England he is a Presbyterian in Scotland." Is the King a Catholic in Ireland, and a Mohammedan in India?

The clergy are sometimes accused of being quick-change artistes; but the following description in a daily paper of Dr. Clifford praying is really noteworthy: "At one moment this octogenarian looked like Homer, then like Darwin, then like Ulysses, and then like a nameless patriarch of Israel." It seems as if the reporter had been lunching freely.

The Vicar of St. Gabriel's Church, Cricklewood, has been appearing as "Hamlet" in a presentation of the play in the Church Hall. That is far better than acting the part of the Angel Gabriel.

The clergy tell us that the War was a chastisement from God for our sins. Some folk have turned this chastisement to their own financial benefit. At Christie's Sale Rooms recently a necklace of pearls was sold for £4,100, and a diamond and emerald ring for £2,850.

In a paragraph on the religious views of men in the public eye, the *Evening News* said Mr. Arthur Henderson is a Methodist, "who has had experience on the penitent form, and on the doormat at 10 Downing Street.

The conversion of the Chinese to Christianity goes on apace. A Chinaman at Gateshead Court was asked his religion, and replied: "Munition worker."

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 30, Maesteg; December 1, Ferndale; December 2, Llwynypia; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 1, Swansea; December 8, Garw.

T. BERRY.—The "tangible results" of Freethought work are seen in the breaking down of the power of superstition and in the growth of a saner human kind. You are impressed by Parliament going to a Thanksgiving Service when the Armistice was declared. To us it seems like making God responsible for the War. And in that case the less honest men have to do with it the better. As one writer expressed it, a thanksgiving service now is like rejoicing in a cemetery.

H. DAWSON.—We know we have your good wishes. Still we appreciate your congratulation on our "sticking so successfully to the best of causes."

J. SANDERSON.—Paper was received all right. Thanks. Your having sent 600 back numbers of the *Freethinker* to the soldiers was excellent work.

R. N. CRUDDAS.—We sincerely hope the desire that your child, whom you have named Charles Bradlaugh, will grow up worthy the name. It will not be the parents' fault if events turn out otherwise.

C. J.—We are obliged by your interest in the *Freethinker* and our work.

MAJOR WARREN.—Pleased to hear from you. It is a pity that so many should attempt to exploit in the interests of superstition, the misery caused by the War, but one can expect nothing else.

G. GERRARD.—We hope you will be successful in linking up *Freethinker* readers in Chester with a view to organization. We appreciate your good wishes.

D. SUTHERLAND.—Literature has been sent. Yes, it is something to have pulled through the War; but our troubles are by no means over.

MR. T. MARSON writes:—"Enclosed please find P.O. for four shillings and fourpence which makes the cost of my *Freethinker*, for a year, threepence per week—than which it is worth much more. You have kept the flag flying throughout the War; I don't think there is an easy time ahead, but the *Freethinker* will pull through all right with its present staff to pilot it.

"PHŒNIX" (South Shields).—We intend reprinting a number of things as early as possible. Conditions in the printing trade have not yet improved, and may not for some time. However, we are getting on with things, as you will see. Your getting six new subscribers is good work, and with you we wish all our readers would do as well—or better.

T. OSBORNE.—There are numerous works that give a general reply to and a general explanation of Spiritualism. But it is foolish to attempt to "explain" a statement as presented to one without some means of checking it. With the best of intentions a statement may be unconsciously "coloured."

GRATEFUL.—We deeply appreciate your concern. But please see our comment on Mr. Rickard's letter in "Sugar Plums."

F. SMITH.—Sorry we are unable to find room for your letter. So soon as conditions permit our enlarging the paper more space will be available for correspondence.

L. AUSTEN.—We are pleased to have your congratulations on having pulled through the War. But are we through? We have some hard times immediately ahead, and having got through so far with safety we face the future without fear.

S. W. ALABASTER.—So soon as printed will see that you are supplied. Your letter contains excellent news. Thanks for what you are doing.

A. W. SKILLING.—An exposure of Pastor Russell appeared in the columns of *Truth*. The office of that paper could supply you with the dates. A libel action was threatened, but never occurred.

W. BARNET.—We are pleased you raised the question of Secular Education with your candidate. We are attending to the matter, and seeing he is supplied with the required information.

"SCOTIA" writes that several Glasgow secularists have now joined the Secular Education League. We hope more of them will follow this excellent example.

SAPPER WALDER.—Parcel is being sent; hope it will prove effective.

RAMSGATE.—We should be very pleased to visit Burnley and see what could be done, if arrangements could be made.

J. DUNCANSON.—Pleased to learn that Mr. Palmer had a successful meeting in South London on Sunday last.

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.

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.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged:—£425 19s. 1d.; R. D. Side, 10s.; 2nd Lieut. H. W. Side, 5s.; Ede B. Side, 5s.; W. Barlow, 1s. 6d.; W. Lamb, 10s.; J. S. Norman, 10s.; G. W. R., 5s.; F. C., 5s.; H. J. Slack, 5s.; E. J. P., 2s. 6d.; E. Rickard, 2s. 6d.; W. Ambrose, 2s. 6d.; F. H. Curle, 3s.; T. Hart, 2s. 3d.; W. Cutler, 9d.; T. M. Brown, 10s.; Manchester Branch, N.S.S. (per A. C. Rosetti), 12s.; Mr. Goodman, 10s.; H. L. Wheeler, 2s.; Scotty, 2s; C. J., £2.; L. May, 2s.; R. Weston, 1s.; T. Marson, 4s. 4d.; F. (Aberdeen), 10s.: C. Williams, 2s.; "My Bit," 1s.; Phœnix, 10s.; Four Stalwarts (Naval), 10s.; Old Soldier, 10s.; Corpl. A. L. Smith, 4s. 9d.; H. L. T. Wheeler, 2s.; Mrs. Jortan, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. H. W. Irving, 5s.; Pansyite, 2s. 6d.

Per A. Vanderhout:—F. Hollingsworth, 2s.; B. Garcia, 2s. 6d.; G. Austin, 2s.; F. Howell, 2s. 6d.; W. Bennett, 2s.; D. Aberdeen, 5s.; V. Collins, 5s.; W. Smith, 5s.; A. Vanderhout, 5s.

Per D. Sutherland:—G. Gerrard, £2 13s. 6d.; W. G. Mortimer, 3s.; W. Carter, 1s.; A. Slee, 2s. 6d.; A. F. Trickey, 1s. 6d; Old Cestrian, 10s.; W. M. Tugman, 1s. J. C. Edwards, 2s. 6d.; D. Sutherland, 5s.

Per Sec. Manchester Branch, collection, 16s. 2d.

Total, £444 0s. 10d.

This Fund closes on December 17.

Sugar Plums.

Sunday's meetings at Leeds were a pronounced success. The handsome Town Hall, one of the finest municipal buildings in the North of England, was well filled both afternoon and evening with an interested and appreciative audience. Every point in the lectures was well taken, and quite an ovation was given to Mr. Cohen when he sat down after replying to opposition at the close of the evening lecture. The meetings had been well advertised, and everything seems to have been organized on an adequate scale. For this the local friends deserve all credit. Mr. Greevz Fisher presided with dignity and efficiency at both meetings. Visitors were present from Huddersfield, Sheffield, Bradford, Barnsley, Wakefield, and elsewhere; and in all probability the meetings will lead to work being commenced in some of these places. Mr. Cohen took with him to Leeds a nasty cold, but returned none the worse for his experience. The experiment involved considerable expense, and its success was evidence of what can be accomplished when the work is undertaken in the right spirit.

Mr. Cohen is having a busy week-end this week. In order to visit as many places as possible he will be leaving London early on Saturday morning for Maesteg. There will be a meeting of Freethinkers in the late afternoon whom he has been asked to address, with a public meeting in the evening in the large Town Hall. On Sunday he will lecture twice at Ferndale, and on Monday at Llwynypia—thus opening up ground in two new places. This will mean either travelling overnight or leaving very early on Tuesday morning in order to get the next week's *Freethinker* out. And by Tuesday evening he will have earned a night's rest, if nothing else.

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We are now in the midst of the Election turmoil, and there is a good opportunity for Freethinkers bringing their views before the public. Candidates should be questioned on at least four points:—

1. Their attitude with regard to the abolition of religious instruction in all State-supported schools.
2. The abolition of the Blasphemy Laws (such as the 9 and 10 William III., c. 35).
3. The complete disestablishment of religion, as in France.
4. The abolition of compulsory Church Parades and of compulsory attendance at "Divine Service" in both Army and Navy.

For over four years politicians have all been calling the universe to witness our devotion to freedom, and what we were prepared to undergo to secure liberty. We have now a chance of proving that our talk is not mere lip-service. None of these four points claim any sectarian or party advantages. They each involve a plain and simple act of justice towards all citizens. They leave all opinions on religion absolutely equal before the law. They affirm the duty of leaving the child with an unbiased mind, and the adult, whether in or out of the Army and Navy, free to choose the religion that seems to him best, or to reject them all.

Sir James Frazer has added to the debt all Freethinkers owe him by the publication of a new work on *Folk-lore in the Old Testament, Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law*. Like the author's *Golden Bough*, the work is a mine from which all students may dig, and while themselves enriched, leaves wealth for all. We intend, at an early date, dealing with the book at some length, and merely call attention here to the publication of a work that a great many of our readers will be anxious to possess. The work treats of the Creation, The Flood, The Tower of Babel, The Story of Sampson, The Mark of Cain, and numerous Biblical customs and legends In each case the reader is treated to a wide survey of corresponding customs and stories among primitive races. There are also a couple of deeply interesting chapters on Primogeniture and Unigeniture, which open up quite a number of associated subjects. The work will help still more clearly to emphasize the savage origins of Christian religions, and we hope that one day Sir James will do for the New Testament what he has here done for the Old Bible. As we have said, we intend dealing with the work at some length as early as possible. *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* is published in three volumes, uniform with the *Golden Bough*, price 37s. 6d.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures twice to-day (Dec. 1) in the Dockers' Hall, Swansea; at 3, "The Value of the Bible in National Life"; at 7, "Science, Religion, and Morals." Good audiences are certain, but we hope to hear that the hall is crowded out on both occasions. On Tuesday, Dec. 3, at 7, Mr. Lloyd lectures at Ogmore Vale, where a new Branch of the N. S. S. is being formed.

We have in the press, and hope to issue in the course of two or three weeks, a small volume of literary essays by our contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar. Readers of the *Freethinker* have for long appreciated Mr. Millar's essays as they have appeared in these columns, and many will no doubt be pleased to have them in a more permanent form. Mr. Millar's natural taste for the picturesque has won him many admirers, both in the *Freethinker* and other journals.

The *R.P.A. Annual* for 1919 is well up to its usual level of varied excellence. Mr. Eden Phillpotts opens with a poem on "The Fruit of the Tree," in which a good idea is well worked out, but ends with a rather lame line. Professor Gilbert Murray manages to say all he wishes about the War through the mouths of Aristophanes, Erasmus, and Voltaire. Professor Bury writes on the Censorship, in which he makes a rather uneasy defence of a bad institution, while the objection to a censorship is evaded rather than refuted. Mr. William Archer, Mr. McCabe, Mr. F. J. Gould, Mr. H. S. Salt and others complete the issue. The price of the Annual is now One Shilling.

Extract from a sergeant's letter:—

> The Battalion is being disbanded, and we leave this camp in a day or two. The C. of England parade this morning was somewhat interesting by reason of the fact that the chaplain, in saying farewell to us, lamented that his work had been a failure. It seems that the soldier can be compelled to attend the Church service, but he cannot be made to partake of the food provided for his spiritual and mental refreshment. The address would not have been remarkable, except for its honesty, had it not been obvious that the chaplain thought the fault lay with the soldier, not with him or the Church. Poor parsons! four years' of war have taught them nothing; but Tommy has learnt many things. If the afore-mentioned gentleman could have heard the latter's after-church remarks, he would have realized that. But few parsons have ever been sufficiently in touch with the private soldier to understand his mental make-up. Already the rank and file look forward to the day when there will be no compulsory Church Parade. Perhaps the padre's gloom was deepened by a vision of empty churches, for he looked anxious as he passed out, conscious of defeat, but sublimely, pathetically unconscious of the reason.

Mr. C. Rickard writes:—

> May I offer you my congratulations on your splendid courage in keeping the flag flying during the terrible time we have just passed through, and trust you will give your readers an opportunity of showing their appreciation in a practical manner in the near future.

We hope they will all show their appreciation *at once* by helping us to give the *Freethinker* the circulation it deserves.

The following reaches us from one of our naval units:—

> Enclosed you will find note, value 10s., a small contribution from four stalwarts on the above-named ship.
>
> I regret that the contribution has been so long in being sent, but you will quite understand that the exigencies of the Service are to blame.
>
> We all wish that we could be of more use to the *Freethinker*, but are doing our best. It may interest you to know that the circulation aboard has now reached twenty copies.

Mr. M. Westlake writes:—

> I am late in sending my mite, but, though undischarged, my duty was not forgotten. I owe the *Freethinker* a debt of gratitude, and regret that the help I can now give is but small. I am only a poor man, and for your sake wish it were otherwise; but although the world will benefit but little, financially, from my death, I think it but right to inform you that the *Freethinker* has not been forgotten. In planning the disposal of my small estate, at such time when I have joined the "choir invisible," nothing gave me greater satisfaction than the knowledge that the *Freethinker* would be amongst the few who would benefit by my death.

We can only say with all sincerity that, while appreciating to the full the spirit of the above, we hope that Mr. Westlake may keep the *Freethinker* for many years from benefiting by his death.

For some unexplained reason, Mrs. Seaton-Tiedemann failed to keep her appointment with the North London Branch on Sunday last. A fine gathering had assembled to listen to this lady, and, under the chairmanship of Mr. Collette-Jones, various members debated the subject of Divorce, the discussion being interesting and enlightening. To-day, Mr. Ben Purse, of the National League of the Blind, will open. His subject, "Socialism *v.* the Policy and Programme of the Liberal Party," is most opportune, and Mr. Purse, we hear, is a good speaker and debater. We hope he will have a large audience.

Will *Freethinker* readers in and about Chester be good enough to communicate with Mr. D. Sutherland, 30 Francis Street, Chester, with a view to organization and propaganda?

The New York *Truthseeker* reprints Mr. Cohen's article of September 8 on "Materialism," with suitable acknowledgments.

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Religion After the War.

The Church and the War—these are the two engrossing topics of the day.....From every rank of life comes eager questioning. "*Why* is all this?" "How can God permit it?" "Has Christianity no better record of its two thousand years than this murderous flood of evil deeds?—this cruelty, and lust, and bloodshed?" And the Church apparently cannot explain why Christianity has failed in its teaching, or why the blasphemous outcries of a ruthless tyrant are permitted to ascend to Heaven as excuse or explanation.—"*Rita*" *(Mrs. Desmond Humphreys)* "*The Wrong End of Religion*," pp. 3-4.

This War by its surpassing magnitude and almost incredible horror has.....compelled men.....to subject the deepest problems of religion to an analysis from which most of those who are attached to specific creeds would certainly have shrunk as profane before these floodgates were unloosed.....many of them are driven against their will to the despairing conclusion that either there is no God, or that He is not good, or that He is not all-powerful. If they say, there were a God, just and omnipotent, He could not have permitted this awful waste and suffering when he might so easily have prevented it all. They only feel irritated and insulted when they are told that they must submit without question and believe in Him in the teeth of evidence which they cannot controvert.—*M. H. Temple*, "*The Failure of the Church*," the "*National Review*," January 1918, p. 571.

Have the Churches gained or lost by the War? After four years of this barbarous and savage War it is time to look round and see how the Churches have stood the test. Have they advanced or gone back in public estimation?

We think there can be but one answer to the question; the Churches have lost enormously in prestige. A storm of hostile criticism is beating against the Churches. Books, like *The Wrong End of Religion*, by "Rita," *The Questions of Ignotus*, *The War and the Churches*, by Joseph McCabe, and the same writer's *Bankruptcy of Religion*, and many others, fiercely attacking the Churches, have been bought and read by thousands.

There has also been a deluge of criticism, advice, and exhortation in the magazines and the daily and weekly press. Never have the Churches been so faithfully dealt with, so openly and publicly criticized, denounced, and derided, as to-day. And as the daily and weekly press are very careful not to publish anything but what the public want, it may be taken that they represent the great majority of public opinion in the matter.

And the criticism often comes from the most unexpected quarters. For instance, Mr. Harold Begbie, the author of several religious novels, whose occasional articles in the *Daily Chronicle* so reek with pious sentiment—there is nothing to be compared with them outside the columns of the *War Cry*—one would think that he would be one of the first to rally to the defence of the Church; or, at any rate, of religion, from the attacks launched against them. On the contrary, we find him denouncing them in good set terms. In an article, entitled "The Rout of Religion," contributed to the *Royal Magazine* for August, 1915, after declaring that the War was caused by commercial rivalry. He observes:—

Religion could not prevent the war because it had not previously prevented commercial competition; it cannot stop the war because it has never attempted to stop trade wars, or sweating, or price-cutting, or trusts, or commercial selfishness. Religion has been a looker-on. It has played no active part in existence. It has occupied the seat of a spectator, or has been the considerate physician to those whom the battles of trade fling broken and almost dead out of the firing-line. Religion has never stood up to industrialism, and called it a devil. The tables of the money-changers are fastened to the ground; those who sell doves fear violence only from the Suffragettes; from the Church they expect protection.

He advises us to go through the streets of any of our centres of industry and study the faces there, "and ask yourself whether the wounds inflicted by rifle, and steel, are not cleaner wounds than the maimings of commerce .....look at the packed public-houses, the atrocious architecture, the dreadful clothes, the vulgarizing theatres, the hypocritical journalism, and the nauseous literature of these great centres of commerce. Who would live there, except to make money? Why has religion looked on and kept silence? Life's object is not the making of money." He continues:—

Is it so amazing, then, that we find in this war a man like Bishop Gore upholding British arms, a man like Eucken upholding German arms, a man like the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris upholding French arms, and the priests of Bavaria to a man upholding German arms? Catholics are slaughtering Catholics; Protestants are slaughtering Protestants. The French soldier and the German soldier expire kissing the same cross and breathing the same prayer. On both sides men are singing hymns, reading the Bible, praying through Christ to the One True God.[1]

Mr. Begbie says, and we agree with him, "that men will take a more intelligent interest in religion," that they will decline to be fobbed off with the answer "that such and such is the tradition of the Church." They will say to themselves: "'Religion did not avert this horrible war; religion was powerless even to mitigate the waste and destruction of this hideous catastrophe; religion has really done nothing at all for the brotherhood of humanity.' They will reflect that religion has had a long innings, that religion has enjoyed enormous wealth and influence, that religion has had the means and the inspiration to make a brotherhood of the human race. Is it not certain that they will reject the existing organization of religion which has so disastrously failed humanity."[2] Mr. Begbie records: "I heard a well-known man say at a luncheon party the other day that what most impressed him in this War was the collapse of ecclesiasticism. He spoke of the Church's ignominious silence in this world crisis. No one contradicted him." Mr. Begbie says: "The present generation of Christians will pass away sorrowful and dejected." But expresses the pious hope that in the new generation to come the Church will be born again. If it is, there is not much doubt that it will be still born. For, look you, it is the fundamental dogmas of religion itself that are being questioned to-day, more widely and more drastically than ever before. God himself is being tried in the balance and found wanting. People are saying, "What is the use of praying to God for help if he was unable, or unwilling, to avert this frightful catastrophe that has engulfed the world?"

So far from the Church providing any intelligible answer to this agonizing demand for a satisfactory explanation of God's indifference or ill-will, says Mr. H. Temple, "Such authority as exists in the Church of England has occupied itself with the beatification of that very doubtful character Charles the First, and with the expurgation from the Psalter of certain verses which never seemed more appropriate than at the present time. But of anything like an organized effort to come to the help of the people whose faith is being shaken to its foundations by this grim but most undeniably real figure of war, there is hardly a trace."[3]

Another writer, who attacks the Church as the opponent of true religion, observes:—

The pagan Greeks of old were honest enough to close their temples of peace when the nation went to war,

[1] Harold Begbie, "The Rout of Religion," The *Royal Magazine*, p. 350. [2] *Ibid*, p. 351.

[3] M. H. Temple, "The Failure of the Church," the *National Review*, January, 1918; p. 572.

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and kept them closed until peace was restored. Not so the modern representatives of what is euphemistically called Christianity. Far from having any religious objections to warfare from the Christian standpoint, the preaching fraternity, as usual, showed a united front in favour of the international slaughter.....the parsons and priests of the various brands of Christianity represented in the several belligerent countries at once plumped for bloodshed, declared God to be on their side, and began at once to pray to the Prince of Peace for victory. What can the God of orthodox Christianity be expected to do in such an extremity? Obviously, He cannot answer the prayers of all the Allies and those of their enemies at the same time. The gravity of His situation would be intense if the humour of it were not so apparent.[1]

And having beaten the patriotic drum from the pulpit, the Church straightway obtained exemption from military service for its clergy—a class of men who produce nothing; are, in fact, parasites on the nation, who could be more easily spared than any class in the community, and yet declined to serve their country in the hour of its most desperate need.

As Mr. M. H. Temple observes:—

> The original refusal by the Anglican Bishops to allow the younger clergy to join the ranks when the first call came for men was a mistake which inevitably emphasized the divorce between the clergy and the people.....If, as Article 37 asserts, "it is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars," why were the younger clergy forbidden to serve in a war so just as this, and at a time when the need for men was so imperative?

In my opinion, as a mere matter of policy, the Church made a fatal mistake here, and lost the last shred of respect the ordinary man still retained for her.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."

(Continued from p. 605.)

ANOTHER glaring instance of question-begging is given in the phrase "psychical energy." If the phrase were used simply as a metaphor to denote the mental state of restless striving and action which accompanies pent-up neural energy of vigorous youth and health, no exception whatever could be taken to it. *All* mental states or processes are expressed in terms of physical similes, however effaced by now may be their birth-marks—so artificial a "creation" is man's world of ideas or thought.

Dr. McDougall, however, does not use it as a term of descriptive analogy, but as expressive of something which has a fundamental affinity or kinship with physical energy, for they are assumed or declared to be *mutually transmutable*.

We have, therefore, a right to ask, What *is* this "psychical energy"—what are its attributes? What property has it which identifies it with energy and entitles it to be denoted by it, and in what way does it differ from it?

There is no ambiguity as to the meaning of physical energy. It is "that which can do work"—that is, overcome physical resistance either of "force" or of inertia. In other words, it is that which can effect spatial displacement or movement.

Now, can "psychical energy" produce movement or strain in physical substance? If it can, why call it "psychical"? If it cannot, why call it "energy"?

To discuss its transmutability is therefore as disingenuous as the thing itself is gratuitous and baseless.

[1] W. Bell, *The Exodus from Houndsditch;* 1916; pp. 11, 12.

Another potent "argument" is to cast doubt upon established generalizations of science, which directly negative his pet "soul" theory.

He speaks most disparagingly of the premier and best established principle of science—"The Conservation of Energy." He refers to it as "merely a generalized statement of an empirically established fact."

That which rests on the solid *bed-rock* of uniform human experience, to which there is not a single recorded exception, is scoffed at as "empirical," while the guesses of the perfervid imaginations of ignorant and blind fanatics, which have not the empirical basis of even *one* demonstrable fact, are held up to honour.

He sneers at the phrase "potential energy" as a "convenient fiction."

It is difficult to refer to this jibe without apparent discourtesy. One is at a loss to know whether to regard it as a "cheap sneer" over the crude efforts of science at naming things in the days of its youth, or to his having no clear conception of the meaning of "energy."

The term "potential" as applied to energy is obviously crude and misleading. The energy usually referred to by the term is in no sense "potential." It is as actual as the kinetic form. When the term was first used by infant science, energy was conceived as that which is possessed by *mass in motion*. And the word "potential" had reference to the word "kinetic" rather than to the word "energy." It is an instance of an unfortunate act of wrong-naming a thing, as was often the case with infant science. Energy has two distinct forms: the kinetic and the static; one is due to mass-motion or momentum, the other to position or strain. A spatial element is equally essential to either kind—as displacement in the one and as movement in the other; both of which are familiarly exemplified in the swing of a pendulum, during which they alternate at every instant, as it paces and re-paces its arc. But the one form is just as much energy as the other—a fact which makes Dr. McDougall's disdainful comment sorry reading.

In the same question-begging strain Dr. McDougall devotes some space to "proving" that the "inconceivability" of the notion of transmutation of "psychical energy" into the physical and *vice versa* does not imply the impossibility of the process. I agree; but it is a question-begging discussion and settles nothing. Such a plea helps the Materialistic view more than it does his own. In the case of the "Materialist" the inconceivability of the "movements and gyrations of atoms becoming states of consciousness" is usually urged as the fatal gap in his theory. If, therefore, "inconceivability" is no barrier to itself, the main objection to "Materialism" is gone. The Materialist has no gratuitous figment on the other side of the gap with which he must try and correlate it.

Dr. McDougall's first task is to produce evidence of the existence of his postulate—the soul of its energy. It is then, and only then, will it be relevant to discuss the "conceivability" of transmutations between plupical and psychic.

(To be concluded.) KERIDON.

Correspondence.

FREETHINKERS AND THE GENERAL ELECTION.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—For some mysterious reason the Prime Minister has decided not to wait till the general treaty of Peace is signed, but to launch forth on a General Election for a new Parliament before Christmas. Naturally and rightly we are all highly enthusiastic in having shattered the power of the Militarist caste in the West, which, supported by all the forces of a reactionary superstition, has, for over forty years, held

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the nations in thrall. But in placing within the reach of all that priceless liberty and freedom for which our brethren have so gloriously fought, suffered, and died, let us not be unmindful of the fact that complete liberty and equality in matters of religion has still to be won at home.

It must be clear to all that the new Parliament will be faced with tremendous issues. The Churches are already on the war-path, and it behoves all who believe in the supremacy of reason and man's unconquerable mind to be on the alert lest the best of causes suffer a setback. Therefore, I would urgently impress upon all Freethinkers, Positivists, Rationalists, and Progressive thinkers the vital necessity of forcing from all candidates an unequivocal declaration of their attitude to the following questions:—

Whether the candidate is in favour of and will actively support measures for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England, and the abolition of all tithes, and resolutely oppose every effort to endow any religious sects at the public expense.

Whether he will support the complete elimination of clerical control in every form in the education of children, and a policy which will give the child of the poorest member of the community an equal opportunity in every respect with the child of the rich man to rise to the highest rung of the educational ladder.

Whether he will support the complete repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and will urge the removal of all restrictions interfering with complete freedom of speech and writing.

If all your readers will make a point of insisting upon straightforward answers to the above questions they will be doing a great service in enlightening public opinion and forwarding the progress of the cause we all have at heart.

Frederic W. Walsh.

LIFE AFTER DEATH.

Sir,—In an article in the *Daily Chronicle* of the 5th inst., Sir A. Conan Doyle asserts that Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism have been proved beyond a shadow of possible doubt. These phenomena consist mostly of certain movements of material things, table-turning and the like, without any apparent material power to cause them. Granted that such phenomena occur, it by no means follows that because the material power is not apparent therefore it is not there. Any professional conjurer can do things quite as mysterious without any appeal to spiritual forces, and the late Mr. Maskelyne once offered to bet £1,000 that he would reproduce any of the Spiritualist physical phenomena by material means—a bet which was never accepted by the Psychical Research Society.

Apart from such phenomena, however, it remains for Spiritualists to furnish some reasonable explanation as to why the communications received from the spirits of the departed are invariably of the most silly character, and utterly useless in clearing up questions of great interest and importance. Many innocent persons have been accused of murder, and, indeed, actually hanged, when a communication from the spirit of the murdered person might have prevented such a gross miscarriage of the law. Again, the mystery of Edwin Drood has been a puzzle to the literary world for many years, yet a communication from the late Charles Dickens could easily solve it. Ships, with their whole crews, have been lost mysteriously at sea, yet no word of explanation has come from the spirit world—why?

G. O. Warren, Major (retired).

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on November 21.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Eagar, Kelf, Leat, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Pitcher, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received for Coventry, Glasgow, West Ham, and the Parent Society—eleven in all.

A letter was received from Miss Alma Stanley tendering her resignation as Vice-President and member of the Executive. It was resolved that the resignation be accepted with regret, and a letter written to Miss Stanley expressing the Executive's appreciation of her past loyal services.

The President reported the result of the Special Conference held at Birmingham was that the scheme of re-organization presented by the Special Committee had been carried with a few alterations.

A request from the Conference that certain minutes of October 31 be expunged was not complied with.

It was proposed that a Committee to consider the division of groups and areas as provided for in the new Constitution be elected, but after discussion it was decided that this and other matters remitted to the Executive by the Conference should stand adjourned.—E. M. Vance, *General Secretary*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

Metropolitan Secular Society (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, W., near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Dales, "Materialism."

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. Ben Purse (National League of the Blind), "Socialism *v.* The Policy and Programme of the Liberal Party." Open Debate.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7.30, Mr. F. Shaller, "Freewill."

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Mordaunt Shairp, B.A., "Verhaeren: Two Plays—'The Cloister,' 'The Dawn.'"

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Yates, Kells, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Barnsley Branch N. S. S. (Irving's Studio, 48 Sheffield Road): Tuesday, December 3, 7.30, "Soldiers and Secularism."

Ferndale (Workmen's Hall): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 2.30, "The Challenge of Unbelief"; 7, "Do the Dead Live?"

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. F. H. Haywood, "Secular Education, or Something Better." (Those interested in the education of the child are invited to come and hear Dr. Hayward's solution of the Religious Difficulty.)

Llwynypia. December 2, 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Do the Dead Live?"

Maesteg Branch N. S. S., November 30, South Wales Committee will be held at the Plasmewdd Restaurant (near G. W. Railway Station) at 5.30. Mr. Chapman Cohen, will be present. 6.30, Maesteg Town Hall, C. Cohen, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Delegate's Report of Birmingham Conference. Members attendance earnestly requested.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. F. H. Whitehouse, "The Survival of the Fittest *v.* Self-Sacrifice."

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, First Floor, Fowler Street): Mr. R. Chapman, 6.30, Conference Report; 7, "Mary Wollstonecraft."

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, Swansea): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "The Value of the Bible in National Life"; 7, "Science, Religion, and Morals."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and Death.—The Editor	625
Metaphysics.—J. T. Lloyd	626
The Freethought Orators.—Mimnermus	627
Religion After the War.—W. Mann	628
Religion: The Loveless and Limiting.—Ignotus	629
Religion and Life.—E. Lyttelton	632
Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."—Keridon	633
The Hour-Glass.—J. Fothergill	633
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Death.

It is false to say that death is the supreme test of character. That is a philosophy preached to cowards by fools or knaves. The true test of a man is not death but life; for how a man will face death will be determined by his character, and character is not a thing of the moment. It begins with each one in the cradle, and the call of death is only the occasion for a last expression of its quality. But on the observer death has its inevitable and universal reaction. A tribute of silence, if not of respect, is wrung from all. Instinctively the voice is lowered, the manner becomes quieter, the most thoughtless recognize the presence of one of the great—perhaps one of the most significant—facts of existence. A world without death is an inconceivable world. It would be a place in which affection would die of inanition, where before and after would almost lose their meaning. Love finds its occasion in birth, but it is deeply rooted in the complementary fact of death.

* * *

A Good Beginning.

For over four years death has been more than usually busy in our midst. War, famine, and disease have been active. Never before has the grim reaper swung his scythe with such vigour; never before, and in so short a time has he reaped so rich a harvest. In France scores of thousands of our kith and kin lie buried. The dead have given their all, and the living can give them nothing in return but affectionate and respectful remembrance. The whole nation is at one here, and it is fitting that some attempt should be made to preserve and to clothe with some sign of outward dignity the places where our dead lie so thickly. It is, therefore, only just that the care of these graves should be taken from the hands of private individuals, and made the concern of the nation as a whole. So far the Imperial War Graves' Commission is well conceived. So, also, it is good to find Sir F. Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, in his just-issued report on the care and treatment of these cemeteries, recommending that private memorials be not allowed. It is well that in this matter individual caprice and wealth should be eliminated. Sir Frederic well says:—

> The sacrifice of the individual is a great idea and worthy of commemoration; but the community of sacrifice, the service of a common cause, the comradeship of arms which has brought together men of all ranks and grades—these are greater ideas which should be commemorated in these cemeteries where they lie together.

That is well put; and a logical carrying out of the idea would have been the recommendation of a monument which should eliminate everything of a sectional or sectarian character. Service in a common cause should be symbolized in a way that would strike no jarring note, and rouse no mocking or contemptuous spirit.

* * *

With a Bad Ending.

An earlier recommendation, from Sir E. Luyten, was that the memorial in each cemetery should take the form of "one great fair stone" raised on three steps, with suitable inscriptions. This, says Sir Frederic Kenyon, goes "far to meet our requirements," but it is not enough—

> It lacks the definitely Christian character, and it does not represent the idea of self-sacrifice. For this the one essential symbol is the Cross. The Jews are necessarily interred with their Christian comrades, but it is believed that their feelings will be satisfied by the inclusion of their religious symbol in the design of their headstones.

But, in the name of all that is sensible, why should this national memorial to the nation's dead have a definitely Christian character? Does Sir Frederic wish us to infer that they who are dead had all a definite Christian conviction while alive? Sir Frederic must know, as everyone else does, that the vast majority of the soldiers thought very little about Christianity, one way or the other. And of those who did think, a by no means negligible number thought of it only to reject it. Surely the "service of a common cause," in which these men died, was not the service of the Churches. How many would have died for that cause? And by what moral right will the Graves Commission erect a cross above the grave of men who while living repudiated the cross and Christianity? It is an outrage on the dead. Sir Frederic may reply that the majority of the dead were Christians. Let it go at that. But right or wrong, decency and indecency are not determined by questions of majority and minority. An injustice must be done to an individual if it is done at all. These men died in "the service of a common cause." Sir Frederic Kenyon, in the interests of a discredited and a dying creed, repays their sacrifice by almost an insult.

* * *

Exploiting Death.

Clerical influence, we feel sure, is behind it all, and it quite accounts for the impertinence of the suggestion. Only the Cross can represent the idea of self-sacrifice! Was the Cross responsible for the self-sacrifice of the French soldier and the French people—whose sufferings were a hundredfold greater than ours? What of the Mohammedan, the Jew, the Buddhist, the Hindoo, the men who went into action with "Atheist," "Agnostic," or "Freethinker" written on their identification discs? Did self-sacrifice mean to them the Cross? It is the arrogance of the Christian who takes to himself a quality

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that belongs to humanity as a whole, and stamps it with his sectarian mark. Christianity has for centuries made life hideous with its sectarianism; it cannot suppress its sectarianism even in the presence of death. Above the grave of the French soldier stands the inscription, "La Patrie." It stands to him for all that he holds dear—for home, for friends, for national greatness. Does the British soldier need more? Does he ask for more? No, it is not he who asks for aught else; it is the request of a class that sees in death little more than an occasion for advancing its own sectarian interests.

* * *

The Sign of the Cross.

And yet there is a grim, even though unconscious, irony in erecting the Cross over these huge repositories of the nation's dead. For the War, with its twenty millions of killed and wounded, represents the part product of over fifteen centuries of the rule of the Cross. The most contented people under the Cross have always been dead ones. It has stood as a sanction for some of the worst outrages that the history of the past fifteen centuries has furnished. When two civilizations were blotted out in South America, and nearly three million natives killed, the banner of the Cross floated above the ruins and over the corpses of the people. When Christian Spain murdered thousands of its Mohammedan and Jewish subjects, and robbed and expelled the remainder, what, again, was the symbol employed? The Cross. When the streets of Paris ran red with the blood of a St. Bartholomew massacre, and the fires of our own Smithfield blazed around the limbs of heretics, it was under the shadow of the Cross. It was held aloft over the horrors of the black slave trade, and over the fiendish brutality of the Inquisition. It has provided the occasion for bitterness and brutality in Ireland for over three centuries. It has divided families and set nations at each others' throats. And now it is to stand as a symbol over the graves of hundreds of thousands in France. A symbol of what? The thoughtful man or woman of the next generation may well see in it the symbol of the the failure of a religion that possessing almost fabulous resources demonstrated its own dishonour in the world-war of the twentieth century. The satire of its erection will be lost on the dead. Let us earnestly hope its significance will be fully recognized by the living.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Metaphysics.

MR. J. DOWELL JONES, in a letter which appeared in this journal for November 24, in a perfectly friendly manner, finds fault with me for placing metaphysics on a level with "dogmatism." I have no recollection of ever having committed such an offence, and I am quite certain that I did not intend to do so in my article on "Experience as Argument," which is to be seen in the issue for November 10. However, I am grateful to Mr. Jones for affording me an opportunity to express my views on the important subject of Metaphysics. My critic regards my supposed attitude to it as symbolic of a weakness in the Freethought position generally. Every scholar is aware that *metaphysics* is the term which Andronicus of Rhodes is supposed to have applied to those writings of Aristotle that came *after* the *physics*, and that, therefore, it merely indicated the place of those writings in that edition of his works, but was not intended to be descriptive of their nature. Later, mystics of the Neo-Platonic school maintained that it signified *beyond*, not merely *after*, physics. In the work thus called, Aristotle treats of the principles of Being, as such, and of theology, or the existence of God. In other words, metaphysics concerns itself with subjects which lie beyond experience and knowledge, but which have been the pet toys of speculative jugglers in all generations. Mr. Jones refers to certain "facts" which, "even in the present age of scientific progress, can only be investigated metaphysically"; but those facts are entirely unknown to me. The existence of "those infinite things that we to-day are unable to comprehend," is an assumption, not a fact. Is it not likely that my friend has ventured a little beyond his depth here? He says: "It is impossible for us to conceive of space and time as finite, and yet the Infinite is necessarily beyond our knowledge." Then, as if he had already forgotten that sentence, he adds: "To this same sphere—that of the conceivable but incomprehensible—appear to belong love, life, truth, goodness." Can the same sphere be at once conceivable and inconceivable? Be that as it may at present, the point of importance is that Metaphysics has not devoted itself to the investigation of facts, but to the discussion of questions relating to the nature of reality. It has been called a theoretical science, which, many Neo-Platonists declared, "could not be attained except by one who had turned his back upon the natural world." But it is a well-known fact that Neo-Platonism flourished only when dogmatic theology was prominent and the natural sciences had been forcibly suppressed. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of metaphysicians have been themselves zealous advocates of dogmatic theology, and it was certainly with this fact in view that, in my article, I placed the doctrine about God "a metaphysical speculation."

When Mr. Jones says that "metaphysical research is occupying so big a place in the Western hemisphere in these days" he must either be labouring under a delusion or attaching an unusual meaning to the adjective "metaphysical." I admit that in the nineteenth century there was a slight reaction in favour of metaphysics; but already that reaction is a thing of the past, and the natural sciences are everywhere all-victorious. Scholasticism, which was based on Aristotelianism, is now as dead as Queen Anne. This is by no means a faith-ridden age, but an age which, wholly dissatisfied with the unverified and unverifiable assumptions of dogmatic theology, is wistfully endeavouring to interpret the facts of life in terms of natural knowledge, and not of supernatural belief. I find that the generality of present-day thinkers are flying, for a solution of all pressing problems, not *to* but *from* religion; and to all such Freethought offers, not vain guesses, speculations, and hypotheses, but all the light already obtained and obtainable as the direct result of the scientific investigation of the mechanism of Nature. Mr. Jones alludes to people who want to know why memory persists in the subconscious mind, and what utility have experiences that extend over a lifetime if the ego ceases to be at death; but, surely, such "thinkers" look at social life through selfish eyes, and fail to realize that the utility or inutility of experiences is not affected by what happens to the ego at death.

I hate all dogmatism except that which inevitably accompanies actual knowledge, and I cannot see what justification I have given for the charge of being dogmatic which Mr. Jones appears to make against me. In the article which occasioned his letter I indulged in no dogmatism, but confined myself to characterizing all theological statements about God and his relation to human destiny as purely speculative dogmas. Does not Mr. Jones agree with me on that point, and is he not aware that the schoolmen regarded speculative theology as the proper sphere of metaphysics? I am, of course, aware that in Great Britain metaphysics is often used as a synonym of philosophy, especially by thinkers like

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Carveth Read, who regard philosophy as "the attempt to unite the sciences in one system, and to expound their mutual relations and the harmony of their laws. In his excellent book, entitled *The Metaphysics of Nature*, Professor Read says :—

> Positive philosophy is such a manifest demand of reason that almost at the beginning of European speculation it was felt by Plato (Rep. B. VII.); at the beginning of modern thought, by Bacon; since Comte the idea has become popular, and the first problem of the Positive Philosophy, the Classification of the Sciences, is now a common exercise. The great body of the Positive Philosophy (not merely Comtian) is constituted by those sciences which give an account of the genesis and history of the world—Astronomy, Geology, Biology, Psychology, Sociology: the Analytic Sciences, treating of the modes of energy or activity which the genetic Sciences imply, are,—Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology, Economics, etc.; the Formal Sciences, Logic and Mathematics, investigate the conditions of proving the relations and laws of phenomena in general, so far as proof is possible from accepted premises (pp. 1, 2).

Another critic of the same article, who has written to me privately, says he often detects bad logic in the *Freethinker*, but that I, in the article under consideration, have provided him with the worst specimen he has seen yet. This is the passage he pounces upon :—

> Mr. Lord is entirely mistaken when he affirms that religion begins in experience. The present writer is acquainted with scores of persons who have never entertained a single supernatural belief, and not one of them has ever had any religious experience.

And this is the comment thereupon :—

> That does not refute what Lord says. It confirms it. Lord might answer: "Well, if they have had no experience, I would not have expected them to have any religion, because religion *begins* in experience.

I may be very stupid, but with all due deference to my logic-grinding critic, I am utterly unable to trace the slightest illogicality in that quoted extract. Its truth is not questioned; but if it is true what it proves is, not that religion begins in experience, but that it never begins at all, in the absence of belief. Unless Mr. Lord or Mr. Harpur can produce a person by whom religious experience was enjoyed prior to his entertaining any religious belief my contention stands, not only as absolutely true, but also, because true, as entirely logical. Why are the people to whom I referred without religious experience? Whose is the responsibility for the lack of it? If there is a God, why has he never spoken to them? Whose fault is it that they are without knowledge of him? If through the influence of their parents and school teachers children are not induced to believe in God, why are they allowed to go through a life as Atheists? If their so-called Father in Heaven is not a myth, how can he have a moment's happiness while they are in total ignorance of him? Full well do the priests know that unless they secure the child they will never win the man. It is that knowledge alone that accounts for their burning zeal in the cause of religious education.

What I maintain is that God, the alleged giver of religious experience, is either a supernatural Being, metaphysically conceived, or an idealized abstraction; but, in either case, an imaginary creation, and, of necessity, no experience of him is possible except to those who believe in him. Consequently, and, of equal necessity, the degree of experience invariably corresponds to the intensity of the belief. In other words, religious experience owes its existence to metaphysical theology. Therefore, while I greatly admire many metaphysical systems because of their beauty, ingenuity, and subtlety, I attach no practical value whatever to them; and I agree with the following estimate by Ingersoll :—

> There is no propriety in wasting any time about the science of metaphysics. I will give you my definition of metaphysics: Two fools get together; each admits what neither can prove, and thereupon both of them say, "Hence we infer." That is all there is of metaphysics (*Works*, vol. vii., p. 17).

J. T. Lloyd.

The Freethought Orators.

> Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain.
> —*Ingersoll.*

What a volume could be compiled of Rationalist oratory! For near a hundred years the Freethought Movement has contained some of the foremost speakers in the country. From the stormy days of Charles Southwell until the present day the bead-roll of Freethought advocates has included men and money who could sway popular audiences as a musician plays on an organ. Owing, however, to the press boycott, scant records are to be found of some of their best efforts, although there is sufficient left to justify any claim of oratorical pre-eminence. To think of Charles Bradlaugh is to recall the personality of one of the greatest of orators; an artist in words who could rival Leon Gambetta and Emilio Castelar. His Parliamentary speeches were tame as compared with the volcanic orations delivered before Rationalist audiences; but, in spite of their judicial note, they are magnificent examples of their kind. Perhaps the speech on the Oaths Bill is the best—so suave and dignified—as befitted such an audience as the House of Commons. The address at the Bar of the House, too, is a masterpiece in its way; but neither display that Gallic fervour which was so marked a feature of his platform speeches. For it is the French orators, above all, who excel in this way. There is always logic and thought in what they say, and at the same time a volcanic emotion which can alone give it value for popular audiences, and enable them to turn votes by their eloquence. It was in the lecture halls that Bradlaugh uttered his most passionate appeals; there that the gage of oratorical combat was thrown down. A master of rhetoric, Bradlaugh could be solemn or volatile, grave or humorous, persuasive or denunciatory, pathetic or scornful at will. How magnificently these addresses would have read, only those who heard them hot from his great brain and heart can ever realize. For

> that fiery heart, that morning star
> Of re-arisen England, whose clear eye
> Saw from our tottering throne and waste of war
> The grand Greek limbs of young Democracy
> Rise mightily like Hesperus.

Mrs. Annie Besant's name leaps to the mind. How vividly do her speeches come through the mist of the years, recalling the time when she was regarded by the younger soldiers of Freethought as Marie Antoinette was regarded by the youthful Royalists of France. Ladies were scarce on lecture platforms in those tempestuous days; and she was queen of them all. When she chanted the Galilean's requiem, or retold in awed accents the awful story of Bruno's sufferings, the audiences cheered themselves hoarse in their admiration at her consummate oratory. At her farewell address in the old Hall of Science, London, after fifteen years devoted service to the cause of liberty, she made a most moving speech. Some of her audience actually broke down, and men were not ashamed to be seen in tears. For, in those far off days, Mrs. Besant was one of the most fascinating and impressive speakers it was possible to listen to—"O noble music with a golden ending."

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Bradlaugh's colleagues were men of exceptional ability. As orators, some of them rivalled their chief, and they richly deserve mention. Charles Watts was a consummate master of language, possessing a most persuasive style. I shall never forget my delight at hearing him again after his return from America, when his lectures were enlivened with witty Transatlantic stories, told with inimitable skill. As a debater, he was, to my mind, easily first of them all, and the reason was that he always wore the velvet glove over his steel gauntlet. He was urbanity itself in such dialectic encounters. Gilded with happy phrases, his speeches sparkled with effervescence and laughter, and became part of the intellectual capital of his audience.

George Foote's speeches and lectures had a literary touch peculiarly his own. His best lecturing period was during the time when he occupied the platform at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court Road. The perorations were wonderful, poetic, and illuminative. The pity remains that they were unreported. Of his published orations, the best is his defence before Lord Coleridge, and, in a far more intimate vein, his oration at the funeral of his dead colleague, Joseph Wheeler. These should serve to show his quality to a younger generation who never had the privilege of hearing the leader at his best. Ever a fighter, the sword was always in his hand. It is difficult to describe the vigour with which he swept off opposition from the field. He was the Prince Rupert of the Army of Progress.

What do we not owe to the fact that Ingersoll's orations were reported, and, in many cases corrected by the speaker? Easily the foremost orator of his generation in America, he flamed the evangel of Freethought over a continent, and, thanks to the reporters, many of his happiest efforts have become part and parcel of the language. In England his reputation is as secure as in his native land. So ardent was his love of Shakespeare that his own orations are enriched by turns of expression caught from the Master himself. Ingersoll's chief claim was his incomparable humour and intense humanism. Who can ever forget his words at Napoleon's tomb? He would rather have been a peasant, worn wooden shoes, lived in a hut, with his wife by his side, and his children on his knees, than have been Napoleon the Great. Recall, too, his beautiful description of a child's laugh—"the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy," and puts to shame the "harp strung with Apollo's golden hair." Always, he was the banner-bearer of Freedom—"liberty, a word without which all other words are vain." As one reads, one can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the beautiful and resonant voice. Under the glory of the rhetoric the trumpets ring to battle.

To-day the great Freethought tradition is carried forward by men and women of outstanding ability. They represent a type of public speaking carried to higher perfection than by anyone else. Let us see to it that their happiest efforts do not go unreported. For their life-work is a positive contribution to the conception of a new civilization, a world new-born. Our children's children cannot fail to enhance the estimation in which we regard these standard-bearers of Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others, this is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity.—*Robert Burns.*

Let us have more science and more sentiment—more knowledge and more conscience—more liberty and more love.—*Ingersoll.*

Religion After the War.

II.

(Continued from p. 622.)

From the day when we awoke to an adult perception of the life of the world we have been aware that the established system of settling international quarrels was barbaric, and might in any year lead to just such a catastrophe. How comes it that such a system has survived fifteen hundred years of profound Christian influence? Whatever we may think of the clergy of to-day, with the more powerful clergy of yesterday, we have a grave reckoning.

If they had directed to war the smallest particle of the ardent rhetoric they poured on disbelief in dogmas which they are to-day abandoning, the public mind would have awakened long ago. There is no intrinsic difficulty in substituting arbitration for war.—*Joseph McCabe*, "*The War and the Churches*," pp. 24-47.

In the early days of the struggle we grew accustomed to the reports of enthusiasiic chaplains and others who told us that "contact with the realities of life and death" had brought great numbers of the men of the New Armies back to the faith and practice of traditional Christianity. But after four years of war we are now told, by most interpreters of the signs of the times, that neither the Army nor the civilian population has been to any appreciable extent affected by what has happened since August, 1914.

We lament that our soldiers are not Christian in any vital sense of the word.—*Rev. Cyril E. Hudson*, "*The Nineteenth Century*," November, 1918, pp. 880-886.

AT the commencement of the War the Churches declared that the disaster was due to the Materialistic teachings of science. Just before the War, it will be remembered, the clergy, both Church and Nonconformist, were unanimous in declaring that Materialism and Atheism were utterly discredited, and nobody but the ignorant and vicious believed in them any longer. Then when the War broke out they suddenly discovered that the Germans were a nation of Materialistic Atheists! That is just another sample of the utterly unscrupulous methods adopted by the Churches towards those who oppose them. And the falsehood is still being propagated. I take up to-day's *Daily Chronicle* (November 19th, p. 2), and find an article by Mr. Arthur Mee, entitled "The Churches' Ordeal," in which he declares that "it is Professor Haeckel who helped to sow the seed of the war: it is the Gospel of Materialism according to Haeckel that was supposed to have superseded the Gospel according to St. John.....It is his god of steel that has been set up above all others in Berlin."

We hold no brief for Professor Haeckel. In all the years of our advocacy of Atheism we have never recommended, or even referred, so far as we can remember, to his much-belauded—by many Rationalists—work, *The Riddle of the Universe*. His use of the word Soul, where he only means Mind, plays into the hands of the religious. The same may be said of the claim that his philosophy of "Monism" provides "a connecting link between religion and science." We do not want any connecting link between religion and science any more than we want a connecting link between science and witchcraft or astrology. His description of Christ as "that noble prophet and enthusiast," so full of the love of humanity," is open to the same objection.

It may be said that Haeckel does not mean by "Soul" and "religion" what the orthodox mean. Well, then, he should not use the words.

But to say that the teachings of Haeckel had anything to do with the preparation or launching of this War is absolutely false. As Mr. McCabe has pointed out in reply to a Catholic writer, Haeckel—

> Is one of the few German professors who have for decades, in spite of the Emperor, drastically condemned the duelling and beer-swilling which sustain the military ardour of German middle-class youth. The influence of the Monists, as far as it goes, is emphatically on the

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side of humanity. But it does not go far. For a Catholic writer, who knows that there are in Germany about 20,000,000 Catholics and more than 20,000 Catholic priests, to ascribe the conduct of a nation to a few thousand unorganized Rationalists, with no salaried servants, is the depth of fatuity.[1]

In addition to the 20,000,000 Catholics, the Protestant Churches claim 38,000,000 members, and, as Mr. McCabe further remarks, "the only men to stand firmly against the war and condemn its conduct were freethinking Socialists (like Liebknecht). And in the face of all these facts our religious writers would transfer the guilt for the crimes of Germany from its 60,000 organized and professional clergy and their 60,000,000 followers to a scattered handful of Rationalists and less than two million notoriously humanitarian Socialists!"[2]

One would think, to hear some Christian preachers and apologists, that before the Christian era peace was unknown—that Christ brought peace to a warring mankind a peace which continued through the Middle Ages until the modern period, when the Atheists started the fighting again.

The exact reverse of this is the truth. Under the wise and beneficent rule of the Pagan Emperors, the famous *Pax Romanum*—the Roman Peace, was an accomplished fact. "During a long period of forty-three years," says the great historian Gibbon, "the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace. The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth."[3] This was from A.D. 117 to A.D. 161, more than a century and a half before Christianity became the established religion of the State. Gibbon declares:—

> If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and of wisdom.[4]

Never for a moment has the world been so governed since the establishment of Christianity. And this was accomplished with an army of less than 400,000 men. What would the ancient Pagans think of our armies now? They would declare that their verdict, that the new religion of Christianity was a wicked and debasing superstition, had been justified by the result. After Christianity was established by the Emperor Constantine as the State religion in the fourth century, the Church seized the sword, and used it to coerce other nations to the Faith. Christianity propagated itself by the sword; during the Middle Ages it organized Crusades and Holy Wars, and mail-clad bishops rode at the head of their troops, leading them to the slaughter. "Onward, Christian soldiers!" The Crusades, undertaken by the Church to obtain possession of the tomb of Christ, lasted intermittently for 200 years, and drained the resources of Europe of men and money Millions of lives were sacrificed in the mad enterprise. The Thirty Years' War of the seventeenth century was a wholly religious war: and yet, in spite of all this bloody record, Christians have the hypocrisy to pretend that the present conflict was caused by the teaching of Materialistic Atheism! But nobody is deceived, and the false charges of the clergy rebound on themselves.

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

[1] Joseph McCabe, *The Bankruptcy of Religion*, p. 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[3] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i., p. 8; Professor Bury's edition, 1912.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 78.

Religion: the Loveless and Limiting.

It has more than once been said that the noblest duty of Secularists is to add something to the sum of human happiness. But is it so? Is that conception of duty not even susceptible of extension? Yes, surely. Because if *human* happiness by itself is to be secured through the pain, suffering, and sorrow of beings that are not human, we desire no share in such happiness.

The whole teaching of Christianity regarding the "brute" creation is based upon the fundamental assumption that the beasts "perish." Man is immortal but (*face* Dr. David-Smith) his dog may not attain the golden shore. The Bible provides no place in the ambit of human affection for animals. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" "Doth God care for cattle?" And so on.

And, observe, it is only the elect of mankind—those saved by grace—who have been born again and been washed in the blood of the Lamb who are to have the dubious privilege of walking the golden streets. The rest go with their dogs. There was a custom prevalent in the Highlands among hunting chiefs for their staghounds to be buried beside them—the idea, doubtless, being that man and dog might in some unknown future hunt together in fields Elysian. A Pagan idea and a beautiful one.

How many fair young lives have we seen blighted and withered by a fervid embracing of the "faith once delivered to the saints"! The inhuman precepts of religion have turned the rose garden into a desert. The best thoughts of men are quenched by supernatural inhibitions. What we have got to bear constantly in mind is that these inhibitions were devised and enacted with the definite object of retaining power over the masses. *Death* was the sentence on those who aspired to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Human love is cramped and stunted and prostituted to base ends by the influence of religion. Young people are adjured, with abundance of florid and violent emotionalism, to love One whom they have never met—never seen—never heard—even on the telephone. Lay up treasure in heaven, says the Bible, and where your treasure is there will your heart be also. An injunction based on a sordid idea. The great ones—the wealthiest ones in the world—know well how to work the *spiritual* hocus-pocus so as to secure their own *material* ends. In the world that now is the poor may have a superabundance of spiritual nourishment—probably a synonym for the blessings of poverty!

Religion blasts or constricts human love. It is the refuge of cowards, and the destroyer of heroism. No matter what your record has been, if you are willing to be a devoted servant of Mother Church, she will connive at your past; nay, all your transgressions will be blotted out—like a thick cloud! Religion shelters the whining sneak, the slimy slanderer, the shallow-pated but cunning self-seeker. There is nothing big or courageous or free about the manhood that the Church values Blind and servile devotion is only possible to those mentally and spiritually emasculated.

There are so-called Agnostics who have made great names for themselves in the world, but who have bartered their manhood for their positions. There is no use in trying to mix oil and water. The power of religions consists in the power over material possessions. It matters not that eloquent preachers tell us a very different story. Religion makes man little, and it makes him a liar. It is a constricting, limiting, stunting, devitalizing thing. The Churches never rise to the occasion. When Attila is thundering at the gates, they are arguing about rules of precedence and the colour ceremonial robes should be! There is nothing expansive or uplifting or inspiring in religion. It distorts human thought and feeling by insistence on the reality of things unknown and unseen, and ignores the clamant needs of the factual present.

Ignotus.

For of waves
Our life is, and our deeds are pregnant graves
Blown rolling to the sunset from the dawn.
—*George Meredith.*

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Acid Drops.

A competition for winter evenings might be "Who Won the War?" There seems at present considerable doubt about it. A general impression appears to be that the soldiers and sailors won the War. But Father Bernard Vaughan says that Marshal Foch told him that God won the War. But as God is God of all, and no respecter of persons, it follows that God also lost the War. Then, again, a Parliamentary candidate in our division sticks up a big circular advising people to vote for him because "We won the War." But if God won the War for us, what is the meaning of three millions of our people killed and wounded? And why the deuce did he take over four years to win it? The position is certainly mixed.

Dean Inge, in a sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral, pointed out pathetically that the struggle in the world-war "was not between democracy and monarch, but between Christ and Machiavelli." This view suggests a duel, and not a fight between embattled millions, and, further, one of the antagonists would be nineteen hundred years old, and the other four centuries. We wonder if the congregation smiled at "the gloomy Dean"?

Canon Patrick Rogers, a Catholic priest, of Suffolk, has died from the effects of a fall while walking to church. There is not the smallest sign of a moral in this case; but had the gentleman been a Freethinker there would have been a very solemn one.

The secret of the singular and touching piety of Marshal Foch is out at last. The French Generalissimo has a Jesuit brother, and there can be little doubt that some of the stories of the great soldier have been coloured by the association. How, otherwise, should we know that the Marshal has under his tunic "a little crucifix hanging from a twist of twine."

The public has become accustomed to "potted plays" and "potted literature," and it looks as if the next thing is to be "potted" piety. The Rev. R. Pyke, writing in the *United Methodist Magazine*, suggests a time-limit for prayers, and criticizes invocations extending over twenty minutes. He complains that some prayers are "actually disquisitions." Mr. Pyke has been fortunate in his researches. Some ministers have the distressing habit of presenting a full and complete summary of the week's news at the Throne of Grace in the hour of supplication.

No less than 19,000 clergymen preached on drink-prohibition on Temperance Sunday. We wonder if all these gentlemen drink lemon-squash or orangeade in private life?

A daily paper states that there is a famine in hairdressers, and that, in many cases, people have had to cut their own locks. Does this herald a return to the tonsorial fashions of the Twelve Disciples?

An officer, says a daily paper, wrote from the East to his father, a North-West London vicar, "The Bishop of London is here, camouflaged as a full colonel." We don't see why this officer should sneer at the Bishop. His is a pantomimic business; the Bishop is simply living up to his part.

According to the *Times*, German Catholic newspapers foreshadow a complete separation of Church and State, with a stoppage of payment of clerical stipends. We hope this will turn out to be correct. It is no more than a measure of justice, although we feel sure it will be the occasion for a great many English papers to commence harrowing our feelings with stories of brutality to the Church. This occurred in the case of the revolution in Portugal, also with the disestablishment of the Church in France, and later with the abolition of the State Church in Russia. The man whose library is made up of his daily paper kindly forgets to-day what he read yesterday, and so is ready to swallow anything that may come along to-morrow.

The clergy like to turn things to their own account. At a Catholic church at Maidenhead the musical items at a thanksgiving service included "Rule, Britannia."

The star-turn at a special Y.M.C.A. service at the Albert Hall was General Townshend, the hero of Kut. Probably more people attended to see the gallant soldier than to listen to other items in the programme.

The dyer's hand is subdued to the colour it works in, and the dear clergy look at things from a purely (and sometimes petty) ecclesiastical standpoint. Here is the Archbishop of Canterbury saying that the one thing which aroused his indignation during the War was that it had put a stop to the ringing of church bells.

The *Star* has many good things among its "Asterisks." The following is a brilliant example: "Cardinal Piffl, who says a restoration of the Austrian monarchy is probable, seems well named."

There is quite a Biblical touch in the press announcement that Mr. Joseph Smith, the head of the Mormon community, has passed away. Five widows and forty-two children mourn Mr. Smith's loss. His income was derived from tithes.

Under the heading of "A Happy Conversion," the *Daily Chronicle* says:—"Formerly a hostel for German governesses, The Swallows, at West Ealing, was opened by the Bishop of Kensington as a home for unmarried mothers." Educationalists will note the delicate suggestion that ladies who have taken the wrong turning are superior to mere governesses.

The Roman Catholics are not far behind the English Churchmen in imitating the pushful methods of advertising so successfully exploited by the Young Men's Christian Association. Recently large display advertisements have appeared in the newspaper press, asking for support for Catholic institutions. It is all vastly entertaining that the agents of "Omnipotence" should be so reduced as to be compelled to imitate the methods of the patent medicine vendors.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has been saying some plain things about the Bishops—and other things. Speaking of the Bishops, he said: "Bishops may be estimable gentlemen personally, but politically and collectively they are a curse to the country. They have no place in politics. They ought to go back to the Church to which they belong." Another discovery made by Sir Arthur is one that we have dwelt on more than once. This is that "We in this country are more priest-ridden not only than in any Protestant country in the world, but far more than in any Catholic countries." We *are* priest-ridden, but our national capacity for humbug—where religion is concerned—induces us to pretend it is otherwise. Priestcraft here works by more underground methods—that is all.

Few will quarrel with Oxford University for offering to confer an honorary degree on President Wilson; but this seat of learning is sometimes rather reckless in conferring honours. Some years ago it gave the degree of Doctor of Civil Laws to—General Booth the First.

The religious world is taking to advertising in the press as a duck takes to water. Maybe the results are comforting to the faithful; but to the mere outsider it is a little disquieting to find an impassioned appeal for Sunday observance sandwiched between advertisements of Buggins' Baking Powder and invitations to use Somebody's Cure for Bunions.

With the people, and especially with the clergymen, who have him daily upon their tongues, God becomes a phrase, a mere name, which they utter without any accompanying idea.—*Goethe.*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 8, Garw.

T. H. GUNNING writes: "Hearty congratulations on your success in bringing the *Freethinker* safely through all difficulties caused by the war: outsiders can only dimly comprehend the qualities necessary for such an achievement. Although comparatively a recent addition to your readers, I have become truly appreciative of the truths so ably enunciated, and I wish you continued and increasing success in the killing of superstition."

A. F. THORN.—Card received. Hope to see you home soon.

W. B. D.—We don't wish anything of the kind, much as we appreciate the spirit responsible for the desire. We are content to see things going ahead.

W. J. CLEESBY (France).—We are sending a parcel of literature for distribution.

C. L.—We know nothing about it. While we value the feeling indicated by such a move, we hope it will not be persisted in. It will certainly not be with our sanction.

SAPPER RONALD.—Your previous letter never reached us. Probably it was torpedoed. Are we to return the letter you enclosed for our reading? If so, please send full address. The events related are peculiar. We have no doubt that other observers would have reached a different conclusion, and the value of the statement that there was no room for deception depends upon the observer. There is always room for deception, both deliberate and self-deception.

S. W. HAYNES (Durban).—We should be willing to print your article, but as it stands our readers would be in the dark as to what it is all about. It requires some information concerning the local circumstances which led to the article being written. We are returning the MSS.

W. J. BUTCHER.—We quite sympathise with your attitude, but we are bearing in mind other things of which you appear to have lost sight. The end will come soon we expect.

H. J. PORTER.—One day we hope to realize your ambition—which is also ours. Pamphlets are being sent. Thanks.

A. B. HARDY (Edinburgh).—Will this gentleman please send his address to the Editor? We have mislaid his letter.

W. HETSON.—We were not surprised, nor, we note, were you. Writing in the *Freethinker* for January 10, 1915, Mr. Foote said: "Calumnies fill the air every time Mr. Foote talks of change.....There promises to be much venomous opposition to any sort of change. Mr. Foote will therefore not throw himself into this herculean task until the litigation connected with the Bowman bequest is ended." The "herculean task" was left to us, and it would have been cowardly to have evaded it. And, besides, we knew we could count on the support of the party. For the rest, we did not look for a bed of roses when we took on the posts of President of the N.S.S. and Editor of the *Freethinker*.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: "Collection, Birmingham Conference," £1 2s. 6d.

"SCOT."—As you give no address we are compelled to answer you here. We deeply appreciate your action, and also your opinion that "we have done wonderfully well for the *Freethinker* and the Society during these trying times." But please don't think we are sentimentalizing when we say that it was not a period when one could afford to think overmuch of one's personal interest. The great theory was to revive the movement and place the paper on a secure footing. If we have done anything towards these ends we are content.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Freethought was busy in Wales this week-end. Mr. Lloyd was in Swansea on Sunday, and, we are pleased to say, had capital meetings. Mr. Cohen had a good meeting on Saturday evening at Maesteg, and another good one on Monday evening at Llwynypia, in spite of a torrential downpour. And on Sunday there were two magnificent meetings at Ferndale. The large town hall was well filled in the afternoon and quite full in the evening. Mr. Cohen was in good form, and every point in the lectures was well received by the audience. The two last-named places represent new ground, and there will be good work done there, we think, in the future.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (December 8) at Pontycymmer. We have no doubt that Freethinkers in the locality will make it a point of being present.

To-day (December 8) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30. His subject is, "The New World and the Old Faith."

Some time ago one of our readers, Sapper Povall, wrote us on the question of church attendance. Acting on our suggestion, application was made to the O.C. for relief from church attendance. With quite Solomonic judgment, the O.C. decided that the matter should be settled *in discussion* between the chaplain and the soldier. At the end of two and a half hours' discussion, the soldier was deemed to have so far made his case good, in the opinion of all who listened, that exemption was granted. We cannot say this was the *best* way of settling the matter—a soldier should be able to demand exemption as a right—but it is a good way. And if all chaplains were put through the same ordeal, we should see things. Imagine the khaki-clad Bishop of London trying to hold his own with a decently educated soldier!

A meeting of all interested in Freethought principles will be held in the City Studio, 3, High Street, Belfast, on December 13, at 7.30 p.m., with the object of forming a branch of the N.S.S. All friends are urgently requested to attend, and those in sympathy with the movement, particularly those in the country, who are unable to attend on that evening are cordially invited to call or write to Mr. John F. Lessels, photographer, The City Studio, 3, High Street, Belfast. We sincerely hope that all Freethinkers, both old and new ones, will see to it that so large a city as Belfast is not left without a representative Freethought organization. Other places in Ireland will follow.

Our contributor, "Keridon," pays his first visit to the Manchester Branch to-day (Dec. 8). He will lecture—afternoon at 3, evening at 6.30—in the Downing Street Co-operative Hall. We hope that Manchester Freethinkers will do their best to see that there are good audiences on both occasions. The lecturer deserves them. Tea will be provided at the hall for those coming from a distance. There will be a selection of music before the evening lecture.

A rush back from Wales on Tuesday morning, in order to see the *Freethinker* through the press, left the editor with no time to attend to anything but the most pressing matters. A number of letters are, therefore, held over until next week, and acknowledgments of contributions to the Sustentation Fund are also held over. Intending subscribers are reminded that the Fund closes on December 17.

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Religion and Life.

BY DR. E. LYTTELTON.

SIR,—I am reluctantly being led to abandon the hope of finding a common intellectual platform of agreement on fundamentals, for we are arguing, or tending to argue, on different planes: and there is no waste of time quite so abortive. It is extremely difficult to indicate even dimly what this means, but I will try. I think it possible that some of our readers may find it easier to understand what I am trying to say than you do. Anyhow, in the hope that this is so, I will ask for the hospitality of your columns for a few more letters, while I continue the statement of what Christianity is.

A word first about Humility. I was aware that there were *traits* in the character ascribed to Buddha which we should call *traits* of gentleness, and passages in commendation of such may be culled from pre-Christian writers. But first let me emphasize the fact that the virtue is something vastly more impressive and inexplicable than gentleness or want of arrogance. It is not a negative quality at all, but a wonderful power which springs from self-forgetfulness—the very quality which the Greeks seem not to have recognized at all, and the achievement of which is the most surprising triumph, perhaps, over our lower nature that man has ever reached. The Greeks preached "Know thyself" as a principle essential to a wisely ordered life; and Aristotle, the pupil of the prophetic Plato, drew a sketch of his ideal man, and we find that not only does this personage think a great deal *about* himself, but a great deal *of* himself. This differs *toto cælo* from the Christian conception of self-forgetfulness which I will venture to say is not only an amazing secret of strength but the most beautiful thing in character, except what St. Paul calls *agape*, to which it is too closely akin to be contrasted. In a Christian country you find instances of that striking simplicity which gives to the orator, the actor, the statesman in council, and the missionary as he preaches a wholly mysterious power. The Christian mystic alone gives any account of it as the fulfilment of Christ's promise to be present with His faithful followers; but the gift of self-forgetfulness seems to be native to others besides the conscious servants of the Master. In the case of many Christians it is not a natural endowment but a triumph of self-conquest, enjoined by Christ in the new command that we are to deny, *i.e. ignore*, ourselves—the most difficult conceivable, the most unlikely to have been invented by self-indulgent man; the most unpractical, Utopian order ever given; had it not been for two arresting facts (1) Jesus fulfilled His own order to the uttermost; and (2) promised to any who would trust Him that He would give them the power to do likewise.

Now, Sir, I am well aware that this sort of talk must be to you the veriest rhodomontade; and more than that, you are bound by fidelity to your own principles to rate it as rubbish, and doubtless, if you were not too courteous, you would say so. That is because we are not looking at the same set of facts: nor are we reasoning from quite the same set of assumptions.

To take the latter point. You remember I quoted H. Spencer's dictum that all knowledge is a verification of assumptions. It is a remarkable saying, because it was uttered at a time when scientific thinkers poured cold water on assumptions as such. Unless one began by denying that one assumed anything, there was no chance of being listened to by anyone who thought himself—as a great many did—to be a superior person. Subsequently, it was found that without assumptions not only knowledge, but life itself, became impossible: because you might condemn yourself in theory to live only by sensation, but you at once debarred yourself from forming a moral judgment on anybody else's conduct, or even on your own. Thus a reputable citizen who happened to fancy himself an advanced thinker—that is to say, as content to guide his actions by sensation only, because it was distasteful to him to assume the existence of an unseen world—was brought up short when, for instance, his own offspring betrayed unmistakable leanings towards gluttony. He was fain to admit that gluttony in a child is often the precursor of unclean habits in a boy; just as they are precursors of various ugly things in manhood, the Divorce Court or the home for inebriates. But to check the early symptoms he had to draw upon assumptions which not only were outside the area to which he had confined himself, but flatly in opposition to the principles he professed. He had to make an excursion into a region of obscurities where his goings became very unsteady and his voice sounded hollow as he spoke. In other words, he had to act on a moral judgment for which his materialistic principles gave no warrant whatever.

Similarly I conceive that I am throughout expressing judgments based on moral and religious principles, without which the judgment would be nonsense. You, on the other hand, draw all your judgments from a more restricted area; I am not at present able to say whether it is the Materialist's area or one slightly more extended. I should conjecture it is the latter, and the extension beyond the region of matter and sensation would be into the region of some generally accepted morality. For instance, if a correspondent were to send you an article advocating "Free Love," you would refuse it as likely to be pernicious to society: at least, I fancy so. Now, it would not be strange if by the same post another correspondent—a man of sanguine temperament—sent you a disquisition upon the eternal value of Tory principles, or on the desirability for each one of us of spending half an hour daily in brooding upon the higher life. I fancy the former would speedily find its way to the same waste-paper basket as the homily about "Free Love"; but I am not sure what would happen to the latter. It might depend on whether you conceive or deny that there is such a thing as a higher life: a form of existence above ours, as we believe ours to be above that of animals; and as to that I am still in the dark. But, anyhow, your action would indicate that you make certain assumptions dealing with matters extra-sensational: that is to say, drawn from what is sometimes called the unseen world, lying beyond all possible verification through our five senses. That is, I believe, a thoroughly reasonable thing to do, and, for my part, I find myself impelled to do it more and more. But when I engage in discussion with an Atheist, I find that while he invariably uses assumptions of the kind which show he is not a thorough Materialist, he rigidly bars out others drawn from the same unseen world, for no reason that I can learn, except that they are not verifiable by the senses—a reason which, in the other cases, he has discarded. In the case of yourself, or any other editor of a well-conducted and somewhat "advanced" journal, if my conjectures given above are correct, you would assume certain large principles about virtue and human welfare in morals and politics, irrespectively of any verification by the sense; and, what is more to the point, you would assume that there is such a thing as Truth in the abstract, yet in touch, so to speak, with human life; and that one or more of the contributions with which you were favoured was in conflict with this Truth, and, therefore, only fit to be "flung," as a Cornishman would say. In other words, you would, I should say, practically admit that there is a "higher" life; but, at the same time, deny that there is

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a Personal God. Now, this denial cannot rest on the impossibility of sense verification, because you show that, in the other cases, you disregard it. It appears to me to rest on an exceedingly daring assumption impossible to verify by the senses, or in any other way, the bald, barren, naked dogma that there is no God.

That is how the situation presents itself to me. Doubtless, you will correct my statement where it is incorrect. But, so far as I have gone, it is, anyhow, an attempt to explain why there is a great diffiulty in our arguing on the same level, or looking at the same facts from the same angle of view.

Next time I hope to grapple with the question, nowadays widely discussed, how do we Christians reconcile our doctrine of God with the existence of misery, strife, bloodshed, etc., on the vastest scale throughout the world.

Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."

V.

(*Concluded from p. 622.*)

Before I take my leave of the subject I wish to ask Dr. McDougall a few pertinent questions in respect to the "soul."

He pleads "ignorance" of any definite knowledge of it; and well he may, for the word stands for a mere vacuity.

But strange to say that this consciousness of "ignorance" does not prevent him from always alluding to it as if it were the best known of "knowable objects." He surrounds it with a bodyguard of question-begging queries, which have the effect, whatever be his motive, of diverting attention away from this confessed "ignorance," and despite of it, of insinuating a belief in its reality.

Let me therefore put a few questions in turn with the avowed object of directing the reader's attention to the fact which Dr. McDougall apparently tries to avoid—viz., that the term "soul" is an idealess word—a sound or symbol devoid of any ascertained significant meaning; or, if I am mistaken, let Dr. McDougall enlighten us by answering the following questions.

What is the "soul" as a distinct entity apart from "mind"? What is its function? The "ether" metaphor shed not a ray of light; it rather "made darkness visible"—it only exemplified the "divine art of obfuscation" *in excelsis*.

As he has not supplied a scintilla of evidence of its existence, how is he assured of it? If it be an intuition, why not frankly tell us so instead of buttressing it up with the travesties of argument?

What part is played by the "soul" as distinct from "mind" in the life of the following: an amœba, a worm, an insect, a snake, a cat, or an ape? And upon what evidence or known fact is the answer based?

How does the "soul" of a human embryo differ from that of an infant? Does it *vary* as it passes through the stages of childhood, youth, manhood, and senile decay? Or is it an *un*changeable entity?

If the former, *which* "soul" endures after death, and why? If the latter, how does the *im*mutable "soul" adjust itself into co-operation with *mutable* mind from the impregnated ovum through all its infinite changes till it finally disappears in death?

What relation has the "soul" of an idiot to an idiot's mind? Is its "soul" sane or insane? If the former, why does it not come to the rescue of the idiot during life? If the latter, does the soul remain insane after death?

Again, does or does not the "soul" share in the derangement of "mental structure" in cases of insanity and of cerebral injury? If it does not, why does it not *manifest* itself and take pity upon its "allied" victim and "come to the breach" with assistance while life lasts? The victim would not, apparently, be one whit worse off if it were without a "soul."

But as we are kept absolutely in the dark as to the attributes and functions of the "soul," possibly "sanity" is not one of its predicable attributes. Will Dr. McDougall condescend to tell us?

Does the "soul" of a genius differ from that of a dull person? If that is so, in what way does it participate in the mental activities of a gifted monomaniac—one, for example, quite sane in, say, a branch of science, and a hopeless imbecile in religion or spiritism?

In such a case, if the attribute be predicable of it, is the "soul's" sanity, like that of the mind's, confined within water-tight compartments; or does it alternate between sanity and insanity as it attends to the sane or insane section of mind? Or, as a possible third alternative, Can the soul be sane and insane at the same instant? For there seems to be no limits or restrictions to the possibilities of this mystic entity.

Where is the "soul" during sleep? Is the soul asleep too? If so, why? Is it subject to the physical fatigue? The mind is, which proves its correlation with the laws of energy. If it is not asleep, why does consciousness vanish till mind returns?

In short, why does it do *nothing* that is knowable at any period or under any condition during life? And why does it confine all its alleged activities to the time when life is extinct, when it is impossible to obtain any evidence of its doings. Can an essential factor or element of our being be so fantastically worthless and useless during life and likewise so grotesquely absurd after death?

This will suffice for the present, not that the "list" is by any means exhausted; but because I have little or no expectation of receiving any replies to them. For definite categorical statements would be as deathdealing to the "soul" as high explosive shells are to the body. The "soul" must on no account leave the protection of mist and fog. To come out in the open would be fatal. He will therefore, as is invariably the case with omniscient self-proclaimed oracles, adopt an attitude of supercilious silence. Should this forecast, however, prove inaccurate, I await his replies with no little interest.

Keridon.

The Hour-Glass.

It is the quiet hour, and, being in a sweetly contemplative mood, we turn and view our hour-glass. It is popularly supposed to be held by a gaunt old gentleman, who is also armed with a scythe, with which he at the appointed time mows us down. "There is a reaper whose name is Death," etc. We well remember the time when a contemplation of this apparition brought the keenest terror to us; every dark corner was full of terrible possibilities; we were ever in fear of the inevitable. But, thanks to the teachings of Secularism, we are now freed from all these unworthy fears, the saddest burden which poor humanity has to bear. We can now view our hour-glass with equanimity. It is a peculiarity of this imaginary article, through which the sands of time are ever running, that we only see the lower chamber! we can, however, estimate quite accurately the number of grains in the heap as it steadily grows. But the upper chamber is, in the majority of cases, obscured from us. Some have been allowed to peep through

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this obscurity, but mostly under tragical circumstances. Grand old Socrates saw his small amount of grains when he was handed the cup of hemlock by his tearful executioner; Francisco Ferrer saw the upper glass to be nearly empty when he faced the rifles in the trenches of Montjuich. But with all this, we think it well that we should from time to time remember that the sands are ever running higher in the glass. This will tend to remind us that we should ever be asking ourselves whether we are taking our full part in the emancipation of the race, which we believe can only be accomplished in accordance with the principles of Secularism, which "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." We sometimes wonder whether adherents of Secularism fully appreciate the significance of all this. It is an unmistakable profession, in which we conceive all our activities to be essentially limited to this our life between birth and death. This is fully in accordance with science and education. The work of Secularism is being carried on in all sorts of places; we can claim that even the Universities are with us. Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, in his Preface to *An Introduction to the Study of Social Problems*, says:—

> In a certain sense we may say that the principal function of Universities is the negative function of knocking nonsense out of people's heads and filling the vacuum with orderly habits of intelligent curiosity about the things that really matter, It is never the business of a University to propagate an opinion; that is the function of missions and clubs, of churches and parties. A University exists for knowledge, and, as the Greek philosopher pointed out, knowledge is a very different thing from opinion. A University does not dictate opinion, but trains the mind to scrutinise its prejudices, to dispel its ignorance, and to ground its notions upon a basis of tested knowledge. It opens the doors of hospitality to any honest exercise of thought.

We quote this to show that Secularism is a profession of no mean order. It is in accordance with the great democratic movement which is known as Western Civilization.

Much of this is, however, encrusted with the tendrils of superstition. The Rev. W. Temple can still say from his important position as President of the Workers Educational Association, that "beauty, goodness, and truth are things of the spirit and not at all things of the flesh." Here we have an expression, from high places, of the old barbaric notion of the separate entities of spirit and matter, with its usual laudation of the unknown and its implied degradation of the known, of the very stuff of life with all its handshakes and smiles, aye! and with all its sorrows and tears. The work of the Secularist is clear cut from all this, we must recall men from all these vain illusions. We must ever learn to look, and think, and to more and more understand the world. To understand the world is to love it, it is the home of our race, and it is useless to encourage petty views. We must keep ourselves well in hand and not confuse our idiosyncracies with the outside world. The great river of life will flow on, and posterity will smile at our extravagance; but we venture to think that it will look kindly on our little efforts for its welfare. Our happiness is, of course, purely an affair of this life, our religious friends assure us that life would be unbearable if there were to be no future life in which rewards and punishments will be meted out. This has no basis of proof apart from tradition, it is not supported in any way by modern knowledge. Happiness is best secured by being in accordance with proved knowledge, it is vain to endeavour to square life with imaginary assumptions. Let us rather provide ourselves with the power of happiness, which consists in a proper appreciation of the world. It has been well said that "he who understands the past will not be discontented with the present." Children are usually happy, their future unhappiness is largely the result of wrong teaching; they are taught that their home is not here; their minds are diverted from the real to the unreal, and a false estimate of the world is the result. Let us view the world as we would view a garden which we found in a certain state of perfection. It is capable of much improvement, but much work has been done in it, and it is sacred to us because of this. Our happiness will be best secured by endeavouring to leave it better than we found it. However, we turn to our hour-glass with serenity and view the heap of grains that calmly remind us of our duty, and whether it grows or has about reached its limit we will say with George Eliot:—

> Oh may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence; live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self;
> In thought sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge men's search
> To vaster issues. So to live is heaven.
> May I reach that purest heaven, be to other souls
> The cup of strength in some great agony,
> Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
> Beget the smiles that have no cruelty;
> Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
> And in diffusion even more intense.

J. FOTHERGILL.

The Grave of Keats.

I.

WHERE silver swathes of newly fallen hay
Fling up their incense to the Roman sun;
Where violets spread their dusky leaves and run
In a dim ripple, and a glittering bay
Lifts overhead his living wreath; where day
Burns fierce upon his endless night and none
Can whisper to him of the thing he won,
Love-starved young Keats hath cast his gift of clay.
And still the little marble makes a moan
Under the scented shade; one nightingale,
With many a meek and mourning monotone,
Throbs of his sorrow; sings how oft men fail
And leave their dearest light-bringers alone
To shine unseen, and all unfriended pale.

II.

Oh, leave the lyre upon his humble stone,
The rest erase; if Keats were come again,
The quickest he to blot this cry of pain,
And first to take a sorrowing world's atone.
'Tis not the high magistral way to moan
When a mean present leaps and sweeps amain
Athwart the prophets' vision; not one groan
Escapes their souls, and lingers not one stain.
They answer to their ideals, and their good
Outshines all flare and glare of futile marts.
They stand beside their altars while the flood
Ephemeral rolls on and roars and parts.
It shall not chill a poet's golden blood;
It cannot drown the masters' mighty hearts.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

There is hardly a man in the United States to-day, of any importance, whose voice anybody cares to hear, who was not nursed at the loving breast of poverty. Look at the children of the rich. My God, what a punishment for being rich!—*Ingersoll*

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More Popular.

In the preaching of Dr. Fort Newton on the Soldier's Religion, the *Daily Mail* has found the inspiration of a really humorous leader. It winds up with :—

> He [the British soldier] has shared in the greatest and last Crusade and passed through dangers which it seemed impossible to escape. Is it a wonder that the soldier is religious, and that in the rough language of the soldier whom the preacher quoted : "God is more popular to-day than he has been for a long time" ?

That last sentence betrays the humourist, rough hew him how you will. God is more popular! Think of it! Think of it! After all these years! The Creator of suns, planetary systems, electricity, radium; all these things are interesting enough in their way, but the mere making of these things and the laws that govern them is not enough to make the Creator really popular in the opinion of man and other maggots. In fact, his popularity had reached such a low ebb that, rather than spit on the earth and roll it up into another one, he decided to restore his popularity by a four years' bout of slaughter, lust, cruelty, suffering, grief, and misery. More popular!

Where the Almighty went wrong was over granting man a free wheel. I mean will. So soon as man discovered his own free will he began to go his own gait, and thought more of his own popularity than of God's. The Germans, of course, have overdone the brutality business, and it is more than probable that man's free will will shortly be withdrawn; God having almost entirely regained his lost popularity by means of the somewhat drastic remedy of the War, will shortly make other arrangements in response to the universal appeal of "never again." With the abolition of war his popularity will reach the unaugmentable maximum.

Max O'Rell modestly admitted that the French were the most humorous nation in the world. Oh, that he had lived to hear the great revival of British optimistic religious humour of 1918!

Y. C.

Correspondence.

LIFE AFTER DEATH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Since Major Warren mentions my name in connection with Spiritualism, and quotes me as saying that "the phenomena have been proved up to the hilt for any reasonable man," let me say that I added elsewhere "but no evidence is of any use to those who refuse to examine it." Major Warren's letter shows that he is quite out of touch with the subject. The S. P. Research is not, as he seems to imagine, a Spiritualist Society, and could not possibly take up the self-advertising challenge of Mr. Maskelyne. As a matter of fact, if my memory serves, the challenge *was* taken up by Archdeacon Colley, and Maskelyne entirely failed. I remember reading an account by Dr. Russel Wallace, who had seen both the original phenomenon and the imitation, in which he said that there was no comparison at all between them. But in any case, would Major Warren seriously assert that because a thing can be plausibly imitated by an expert, therefore the thing itself must be false?

The other difficulties raised in Major Warren's letter would cease to trouble him if he read more of the subject, and realized the limitations as well as the powers of psychic phenomena. The other world has its own work to do, and if it interfered continually in ours (presuming that it could do so), we should all become automata.

Arthur Conan Doyle.

COAL IN CANADA.

Sir,—In T. F. Palmer's article on "The Dark Diamonds of the Earth" in your issue of September 15, p. 485, it is stated that "British North America has poor supplies of coal." As Canada has one fourth of all the coal of the world, and our Province of Alberta has one seventh, I wish to bring this to your attention. We have coal on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and nearly the whole Province of Alberta is underlain with it. I am writing the Department of Mines, Ottawa, to forward you a copy of their Report. On page 12 you will see the estimate for the Western Provinces is as follows :—

	tons.
Anthracite and semi-anthracite...	769,000,000
Bituminous	242,313,000,000
Sub-bituminous	847,321,000,000
Lignite	86,422,000,000
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W. A. Rae (Toronto).

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

Metropolitan Secular Society (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, W., near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A., A Lecture.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, George Ives, M.A., F.Z.S., "Extra-Organic Habits in Animals." Open Debate.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Edwin Fagg, "A Master of Disillusion."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Yates, Kells, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, A Lecture. For particulars see advt. *Birmingham Daily Mail*, December 7.

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, "Did Jesus Teach Socialism?"

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The New World and the Old Faith."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, Mr. J. Hammond, "Christianity, Old and New."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Downing Street Hall, Ardwick): Mr. J. C. Thomas ("Keridon"), 3, "Why Faiths Die Hard"; 6.30, "Theology: The Art of Squaring the Circle, or Solving the Insolvable."

Pontycymmer.—Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

Sheffield Branch N. S. S. (Pool's Square): 7.15, Mr. Thos. Dennis, "The Ethics of Atheism."

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. C. T. Gorham, "Intercession."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Folk-Lore in the Old Testament.—The Editor	637
Sin and Death.—J. T. Lloyd	638
Swinburne and Some Others.—Mimnermus	639
Religion After the War.—W. Mann	640
The "Freethinker."—Chapman Cohen	643
The Curse of the Church.—G. O. Warren	644
Arnold Bennett.—Robert Arch	645

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Folk-Lore in the Old Testament.

To his monumental work on comparative mythology, *The Golden Bough*, Professor Sir James Frazer has just added a worthy appendix in *Folk-lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law.*[1] To say that the work is thoroughly well done, is almost unnecessary. But it might easily have been either larger or smaller. It could have been smaller by giving the analogical evidence supplied in less detail, and it would certainly have been larger had Sir James given a complete account of all the survivals of savagery to be found in the Old Testament, which have come down to us in the Christian religion. But for these other evidences he refers his readers to the eleven volumes of his chief work, and those who have already gone through them would probably have complained had they had the same things served up again. Still, as it stands, the work is a mine in which for years students will dig, and never with disappointment at what they find. This time it is the Old Testament. We hope that before long Sir James will issue a companion volume dealing with the New Testament. For the material there is of the same kind; and one very real value of the work of this author, as that of Tylor and others, is the light it sheds on the great enthroned superstition of to-day.

* * *

Religion and Savagery.

At the outset it may be noted that Sir James calls his work *Studies in Comparative Religion*. We may take it that the word has been chosen deliberately. There is no pretence here of saving the face of contemporary religion by calling his work studies in comparative mythology, or comparative theology. The favourite distinction between theology and religion is quite fanciful and wholly false. There is no religion without a theology, there is no theology without a religion. In practice the two things are identical, and the distinction may safely be ignored. All civilized races, Sir James believes, have emerged from a state of savagery, and all civilized races carry with them survivals of their savage origin in the shape of customs, institutions, and beliefs. And prominent amongst these survivals in the civilized world is religion. However refined or disguised, the savage lurks beneath every religion in the world. If we take the Christian practice of the Eucharist, the eating of the body and drinking the blood of Jesus carries us back to the primitive practice of god-eating. The Christian confirmation rests on the initiatory pubic ceremonies still existent amongst savages. The medicine man is the father of the priest, as the belief in an intelligent deity dominating nature has no better ground than the animistic assumption of the primitive savage. There is no need to *dig*, you need only scratch religion to find the savage. And the life work of Sir James Frazer has no greater significance than this. However much some of his speculations may be questioned the main principles stand proof against all criticism. Had civilization been primitive, religion would never have existed.

* * *

Some Biblical Legends—

Sir James Frazer takes his starting point from the first legend in the Bible, the Creation, and he brings to bear upon this a mass of stories from all parts of the world which are no better nor worse than the Biblical one. All peoples have speculated more or less upon the origin of things, and without scientific guidance their speculations have naturally followed the same main forms. Following the Creation comes the Fall of Man, the Mark of Cain, the Great Flood (treated with very great fulness), and the Tower of Babel. All of these Sir James traces to their savage originals, and, working both backward and forward, claims, with justice, that, observing the gaps in the Hebrew story, "it has been left for the comparative method, after thousands of years, to supply the blank in the ancient canvas, and to restore in all their primitive crudity the gay barbaric colours which the skilful hand of the Hebrew artist had softened or effaced." All these stories had already been collated with Chaldean, Assyrian, and similar legends current among semi-civilized peoples; the value of the present book is that it collates them with the much larger group of stories current among uncivilized races. And the significance of this is too obvious for comment.

* * *

And Savage Customs.

We have no space in which to deal with the chapters on Primogeniture and Ultimogeniture, with their review of marriage customs and the regulations governing inheritance. These throw a strong light on both social and religious customs, and may form the basis of articles on some future occasion. We have space only for a rapid review of some of the analogies presented by Sir James in the course of his work. We have the struggle of Jacob with the Angel, the drinking-cup of Joseph, the passage through the Red Sea, the Witch of Endor, the test of Drinking Bitter Waters, the boring of a slave's ear as a sign of perpetual servitude, the superstition underlying the command "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk," the sin of a census—for the taking of which the Lord slew thousands of the people, etc. All these and other Biblical stories are placed in their appropriate settings. And exhibited as Sir James sets

[1] 3 vols. Macmillan. 37s. 6d.

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them forth their air of absurdity disappears. They are seen as part of a group of myths and folk tales that belong to the childhood of the world. And that expression reminds us that Professor Frazer would probably reply that a much smaller proportion of the world's inhabitants have reached maturity than many would imagine.

* * *

How to Read the Bible.

Finally, we may remark that Professor Frazer has shown the Christian how to read the Bible. It is always the Freethinker who has done this. In making a fetish of the Bible, the Christian succeeds only in making it ridiculous. He makes it, not a book or a collection of books, but a monstrosity. As the Christian presents it, the Bible is false as history, outrageous as a manual of ethics, and absurd as a text-book of science. He makes it ridiculous, and then seeks to protect an absurdity by penal enactments and social boycott. It occupies a privileged position only because it is the charter of an established religion, the warranty of a caste, the documents on which rest the pretensions of a hundred and one absurd sects and ridiculous doctrines. As the Freethinker would have it, the Bible may be read with pleasure and studied with profit. The childhood of the race, like the childhood of the individual, is interesting and instructive. There is nothing ridiculous in the savage, and there is nothing absurd in childhood. Absurdity commences only when the man attempts to regulate his life by the thoughts of the child, and when civilization insists upon maintaining the view-point of the savage. In the Bible we have savagery at different levels, but the primitive standpoint is maintained throughout. The Bible *should* be read as a reservation of beliefs and customs, the true analogues of which are to be found to-day among the uncivilized peoples of the earth. Read as it is read by large numbers of people, it is an outrage on common sense and scientific knowledge.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sin and Death.

THE Rev. Professor David Smith, D.D., in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for Nov. 28, dealt with the following passage submitted by an inquirer: "I have often wondered why contact with a corpse should render a person ceremonially unclean (cf. Numb. vi. 6). In our day our dead are regarded with particular tenderness." Dr. Smith explains that the Jews regarded death as at once the consequence and the penalty of sin, and that such is indeed the doctrine of Scripture. Both in Genesis ii. 17 and Romans v. 12, as well as inferentially in numerous other texts, death is represented as wholly due to Adam's transgression. If the first man had obeyed God, the human race would have been naturally immortal. Because Pelagius rejected this doctrine, and maintained that Adam would have died even if he had not sinned, mortality being a natural law, he was accused of heresy by St. Augustine and St. Jerome, and certainly those two Fathers were fully justified in bringing such a charge against him. Paul believed that until Adam partook of the forbidden fruit there was no such thing as death in the world. The world was young; life had only just appeared; disease was unknown; it is more than likely that when the apple was eaten, neither plant nor apple had died. No doubt the apostle looked upon the creation story as literally true, and on that assumption his view of death might have been literally as well as doctrinally correct. Of course, Dr. Smith cannot ignore the fact that the science of geology has utterly disproved the Pauline doctrine of death, but instead of frankly making that admission, he asserts that "the Jews misconstrued it." As held by St. Augustine and St. Jerome, he propounces it "an untenable notion." Then he adds:—

> Death is no curse entailed by sin, but, as the Stoic philosophers recognized, an ordinance of Nature. It is a natural law, and its operation is universal. The leaves and flowers, the birds and beasts, no less than sinful man, obey it. And it is a beneficent ordinance. "Death," says St. Bernard, "is the door of life." It is not destruction, but transition into a larger, richer, and nobler condition, as our Lord taught when he said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone" (St. John xii. 24). This is the Christian conception.

Now, Professor Smith is distinctly unfair both to the Jews generally and to the apostle Paul in particular. He himself declares the Scripture teaches that death is "the consequence and penalty of sin," but that the Jews misconstrued it because they understood death as "physical dissolution." Well, what else does death mean? Surely, that is what St. Bernard understood by it when he called it "the door of life"; and it is equally certain that Paul used the word in that sense when he said that it entered into the world through sin. But this is how the Professor interprets the Apostle:—

> It may seem indeed as though St. Paul contradicted it (the Christian conception) when, in a much debated passage (Rom. v. 12), he affirms that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin," and again (1 Cor. xv. 22): "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive"; but what does death here signify? If it be merely the dissolution of the body, then his argument breaks down. For Christ does not exempt his people from death in this sense. All still die, believers and unbelievers alike. But in his magnificent argument on the Resurrection of the Body the Apostle affirms the necessity of the dissolution of the physical organism in order to attain to the fuller life which is the goal of redemption (1 Cor. xv. 36-44); and hence it is evident that it is not this necessary and beneficent process that he means when he says that "through sin death entered into the world." He means not the physical process but its distressing concomitants.

Dr. Smith's exegesis does grievous injustice to the Apostle. Even Dean Alford admits that in Rom. v. 12, death bears the primary meaning of physical dissolution. To Paul death was, in itself, a necessary evil, caused by sin, and nowhere does he speak of it as a beneficent process. In 1 Cor. xv. the theme is Immortality as secured by the resurrection of Christ. The teaching is that Christ, by dying and rising again, robbed death of its final victory, or extracted its sting. By reason of our federal relation with Adam, all must still die, but the Heavenly Man's victory over death makes us all immortal. Some divines believe in conditional immortality only, regarding "all" in the clause, "so in Christ shall all be made alive," as applicable to none but the redeemed. Be that as it may, the blessing which Christianity is said to have brought into the world is conquest over death, and the Apostle joyously exclaims, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Dr. Smith has no right to say of him, "He means not the physical process but its distressing concomitants," nor do the Pauline Epistles contain a single statement which either directly or indirectly supports the following inference:—

> Thus the Apostle's meaning is not that if man had never sinned he would have continued for ever on the earth, but that his dissolution would have been, according to the Creator's design, a natural and easy transition, without grief or apprehension, from the lower condition to the higher, like the passage from childhood to manhood, or the bursting of the bud into flower.

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That is a theory which cannot legitimately be fathered upon the Apostle Paul or upon the Gospel Jesus. It finds no endorsement in the New Testament. It is perfectly true that death is just as natural as sleep, and all its "distressing concomitants" are of religious origin. So far as we know, death is the end of individual life, just as sleep marks the end of the day's work. All beyond this is sheer speculation, and cannot possibly be demonstrated. It is only too true, alas, that in Christian phraseology, death never signifies the mere dissolution of the physical organism, but "the gloom and terror wherewith sin has invested that natural, necessary, and truly beneficent process"; but both the gloom and the terror, as well as the sin, are the artificial creation of supernatural religion. Death is not a curse but a boon when it comes naturally, as sleep comes to the tired child. Dr. Smith claims that the Christian conception of death is attested by the teaching of Christ, but the only attestation he cites is the fact that the Gospel Jesus never speaks of his disciples' "death," but always of their "falling asleep"; but that proves nothing at all. Even Lucretius, the disciple of Epicurus, one of the most original, beautiful, and dignified Roman poets, employs similar phraseology. In his great work, *De Rerum Natura*, Book III., this is how he sings of the final dissolution:

> For thou shalt sleep, and never wake again,
> And, quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain.
> But we, thy friends, shall all those sorrows find,
> Which in forgetful death thou leav'st behind;
> No time shall dry our tears, nor drive thee from our mind.
> The worst than can befall thee, measured right,
> Is a sound slumber, and a long good night.

To Lucretius, as to his master, supernaturalism was a horrible nightmare, of which he did his utmost to relieve his fellow-beings by presenting them with a sane and wholesome outlook upon life, and by urging them to observe the wise counsels of Epicureanism. He was confident that some good had already been accomplished, for he says:—

> So the times change; and now religion lies
> Trampled by us; and unto us 'tis given
> Fearless, with level gaze to scan the heaven.

The Christian doctrine of sin and death has done more to darken and blight human life than all else put together, for under its dominion myriads of men and women have spent all their days in frightful bondage to fear, death being to them, because of their superstitious sense of sin, a veritable king of terrors. They were so instructed as to the nature and consequences of sin that the very thought of death caused them to tremble like a leaf in the wind. They would read: "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment." When little children laughed somewhat hilariously they were instantly asked in a lugubrious tone of voice: "What if you were to die to-night? Don't you know that it is a fearful thing to fall (unsaved) into the hands of the living God"? Some of us will never forget the awful pictures of the torments of the damned in hell with which our innocent young days were overshadowed and utterly spoilt. It was the false Christian doctrine of original sin that was responsible for all the gloom and depression that characterized life in Puritan homes. That doctrine is being considerably modified by the preachers and Sunday-school teachers of the present day, and yet it must not be forgotten that in some form or another it still lies at the foundation of the Christian religion and gives a sombre colour to all its dogmas. It will die hard, for when it is gone the ministrations of the pulpit will no longer be needed. What we need above all else just now is to get close to Nature's heart and there commune both with her and ourselves, listening with reverence and docility to Reason's voice as it points out to us the true path of social life.

J. T. Lloyd.

Swinburne and Some Others.

> Time writes many wrinkles on criticism's clouded brow.
> —*Augustine Birrell.*

"The true life of a man is in his letters," said John Henry Newman. "Biographers varnish, they assign motives, they conjecture feelings, they interpret nods, but contemporary letters are facts." Yet some letters are the most natural, and others the most artificial of compositions. They may be written with the fear that they may be published, as in the case of statesmen and politicians. But if Newman's remarks are true of any class, they are true of poets and literary persons.

Think of Byron, who is one of the few English poets who have a world-wide reputation. His correspondence is amongst the best in the language, and full of that reckless fun which is one of his surest passports to the attention of posterity. He confesses that his handwriting is as bad as his character. His letters are full of literary quotations always most happily applied. So full of Shakespeare was he that he cannot describe a crush at the opera at Venice without saying that in pushing his way into the building he almost beat a Venetian and traduced the State. Jokes about mothers-in-law are as plentiful as leaves in Vallombrosa, but Byron gets a laugh by saying that his mother-in-law "has been dangerously ill, but is now dangerously well again." The perennial charm of Byron is that he knew the book of the world no less than the world of books. In an age when everybody is bent on saving somebody else's soul, it is a delight to turn to the work of a writer swayed by no worse influence than an easy conscience and a sense of humour.

Matthew Arnold, no mean judge, pronounced Shelley's prose as being superior to his poetry. He was not so far wrong with regard to Shelley's letters, which are simply wonderful. They are not only written in exquisite language, but they reveal the man himself more perfectly than even the incomparable lyrics. Italy has been described by thousands of pens, but Shelley's pen-pictures are among the worthiest. Nor does Shelley confine himself to clouds and sunsets. Byron emerges more truly from his descriptions than from the bulky volumes of Thomas Moore. The letters on Keats form the truest criticism of his brother poet. One must go, of necessity, to Shelley's letters to understand the personality of the author of *Adonais*, for if he had never written them, or if they had been lost, we should never have known the full powers of his wonderful mind.

Swinburne's letters, which have been edited by Edmund Gosse and Thomas J. Wise, form another case in point. His letters are as natural as his conversations, and throb with his enthusiasms and his objurations. One can hardly imagine Swinburne as a Member of Parliament, although his gift of language might have enlivened and extended political controversy, and added to the revenues of the lawyers. But he was invited to become a candidate by the old Reform League. "I appealed to the man I most loved and revered on earth," says the poet. Mazzini (for it was he) was against the idea, and so Swinburne dismissed the matter. It was not a question of modesty, for Swinburne had as good a conceit of himself as Bernard Shaw. Here, for example, is a pleasant piece of arrogance:—

> I should very much like to see the play of Euripides which contains five hundred consecutive lines that could be set against as many of mine.

Humour is not Swinburne's strong point, but he is amusing in comparing Oliver Cromwell and Frederick the Great. "Trust in Providence," he says, somewhat spoils heroism; to me at least—

> A God-intoxicated man, of course, can fight, but I prefer a man who fights sober. Whether he gets drunk

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on faith or on brandy it is still "Dutch courage," as the sailors call it. I must say Frederick's clear, cold purity of pluck, looking neither upward nor around for any help or comfort, seems to me a much more wholesome and more admirable state of mind than Cromwell's splendid pietism.

Like old Dr. Johnson, Swinburne was a good hater. He hurled the whole vocabulary of a poet's scorn at anyone he disliked, but his passion was frequently too frothy to last long. His moods alternated. At one time he hailed Walt Whitman as a great poet, and at another he vehemently denounced him with a veritable Niagara of vituperation. He saw very little good in Emile Zola, and regarded *L'Assommoir* as "the most horrible and loathsome book that ever got into print," which is a statement that makes a judicious critic grieve. Happily, Swinburne's adjectives were not always misplaced. On the whole, few writers have been more generous in their enthusiasm for the best in literature, and he never withheld his tribute to his contemporaries. Victor Hugo, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Browning, Charles Reade, Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and hosts of others, evoked his hearty praise no less than the great Elizabethans and the master-minds of literature.

These letters of a real and unmistakable poet entertain and rouse. To read him is like sitting at the poet's fireside, listening to his gossip on books and authors. To woo the world with a soft tongue was not Swinburne's way, and his letters are characteristically outspoken. Swinburne himself, with his nervous energy, his troubled passion, his restless sense of beauty, was, in real life, somewhat too much of a recluse and a bookworm, and this defect is written boldly in his letters. We must leave it at that. It does not in any way detract from his rare and exquisite gifts as a singer, which make him so striking and even unique a figure in the literature of his country.

MIMNERMUS.

Religion After the War.

III.

(*Continued from p. 629.*)

At once the most crushing and the most appalling aspect of Christianity is the aspect of an apparently Christian nation committing every possible crime, inventing every possible infamy, and applauding itself in every atrocious enterprise as the chosen weapon of God! The whole blasphemous business is so revolting that even the neutral-minded historian will never be able to gloss over its degradation.—"*Rita*" *(Mrs. Desmond Humphreys)*, "*The Wrong End of Religion*; 1917; p. 114.

The moans of the dying who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of Christianity are mingled with the prayers of the grief-stricken multitudes in the several fatherlands; and this monstrous human discord is called: The Christian Nations at War. Was there ever such a horrible cacophony in the history of our planet? Never in the annals of Churchanity has there been a carnival of blood and tears to equal it. Never before has the God of War celebrated so great a feast of human bodies—offered up spontaneously by His disciples, the rival Churchaniteers. Glutted with blood, He, the mighty War-God, will quench His thirst with the tears of weeping humanity—the tears which are the first by-product of Churchaniteering Militarism.—*W. Bell*, "*The Exodus From Houndsditch*," pp. 165-166.

The most wonderful part of this infernal enterprise (War) is, that each chief of the murderers causes his colours to be blessed, and solemnly invokes God before he goes to exterminate his neighbours.—*Voltaire*, "*Philosophical Dictionary*." Article "War."

THE German Army was the only army thoroughly prepared for war. When the frontier fortresses and towns fell like ninepins before the giant guns of their advancing army, and the religious among the Allies turned to God for help, they discovered, with dismay, that the great War Lord, the Kaiser, had made an alliance with the Lord of Hosts.

Nothing has so disconcerted and exasperated the pious among the Allies as the prominent and whole-hearted religious professions of the enemy. Every German soldier bears the inscription "Gott mit uns" (God with us) on his belt. The cry, "God strafe England," was in every German mouth. Strange sentiments, these, for a nation of Atheists, as the religious would have us believe. Every speech of the Kaiser reeked with piety, and he never lost an opportunity of declaring that God was on the German side. He has been compared with the praying Mantis, a beetle which assumes a praying attitude while seeking its prey. The frenzied rage of the pious vented itself by describing the Kaiser as "The blasphemous bully of Potsdam."

France did not call upon God for help. If any nation can be described as an Atheistic nation it is France. They have disestablished the Church and turned the priests out of the schools. We have not forgotten the torrent of abuse from the religious and Conservative Press in this country over these proceedings, coupled with the prediction of speedy vengeance from an angry God—a prediction which seems to have missed fire. Or perhaps God arranged for the defeat of France in this war; but, as on another occasion, recorded in the Bible, the enemy was too much for him. For we read (Judges i. 19) that the Lord was with Judah, and drove out the inhabitants of the mountains, "but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valleys, because they had chariots of iron," the "tanks" of those days.

Our clergy called on the Lord for help, and they claim that he responded with the "Mons angels," at a very early stage in the War. Since then nothing has been heard from him.

Since the War began, the clergy, while attributing the origin of the War to the Atheism of Germany, have been discreetly silent as to the Atheism of France, about which they used to be so eloquent. If France had been fighting against us, then we should have heard something about it—"not arf," as the vulgar say.

But ordinary people will not fail to note that infidel France was victorious over the loudly declared religiosity of Germany. We append a few extracts from the Kaiser's speeches: they are characteristic of them all:—

God's goodness will guide the German people through battle to victory—to the goal appointed for the German people by Providence.—December 19, 1914.

Germany knows her strength, and she relies on God's help.—July 31, 1916.

All Germany contemplates with pride her brave sons *whose deeds, with God's help*, will be a landmark on the road to final victory.—December 6, 1916.

If only we cast our burden on the Lord He will smite the foe, hip and thigh, as He did Amalek, the prototype of perfidious England.—March, 1917.

U-boats are not going to rest until the enemy is beaten with God's help.—November 16, 1917.

The year 1917, with its great battles, has proved that the German people has in the Lord of Creation above an unconditional and avowed Ally, on whom it can absolutely rely.—December 22, 1917.

The German people, convinced of its just cause, resting on its hard sword, and trusting in God's gracious help, has confronted a world of enemies.—August 1, 1918.

Remember that you are the chosen people! The Spirit of the Lord has descended upon me because I am the Emperor of the Germans! I am His sword, His Agent. Woe and death to all those who oppose my will! Woe and death to the cowards! Let them perish, all the enemies of the German people! God demands their

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destruction; God, who by my mouth, bids ye do His will!

As Professor Gilbert has pointed out:—"Very frequently and explicitly the Kaiser avows his Christian faith. No other ruler in history has publicly declared his faith so often as he has done. He preaches, he brings religion into his addresses to military and naval recruits, he takes a prominent part in the dedication of churches, he is concerned for the religious education of the young, he assures his people that not a morning or evening passes without a prayer by him on their behalf, and he concluded his address to the residents of Berlin at the outbreak of war with a solemn command to go to their homes and pray."[1] The same writer also observes, the Kaiser "has given common currency to a warlike and nationalistic designation of God in the term 'the great Ally.' And again: "When speaking to the recruits in Berlin, in November, 1897, the Kaiser said, 'He who is not a good Christian is not a brave man, and is no Prussian soldier,' for the highest qualities of a Christian are 'self-control and self-abnegation,' the latter quality being identical with 'unconditional obedience and subordination' to those who are appointed over one.'"[2] The Kaiser being evidently of the opinion of Constantine, when he adopted Christianity as the State religion, to use the caustic comment of Gibbon: "The throne of the Emperors would be established on a fixed and permanent basis if all their subjects, embracing the Christian doctrine, should learn to suffer and obey."[3] The Kaiser has been charged with hypocrisy; but there is not an atom of evidence to prove that he is acting a part, or that he does not really believe in what he preaches. On the contrary, all the evidence goes to prove that he does. For we are told by those acquainted with his private life, of his morning and nightly devotions. Even in his bed-chamber, where he is secluded from the eyes of the world, and pretences may be laid aside, the Bible lies on a table beside his bed so that he can console himself with it in his waking moments.

Moreover, we have the conclusive testimony of the Archbishop of York as to the Kaiser's spiritual fervour; for, as Mr. Temple complains:—"His Grace of York thought it seemly and fitting to dilate in public on the spirituality of the Kaiser as revealed in private conversation with himself."[4] And if an Archbishop is not an expert upon such a matter, we should like to know who is.

Our clergy called on God for help, but the English people put more trust in the Navy than in all the God's ancient or modern, and the results have amply justified their faith. The attempt of the Church to exploit the War with the mission of repentance and hope, was an acknowledged and unmitigated failure. The people would have none of it.

Now that Germany is definitely beaten, people will reflect that, in spite of her loudly vaunted alliance with God, she has been defeated by infidel France and her Allies, and they will draw the obvious inference that it is better to rely on yourself than rely upon God.

Another loss sustained by religion during the War is the breaking down of the sacredness of the Sabbath. In response to the request of the Government, the Church grudgingly granted permission—many of the clergy vehemently protesting—to believers to work on Sundays for food production on the allotments. Many thousands who, before the War, would not have dared to risk public odium by Sunday work, have taken advantage of the situation, and it is safe to say, they will never go back to the old rigid Sunday observance again. Still worse—from a religious point of view—in spite of the moans of the clergy, the Americans have been publicly entertained with baseball, and boxing matches have been promoted for their recreation on the same day. Moreover, some of the most strenuous fighting of the War has taken place on Sunday. That is another religious barrier broken down.

W. Mann.

(To be continued.)

[1] Professor G. H. Holley, "The Religion of the German Kaiser," *The Fortnightly Review*, November, 1918, p. 649.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 654.

[3] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii., p. 295.

[4] M. H. Temple, "*The Failure of the Church*," the *National Review*, January, 1918.

Acid Drops.

Father Bernard Vaughan once distinguished himself—as a Christian priest—by asserting that it was our duty to go on killing Germans. This may have been true enough, but it scarcely seemed the function of a man whose mouth was full of the Gospel of love and brotherhood to say it. From the brief report of an address before the Guild of Glaziers, we see that he is now in great fear lest the ex-Kaiser should not be executed—which shows stupidity as well as vindictiveness—and vindictiveness is always stupid. Really, the most cruel punishment would be not to kill William, but to restrain him from further mischief, and keep him alive. If punishment is aimed at, there could be no more severe form than this. The cry of "Hang the Kaiser" is the cry of the unthinking mob, and many who join in it are quite consciously playing to the mob. To suffer one must live, to atone one must live. To die is to end suffering, and Father Vaughan is too vindictive to desire an end to the ex-Kaiser's sufferings.

Father Vaughan says, "He boasted of being the All-Highest, and therefore he could at once have stopped, as well as started, the war." The crude sociology of the thing is appalling. But Father Vaughan believes in a God whom he affirms *is* the real "All-Highest." And he could certainly have stopped the War, or prevented the War ever starting. What does Father Vaughan propose in relation to him? If William of Hohenzollern deserves the scorn of all honest men and women—and we should be the last to question this, though we have too much contempt for our modern kings to be vindictive—what does Father Vaughan's "All-Highest," who might have controlled the Kaiser, deserve? Hang the Kaiser for causing the War, says Father Vaughan, but praise God for not having prevented it! Whose, now, is the greater guilt? Perhaps Father Vaughan will tell us.

Christians say that the streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with gold, and they manage to get hold of a lot of money in this vale of tears. The American Young Men's Christian Association asserts that it has received subscriptions to the amount of £30,000,000; and the more modest British branch has expended £2,500,000. The Church of England is trying to raise £5,000,000. Yet the founder of the Christian religion was sold for thirty pieces of silver.

The value of prayer is always emphasized by the dear clergy—when they are addressing their congregations. In actual life they take no risks themselves. The sandbags, which were placed in Westminster Abbey as a protection against air-raids, are now being removed.

The merry birthday of the Man of Sorrows will be shorn of some of its delights this year. The old-time Christmas pudding cannot be managed as there is a shortage of currants, raisins, and sultanas.

The War was God's War, shrieked the Bishop of London. We were out to end war, said other reverend gentlemen. So we read that as the War was to end war, a new ammunition combine is to be formed in this Christian country with a capital of over fifteen millions. Presumably, they will go in for firework-making as a means of paying dividends.

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Cardinal Bourne is quite certain that the "Finger of God" is to be seen in the Allied victory. We hope the same finger will be equally busy in preventing trouble between those who have won the War, and if the "Divine Finger" is not heavy enough, then the whole divine anatomy might plump itself down on the armament rings in the Allied countries, and on the new race in armaments that appears to be developing between various countries. After so much cant about "moral force," it is surely only fitting that the civilized world should rid itself of the constant incitement to war arising from the existence of huge armies and navies.

The *Church Times*, in noting the Labour meeting at the Albert Hall on November 30—it ignores the *Sunday* meeting with true Christian hypocrisy—asks plaintively, "But where were the clergy?" It finds "something alarming in such a gathering without religion having a place," and we concede the ground for apprehension. It remarks that the workers have a religion of their own; but as it points out that the chairman, George Lansbury, confessed to being "one of the few men in the movement who has retained faith in religion," what is left does not appear of a very robust quality. The truth is that the last few years has led thousands in the Labour Movement to realize that the less they have to do with Christianity the better. Freethought is coming to its own there as elsewhere.

The *Church Times* says there seemed to be an absence of clear thinking on the part of some, else why so much enthusiasm for the present tyranny of force in Russia? We must remember that the Russians have disestablished the Church, and that is quite enough to antagonize the *Church Times*. One ought to remember the campaign carried on in the English Press when the Portuguese Republic was established a few years ago. Then, too, we had carefully prepared accounts of the tyranny of a few, etc. Freethinkers will certainly not forget the way the Press was "worked" against France in pre-War days on account of its secularizing policy. What is going on in Russia, no one knows. As we are living with a muzzled and Government-controlled Press, we are not likely to know for some time. We lost our freedom of the Press to win the War, and we are to do without it, apparently, to keep the peace.

"God" appears in quite unexpected and unnecessary places. The London Chamber of Commerce, in a circular to its members, dated November 23, 1918, records the passing of the following resolution:—

> That the Council of the London Chamber of Commerce places on record its heartfelt thankfulness to Almighty God on the success of the Allies and the United States in bringing the war to a victorious end.

"Almighty God" must feel flattered on receiving the congratulations of the London Chamber of Commerce, but we think that the Chamber would have been much better occupied attending to its own affairs, and thus avoid offering a gratuitous impertinence to many of its members. We believe that a protest has been made, and although it was too late to prevent this particular stupidity, the protest may serve a purpose by preventing its recurrence.

"God" is also taking a hand in the Chiswick election. At least the Vicar of St. George's, Brentford, says he has a conviction that God had raised up the candidate, Colonel Grant Morden, to help rebuild this mighty empire. So the Kaiser's God upheld the German Empire. So others affirm that God upholds the British Empire. So, still others, on the "divine mission" of this or that nation. Is it any wonder that our political life is what it is when so many of our public men are so little removed from the level of savages in the substance of their thinking. And if the Vicar of St. George's is right, everyone who votes against Colonel Morden will be opposing God. The political fool is bad, so is the religious fool, but when we get a combination of the two, the outlook is poor indeed.

Religious instruction in public schools is one of the main topics on which the "hecklers" in Bellshill (Glasgow) bombarded their Parliamentary candidates. Unfortunately, neither candidate would satisfy the aspirations of Freethinkers in this respect. The Coalition candidate is quite satisfied with the present arrangement, and the Labour candidate says he does not wish to raise sectarian matters at this Election.

Is it an indication for good or for ill of the Secular Cause in South Shields that the two candidates, official and unofficial, both held forth to enthusiastic audiences on the Lord's Day? Last Sunday no less than three great mass meetings, two indoors and one out, took place, and the intelligent and worthy electors seemed quite oblivious of what is ordinarily meant by the Sabbath.

God, says Dr. Clifford, sends pastors and teachers for the Churches and statesmen for the nation. All we can say is, "Look at 'em!" Of course, if God does send them, it explains a lot and excuses a lot. Hitherto we have blamed the people for having selected them. But if God sends them, we can see it is not their fault. God sends them. God save them! And God help the rest of us.

Among the things which Dr. Clifford says the nation needs for the new Parliament is "The abolition of theological and ecclesiastical tests for State teachers, the removal of sectarian teaching from the rates." We don't think that Dr. Clifford quite says what he means. Read literally, it should mean complete secular education in the schools. But Dr. Clifford does not, we think, mean this. His removal of sectarian teaching would allow the retention of a form of Christian teaching that suited all Christians. As though Christianity is not in itself a sect in this country, and as though its retention in the schools is not an endowment of sectarian teaching.

A *Christian World* writer remarks that when the Jews get back to Palestine, there is no reason why the Jews "should not be able again to give the world a distinctive civilization." What we should like to know is, when did the Jews give the world a distinctive civilization? The Greeks did, the Romans did, the Egyptians did. But there never was a distinctive Jewish civilization, and we venture to say there never will be. The only distinctive thing about the Jew to-day is his religion; and once the pressure of Christian bigotry is removed, his religion is hardly worth a century's purchase.

The attitude of the clergy towards advanced thinkers is often amusing. In a life of Canon Barnett, written by his wife, it is stated that Herbert Spencer was one of the party that went with the Canon to Egypt in 1879. The Canon's impressions of the great philosopher are characteristic. "Herbert Spencer," he wrote, "has a world-wide reputation, and is looked up to by some clever people as their great light. I have not read his books; I found them alien and dull." Is it not delightful? And the writer who confessed that he found Spencer's books "alien" and "dull" without reading them was not a common or garden curate, but a Canon of the Church of England.

The Bishop of Southwark is one of the vice-presidents of the National Society for Combating Venereal Diseases. An advertisement issued by that body is headed: "An Enemy which Knows No Pity," and refers to the ravages caused by such diseases. Does the Bishop endorse this delicate impeachment of Providence?

Providence cares as much, or as little, for churches as for other buildings. In March last the church of All Saints, St. Ives, Hunts, was damaged by an aeroplane, and the cost of restoration is estimated at £7,090. There are only 3,015 inhabitants in the little town, so the church is a somewhat expensive luxury.

Mr. Kennedy Jones suggests that much of the industrial trouble is caused by indigestion from bad cooking and feeding. As Ingersoll associated indigestion and religion, we may look forward to a revival on a large scale.

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The "Freethinker."

A New Year "Push."

EVER since the signing of the Armistice I have been receiving congratulatory messages on the *Freethinker* having so successfully pulled through the War. I think we all have reason to congratulate each other on that. We have all fought together, and we have all triumphed together. Not that our troubles are yet over; we have only seen them at their worst. For some months there will be no decrease in the cost of production, although there will not be the same anxiety about supplies.

But, in addition to sending me congratulatory letters, many have written expressing a desire that *Freethinker* readers should have an opportunity of giving their appreciation of what I have done—"a substantial form"—in the shape of some personal testimonial. It has also come to my knowledge that letters have passed, and some steps have been taken to give this desire a concrete form. I discovered this quite by accident, and it leads me to say what I am saying.

In the first place, I have no desire that anything of the kind should be done; more, I desire that it should not be done. As some of my friends know, I have big designs ahead, and it will be time enough for any general expression of public appreciation when the *Freethinker* has been placed upon a thoroughly self-supporting basis. When that has been done, and when there has been created a really strong Secular Society in the country, something tangible will have been accomplished. Until these things *are* done we must all keep up the struggle with all the vigour we possess. And the only expression of appreciation for which I ask is co-operation in realizing these aims.

But the desire to which I have referred emboldens me to suggest a way in which a good lift may be given to help the *Freethinker*. In three weeks' time we shall be issuing our New Year's number, and commencing our thirty-ninth volume. For a Freethought journal that in itself is an achievement. No other journal in this country has had so long a life, and none have lived with greater distinction.

Now this New Year's number may be made the occasion of giving the *Freethinker* a good lift forward. Nearly everyone of my readers will know someone who does not read the *Freethinker*, but who ought to read it. For that one week I want each of our readers who will to see that this new man, or woman, gets it. I want several thousands of our readers—the more the better—*to order one extra copy of the "Freethinker" for January 5, and post it to a likely subscriber.* The cost to each will be twopence-halfpenny, and it will be a useful New Year's gift to Freethought; as for myself, I will gladly take that as a welcome expression of appreciation for anything I may have done during the War period.

This is a simple, an easy, and an inexpensive way of lending a hand. So far as the office is concerned, care will be taken to make the issue for January 5 an extra good one, and it may even be enlarged for that one week. But on that point we cannot yet be certain. Still, the issue will be a very readable one.

The effect of several thousand copies of the *Freethinker* finding its way into new hands in one week is certain to be good. *But the copies must be ordered beforehand*, otherwise they will not be obtainable. Our circulation is still mounting, but the bigger the circulation the better.

Remember, it is the issue for January 5, 1919, that must be ordered, *and the Order should be placed with the Newsagent not later than December 21.* A wrapper and a halfpenny stamp will do the rest.

Each copy of the *Freethinker* so sent will reach a new reader, and we shall be surprised if in a large number of cases he does not rise up and call the sender "Blessed."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 15, Nuneaton; December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

R. CHAPMAN.—Mr. Cohen is pleased to learn that your Branch desired to express its continued confidence in his Presidency of the N. S. S. The confidence and support of the members of the Society is all Mr. Cohen desires in the pursuit of a common labour, and it is gratifytng to him to know how very general that support is. Sorry to hear of Mr, Shiel's death.

L. ERENBERG.—No one who knows anything of the superstition of the Russian peasantry would be surprised at what you say. The power of the Russian czars rested on the ignorance of the people, and ignorance and superstition are two sides of the same thing.

W. P. ADAMSON.—Have sent your candidate some literature and information. The poor man probably is ignorant of the facts—hence his qualification for Parliament.

W. E. C.—You may rely on our treating your letter with the utmost confidence. A long and strong pull on one's self, with occupation in some form of mental work, is the best antidote.

T. OWER.—We *don't* blame God for anything. It is the Christian who saddles him with the responsibility. All we do is to point the moral of the religious hypothesis.

G. B. TAYLOR.—We are hoping for great improvements as conditions approach the normal. At least, things should be easier. We haven't gone grey over it, but that might have happened.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: H. Reeve, 3s.; Fred. Hall, 10s.

STOKER W. PALMER.—Pleased you find the parcel of literature useful. We will send more if necessary.

F. BETTS.—Certainly there should be a branch at Northampton. We hope you will succeed in forming one. Will use MS. if possible, but have little space, and piles of unpublished articles.

F. INGHAM.—*My People* and *Capel Sion* are published by Melrose, price 5s. See "Views and Opinions" for other matter.

WELL-WISHER.—We quite appreciate the motive underlying your suggestion, but names become assets in the course of time, and the thing is not so simple as many imagine. However, we always welcome suggestions from readers, whether it is possible to act on them or not.

J. WILLIAMS.—It is help such as yours that carry the greatest encouragement. Shall we arrange for your having the paper regularly? Please let us know if it will help in any way.

R. L. M.—We quite agree with your comment, as you will see from this week's issue.

B. DUFREE.—It is simply untrue that Horatio Bottomley was ever invited to become President of the N.S.S., or that he made application for the post on the death of Mr. Foote.

A SCOTTISH CORRESPONDENT writes:—"Are Freethinkers doing all they might do in airing their legitimate grievances during the present Election campaign, or are they more interested in their politics than in their Freethought principles? Some Freethinkers are refraining from asking questions relative to Freethought because they might jeopardize the chances of their candidates."

H. LANCASTER.—We vrry much regret to hear of Mr. Wilson's death, and feel sure he deserves the good things you say of him. Please convey our sympathy to all concerned.

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

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

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

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

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.

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Sugar Plums.

To-day (December 15) Mr. Cohen lectures twice in the Palace, Queen's Road, Nuneaton. We hope that all Freethinkers will do their best to induce a Christian friend to accompany them to the meetings. The meetings are at 2.45 and 6.30.

Next Sunday (December 22) Mr. Cohen visits Glasgow, and lectures there, 12 o'clock and 6.30, in the Burgh Hall, Hamilton Crescent, Partick. The usual meeting-place is not available on this occasion owing to the hall being taken by the Government. However, trams run to the Burgh Hall, the stopping-place being Peel. Journeying from London to Glasgow is no holiday task nowadays, and advertizing is very costly, so we are asked to request Glasgow Freethinkers to do their best to make the meetings well known among their heretical and religious friends. There will be music before the evening meeting.

We are not replying at length this week to Dr. Lyttelton's article in our last issue. This is not from any discourtesy to our able and courteous critic, but because we feel there is much in his contention that as it is almost impossible for us to agree on fundamentals, we are, therefore, arguing on different plans, and, under such conditions, discussion is apt to be wordy without being either enlightening or conclusive. Moreover, as Dr. Lyttelton promises to deal with the question of the way in which "we Christians reconcile our doctrine of God with the existence of misery, strife, bloodshed, etc., on the vastest scale throughout the world," we feel that we may let the discussion rest where it is, until this justification appears. We can then deal with the question at length.

Now that the War is over, the Glasgow branch, N.S.S., is entering upon a campaign to increase its membership. Lapsed members are earnestly requested to renew their connection. All Freethinkers are welcomed to the regular meetings of the Branch, which are held every Sunday at noon in the Good Templars' Halls, Ingram Street, Glasgow. Quite a number of young ladies have joined recently, but but the Secretary is still open to receive many more applications for membership.

We are constantly receiving complaints from readers who are unable to get their copy of this paper delivered from their newsagent. We are doing what we can from this end to bring pressure to bear, and earnestly ask our friends to do what they can to set matters right. They should insist upon a regular delivery; and if failure to do this meant a transfer of custom for all papers, we have no doubt greater care would be shown in giving a regular delivery.

We venture, once more, to remind intending subscribers to our Sustentation Fund that the closing date is December 17. That is the day on which we go to press and remittances for the final list must reach us by the first post of that date.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged:—£444 10d.; T. H. Gunning, 10s.; A. J. Fincken, £5; Mr. and Mrs. Holland, £1; J. Weeks, 8s.; G. H., £1; Tradeston (Glasgow), 2s. 6d.; W. L. Paterson, 9s. 6d.; G. B. Taylor (second sub.), 9s. 6d.; L. A. Kingsworth, 2s.; G. G., 5s.; R. L. M.,, £2; J. Williams, 1s.; J. Kirkpatrick, £1 1s.; E. R. 1s.; H. Holls, 5s.; A. Cayford, 10s.; J. Henry, 2s.; T. Williams, 1s. 6d.; T. Banks, 5s.; T. Vine, 4s. 9d.; W. Beaumont, 5s.; C. Curtis, 1s.; "Arno," 2s.; Wm. Roberts, 10s.; Failsworth Secular Sunday School, 21s.; Old Soldier, 10s. Total, £460 17s. 7d.

Correction:—"T. Hart, 2s. 3d.," in our issue of December 1, should have read: Gunner T. G. Hart (France), 2s. 3d.

This Fund closes on December 17.

The Curse of the Church.

THE Church, as an institution which presumes to decide what is true by majority vote, and uses its power to reward obedience with wealth and honour and office, and to punish objectors with poverty and ostracism, is a curse to the world.

There is no tangible thing corresponding to the word Church any more than to the word State. When a number of men assemble and by majority vote decide that something pertaining to politics shall be done, this assembly is called the State. When a number of men assemble and by majority vote decide that something pertaining to religion shall be done, that assembly is called the Church. But there is no such identical thing as the Church or the State.

It would be well if everybody could understand this, for it would then be plain that such words as Church and State are merely convenient expressions for shifting responsibility from individuals to an alleged something that does not exist.

For example: a custom-house officer examines a traveller's baggage and either steals his goods or makes him pay something to be allowed to keep them. The custom-house officer is no better than a common thief, but he satisfies his conscience by the thought that he is an officer of the State.

But when you clearly understand that there is no such entity as a State, and, therefore, that the custom-house officer is simply a person employed by a number of other persons to rob travellers, you also understand that he is nothing but a common thief. In Italy there are bandits, and in England we also have bandits, only we call our bandits protectionists. We appeal to the superstition of the people by throwing over our bandits the sacred name of the State, the stealing is called collecting customs duty, and what is a crime in Italy becomes a virtue in England. To say that this stealing is done by the State deceives nobody but the ignorant and superstitious, for you can be robbed only by a man. Start out to hunt for the State, and see if you can find anything but a politician and his underlings—and a politician is generally and almost necessarily a man beside whose true biography the life of Dick Turpin would be a Sunday-school book.

And what is true of the State is true of the Church. Certain parsons and laymen meet together and decide by majority vote to do certain things, and then to escape responsibility declare that the Church has done everything.

In the first place, this imaginary thing called the Church is a curse to the world, because in its name both parsons and laymen will be guilty of crimes that none of them would commit on his own hook. Just as a hangman, who, on his own hook, would not kill a sparrow, will, in the name of the State, kill his neighbour—so a parson, who, as an individual, would not lie or treat anybody unkindly, will in the name of the Church, subscribe to statements he does not believe and cruelly cut his best friend. Where is there a creed that expresses the honest personal opinions of the men who either made it or subscribe to it? There is not one; and this means that a few hundreds of parsons and laymen will assemble, and in the sacred name of the Church, declare that they believe what no single one of them believes. For themselves they may be truthful enough, but for the Church they will lie. And, consequent on the steady advance of Freethought, there are very few parsons nowadays who would say to one who differs from them in opinion: "Depart, sir; you are a heretic, and therefore unfit to enter my house or sit at

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my table." But they will assemble at some synod and excommunicate a man whose only offence is that he will not subscribe to a creed that he does not believe. In their private relations they are kindly, but in the sacred name of the Church they are as cruel as Calvin's God.

In the second place, the Church is a curse to the world because it tries to paralyse the brain. It forbids men to reach conclusions contrary to the statements of the Creed, notwithstanding that no thinking person in the Church really believes those statements. The moment a parson begins to openly question the creed and honestly state his doubts, that moment he begins to be treated like a criminal. Promotion becomes impossible for him. He is left off all committes, and receives the cold shoulder. He is regarded with suspicion, and treated as a disturber and a traitor. More than one honest parson has died from such unmerited contumely, coldness, and ostracism.

A parson may be intelligent, devout, and stainless in his character and life, but if he is driven by his reason to conclusions contrary to the Creed, he is doomed to suffering, to poverty, perhaps even to death—doomed by the Church which professes to wear the garments of an angel, but scratches with the claws of a cat.

On the other hand, a parson may be intellectually feeble, mechanically conventional in his piety, weak in character, and unsavoury in reputation; he may be a moral coward and harsh in nature; he may have an impure mind and gross instincts; but if he is orthodox, any position in the Church is open to him—he can become a father in Israel, living in luxury and dying in all the odour of sanctity.

In short, the Church is a curse to the world because it rewards mediocrity coupled with conformity, and punishes superiority coupled with independence and originality, thus paralysing all the advance it can. The direct and necessary result of this policy is to make parsons mentally dishonest, and I have no doubt that with the possible exception of politicians, no class of men are more dishonest in their public utterances than parsons. The constitution and necessities of the Church are such that every parson must be either a fool or a knave; for he must either have no doubts, in which case he is a fool, or he must conceal his doubts, in which case he is a knave. Many good parsons have, no doubt, convinced themselves that it is right for them to conceal their doubts, on the plea that truth is dangerous unless generously mixed with error. They believe that it is their duty to God and man to be hypocrites, and so they are conscientious knaves, but all the more dangerous for that very reason.

Moreover, the Church is a curse to the world because it energetically bolsters up a false system of morals, and by doing so harbours and clothes with respectability some of the vilest people, while it denounces and vilifies some of the best and purest people, as well as many who are not so very good, but who are certainly not so bad as some of its prominent members.

A Freethinker, though he conform his life to every precept of the Sermon on the Mount; though he be true to his friends and love his enemies; cannot belong to the Church. But a Calvinist, though he rule his children with a rod of iron; though he be false to his friends and vindictive to his enemies; though he violate every maxim of the Sermon on the Mount; can. A common prostitute cannot belong to the Church, but a young woman who in legal prostitution sells herself to a rich old man, can. A common murderer cannot belong to the Church, but a hangman can. The hand that adjusted the noose and pulled the lever on Saturday can take the Communion bread and wine on Sunday. The most ignoble criminals in this country are the men who are deceiving the workers by misleading articles in the subsidized Press while they are robbing them wholesale by "profiteering," who are starving them by keeping them from the free use of the land, and by limiting the supply of banking facilities; and these men are all members of the Church, or may be.

The Church wants God in the constitution, but it cares nothing for justice in society. It wants the Bible in the national schools, but it cares nothing for the Golden Rule in business. It says we must not break the Sabbath, but it does not say to the greedy capitalist: "You must not break that poor woman's back over a sewing machine." It tells you to worship Christ, but if you try to follow his precepts it will persecute you. It tells the workers to be thrifty and contented instead of telling their exploiters to get off their backs. It tells the idle rich to be charitable instead of telling them to stop robbing the workers. It encourages the suppression and imprisonment of reformers instead of studying and trying to answer what they have to say. It points the eye of faith to a future world of everlasting bliss, but encourages the hand of the profiteer to lay up treasures in this poor vale of tears. It preaches the blessedness of poverty, while its high priests revel in the luxury of wealth. It loves respectability much more than righteousness, and hates social obscurity worse than sin. It is intrinsically and necessarily bad. It cannot be reformed. It must go!

G. O. Warren.

Arnold Bennett.

Many of us must have rubbed our eyes with astonishment when, a few weeks before the end of hostilities, it was announced that Mr. Arnold Bennett had been called to the Ministry of Information. To any one who knew what a Government department was like, the fact that our rulers had ever heard of the existence of Mr. Bennett, let alone that they should have decided to trust him with so important a branch of war-work as publicity and propaganda, must have appeared to signalize the end of an epoch.

Mr. Bennett is, with the solitary exception of Mr. Thomas Hardy, the greatest living writer of English fiction. He stands above Mr. Hewlett and Mr. Wells—his two closest competitors—by his freedom from the one's slight affectations in style, and from the other's recurrent tendency to caricature. It is a sign of the times that all these four first-rate novelists are Freethinkers. Each one of them is certain to be banned by any orthodox religious family as "unpleasant"—the best compliment that the orthodox religious public are able to pay to any writer. Yet, with all their community of thought, these writers are curiously contrasted, particularly Mr. Hardy and Mr. Bennett. Both are Rationalists and Monists to the core; but while Mr. Hardy's outlook on life is mainly pessimistic, Mr. Bennett is an aggressive and infectious optimist. He gives the impression of enjoying life, even at its worst; and he nearly, even if not quite, succeeds in making you enjoy it too.

Mr. Bennett stands at the head of the small group of novelists and playwrights, among whom the late Stanley Houghton was the principal of the lesser lights, whose function it has been to give literary expression to the life of the industrial north. To us southerners—I speak as one who is bound by iron chains to the metropolis, and whose visits north of the Trent have been few and fleeting—this literary movement has been a delight and a revelation. "Bursley" and "Knype," "Hanbridge" and "Bleakridge"—to quote the names under which Mr. Bennett thinly disguises his native haunts—

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may be quite horrible places to those who dwell therein, but to his southern readers they are holy ground, like Mecca and Medina to good Moslems. Some day I shall make a pilgrimage thither. Probably the trams and shops and mud in the Five Towns are very like the trams and shops and mud in other towns; but to me they will not be so. They will be transfigured by the imaginary presence of Mr. Bennett's creations—Edwin Clayhanger, the romantic master printer; the goodly fellowship of the Orgreave family; and the tyrannical, incalculable, but irresistible Hilda Lessways.

The trilogy of which these characters are the centre is Mr. Bennett's masterpiece. The three novels, *Clayhanger*, *Hilda Lessways*, and *These Twain*, form a veritable prose epic of the Victorian era. Let no clerical hand open these profane volumes: let good church-goers eschew them, and let Pleasant Sunday Afternoons be kept pure from their polluting influence! The spirit of Freethought, humanitarianism, the love of *this* world, blows through them from cover to cover like a fresh breeze. Begin at the beginning; read the burning description of early Victorian industrialism in the fourth and fifth chapters of *Clayhanger*, with its child-slavery and Methodist religiosity. That is the City of Destruction from which Mr. Bennett's pilgrims start upon their journey. In its progress we come across, in due order, all the main incidents of the fight for freedom: the Colenso controversy and the Bradlaugh episode duly figure in the story. The last is, in fact, made the occasion for the first mutual encounter of the hero and heroine. No reader of Mr. Bennett will forget the scene at dinner, where Edwin is asked by his host: "Are you a Bradlaugh man?"

"And Edwin, uplifted, said: 'All I say is—you can't help what you believe. You can't make yourself believe anything. And I don't see why you should, either. There's no virtue in believing.'"

Nor will any reader forget the scene later that night, when Hilda pursues Edwin into his garden to ask: "Did you mean it when you said—you know, at supper—that there's no virtue in believing?"

"Did I say there was no virtue in believing?" he stammeringly demanded.

"Of course you did!" she remonstrated. "Do you mean to say you can say a thing like that and then forget about it? If it's true, it's one of the most wonderful things that were ever said!"

Or the description of the Sunday-school Centenary, with the crowds in the Square singing, "There is a fountain filled with blood," and Edwin's comment: "Look at it! It only wants the Ganges at the bottom of the Square—"

Thus do Mr. Bennett's characters slowly win their way from mid-Victorian superstition to the freer atmosphere of modern days. But it is not only to religious orthodoxy that he flings down the gauntlet. Thomas Hardy issued a terse challenge to conventional morality when he gave his novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the subtitle, *A Pure Woman*, in protest, as he says in the preface, against the current "inability to associate the idea of the title-adjective with any but the artificial and derivative meaning which has resulted to it from the ordinances of civilization." Mr. Bennett's challenge is less terse, but no less emphatic, when he makes his heroine, after falling victim to a bigamist, end up as the admired and respected mistress of a prosperous household. If the book had been written twenty years earlier, there would have been an outcry. In the second decade of the twentieth century it was a safe venture; the teeth of Grundyesque convention must by now be nearly all drawn. Mr. Bennett himself had helped to prepare the ground in one of the best of his earlier stories, *Sacred and Profane Love*, in which the distinction between sanctity and profanity certainly does not turn upon the presence or absence of the wedding ring.

If Mr. Bennett's readers have any just cause of complaint against him, it is that his Hilda and Edwin, after going through fire and water in two whole novels to get each other, develop in the third volume a rather disconcerting predilection for quarrelling on small occasions. Two people of such superior metal, we cannot help feeling, ought to have taken a shorter time to discover the secret of success in marriage. It may be that Mr. Bennett, having allowed some years to elapse between the second and third novels of his trilogy, had a little lost touch with his characters. More likely it is only his way of showing us, incorrigible optimist as he is, that he enjoys life and everything in it—matrimonial quarrels and all!

In Mr. Bennett's interest and sympathy with life in all its phases, there is something reminiscent of French rather than English fiction—particularly recalling Anatole France. This native of the Five Towns, going forth into the world and becoming imbued with the free spirit of Gaul, has returned, as it were, to turn the rays of French common-sense and reason upon the uncouthness and angularity of English provincial Puritanism. It may safely be said that English fiction will never again be quite the same as if he had never touched it. A Democrat, a Freethinker, a Materialist in the best sense of that vilified word, Mr. Bennett has borne a gallant part in the war of human liberation, and contributed not a little to the downfall of the doleful cult of Stiggins and Chadband in this corner of the planet.

ROBERT ARCH.

Correspondence.

EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS INTERNATIONAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to draw attention in your columns to an education movement (based on the subjoined proposals), which but for the War would have been definitely established at the International Socialist Congress arranged to take place at Vienna in August, 1914? The movement is of necessity of an anti-clerical character, and is much needed in the British Labour movement, whose "leaders" have so shamefully capitulated to the forces of reaction in the matter of the clerical education legislation of 1902 and 1903, legislation, by the way, which the Labour Party were returned to Parliament in 1906 pledged up to the hilt to reverse. How far those pledges have been fulfilled is shown by the meek, indeed enthusiastic acceptance by the Labour Party of Mr. Fisher's Education Bill, which was frankly based on the legislation of 1902 and 1903.

It is worthy of note that an amendment moved by Mr. Joseph King that there should be no religious tests for teachers, received no support from the Labour Party.

I suggest that the many capable Freethought lecturers who visit industrial centres should invite their Trade Union sympathisers to discuss with Labour M.P.'s the following question: "How far has the advent of Organized Labour as a political force tended to further democratic principles in education politics?"

This question was one, which prior to the War, engaged the attention of capable research students in this and other countries, and it became ever more clear that there was need for an international working-class education movement, by means of which rank-and-file students of the British Labour movement could obtain the assistance, in matters educational, of educationists in those Labour movements in other countries, which are not, like the British Labour movement, so dominated by clerical influences.

Therefore, a movement was set on foot based on the following proposals:—

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1. An International Federation of such Labour colleges in various countries as are provided and controlled by working-class organizations.

2. An International Working-class Students' Union; and in order to secure the rank and file character of this union, the *unit* to be, not Labour and Socialist "leaders," or great committees of such "leaders," but the *class* (controlled by the workers) for the study of the principles of International Socialism.

3. An International system of travelling scholarships to secure an interchange of lecturers between various countries, and also to enable working men and working women students to visit, and to study the educational systems of, other countries than their own, and to report to their organizations.

4. An International Socialist Library, to bring within reach of working-class students translations of the best works on Socialism and Education published in various countries.

5. That, under the auspices of this Education Movement, there should be held, side by side with the International Socialist *Political* Congress, an Education Congress, for the purpose of furthering the education of the workers in all countries.

This scheme will ere long be carried into realization. The difficulties will be great, in spite of the fact that it will receive warm support from many influential fighters for intellectual liberty in other countries. In the meantime, it is desirable that the proposals on which it is based should be known to, and discussed by, all Britishers who wish to help the younger and brighter spirits in the British Trade Union Movement in their uphill fight against the forces of reaction in British education. Amongst those forces of reaction, I myself, after over twenty years' work in the Labour Movement, unhesitatingly place the *British high Labour and Socialist bureaucracy*.

M. Bridges Adams.

LIFE AFTER DEATH.

Sir,—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle attempts to answer my question as to why the spirit communications are never of any general interest by stating that I do not realize the limitations of psychic phenomena. But surely it is as easy for the spirit of a drowned sailor to say how he came by his death as to say how happy he now is having the enjoyment of spiritual whisky and cigars, as revealed by Sir Oliver Lodge's son Raymond.

I have just finished Sir Arthur's *New Revelation*, and find there is nothing new in it beyond the title, the spiritual yarns therein recounted having been forestalled by that of the Witch of Endor in the quaint old Book, and not nearly so well told. And, so far from Mr. Maskelyne's tricks being plausible imitations of spirit phenomena, it is much more true to say that his clever tricks were exploited by smart "mediums" for the gulling of simple and honest Spiritualists. Like all the other spiritual revelations I have read, Sir Arthur's book only confirmed my previous view, that when the spooks fly in at the window common sense walks out at the door.

G. O. Warren (Major).

Obituary.

On the 4th inst., at West Herrington Churchyard, near Fence Houses, were interred the remains of Mr. Andrew Shiel, who died in his sixty-first year at New Herrington. At the graveside the Secretary of the South Shields Branch through whom deceased had kept in touch with the Secular Movement in recent years, in a few words expressed the sympathy of the Party with the sorrowing relatives and friends. It was with deep regret they had received the last request for a Secular Burial Service. Mr. J. Fothergill gave an impressive reading of Mr. Austin Holyoake's appropriate words, and Mr. R. Nuttall, General Secretary, Northumberland and Durham Colliery Officials' Association, added a touching tribute of respect, acknowledging the loss of a useful and worthy member. Mr. Martin Weatherburn (Newcastle) and Mr. and Mrs. Wright (Penshaw) and others were present. Mr. Shiel was born at Tweedmouth, and many years ago was an active worker in the Cramlington (Northumberland) Branch. Up to his last serious illness he was a steady supporter of the *Freethinker* and the Cause.—R. C. (South Shields).

On December 7 a small gathering of relations and friends attended the funeral of Mr. Jas. Wilson, of Falkirk, who died on December 5 from influenza-pneumonia. He was fifty-one years of age, and leaves a widow and four children. He was a staunch Freethinker, and had been a loyal and zealous Secretary of the local Branch of the N.S.S. since its inception. He was keenly interested, and took an active part in social economic questions. More for the sake of propaganda than for profit, he ran a bookstall, and at most meetings could be seen with a selection of progressive literature for sale. To know him was to like him, and he will be greatly missed by a large circle of friends. Mr. Wilson viewed his approaching end with characteristic courage, and gave instructions that his funeral was to be a purely secular one. Accordingly the ceremony at the graveside consisted merely of a short address by the writer of this notice, who feelingly referred to Mr. Wilson's many excellent qualities of head and heart.—Handel Lancaster.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

Metropolitan Secular Society (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, W., near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Yates, A Lecture.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Miss Nina Boyle, "Our Dishonest Press." Open Debate.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Joseph McCabe, "Is It a New England?"

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Yates, Saphin, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Barnsley Branch N. S. S. (Irving's Studio, 48 Sheffield Road): Tuesday, December 17, 7.30, Mr. T. Lamb, "Voltaire."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, "Did Jesus Ever Live?"

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, "A Confession of Faith."

Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. F. E. Marks, "The Lesson of the Bowman Case."

Nuneaton Branch N. S. S. (The Palace, Queen's Road): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 2.45, "The New World and the Old Faith"; 6.30, "Christianity, Freethought, and the Labour Movement."

Rhondda Branch N. S. S. (Morley's Restaurant, Perth): 2.30, Important Business Meeting.

Sheffield Ethical Society (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Minshall, "Oliver Wendell Holmes."

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Christians and Christmas.—The Editor	649
Christmas.—J. T. Lloyd	650
A Footnote to History.—Mimnermus	651
Justice, Human and Divine.—J. Effel	652
Our Day—January 5, 1919—Chapman Cohen	655
"Conceivability."—Keridon	656
Man's Feline Friend.—T. F. Palmer	667
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	658

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Christians and Christmas.

From beginning to end Christianity is a bundle of contradictions. Its doctrines and beliefs are as contradictory to each other as are its precepts to its practice. It has an almighty Creator whose will is always being overcome by his creatures, and whose wisdom is seldom equal to the cunning of man. It preaches love and has been more successful in rousing hatred than any other religion in the world. It prescribes peace and Christians are everywhere foremost in waging war. Young Men's Christian Temperance Associations are evidence that it has, after centuries of rule, failed to make sobriety a habit among Christians. Societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals and to children prove how far Christianity is from making kindness characteristic of its followers. It has sown history thick with falsehood in the service of religious truth. The records of popes, and priests, and of the Churches prove that Christian history gives an air of plausability to but one orthodox doctrine—that of human depravity.

* * *

Christmas and Christ.

The contradiction that obtains in Christian doctrines and practices dogs it in its festivals. Look at the present festival of Christmas! Traditionally Father Christmas is a jolly, red-faced fellow, full of kindness and good nature. But Jesus Christ, whose birth is supposed to have been on Christmas day, is the very reverse of this—a pale, emaciated figure of suffering, as far removed as possible from plum pudding, and turkey, and general jollification. Christians believe in the one, their practice points to the other. If the youngsters saw Father Christmas enter the room they would shriek with delight, and he would reign the unquestioned king of their affections. If they saw the traditional "Man of Sorrows" they would shriek with fear and run to the sides of their mothers. Human nature has been too strong for the Churches. The logic of life has shown itself more powerful than the logic of faith, and as December the 25th was a period of rejoicing long before Christianity was born, so it may remain such when Christianity has taken its place in a museum of anthropology. About the pre-Christian rejoicing there was reason and logic even though of a crude kind. Christianity succeeded only in making the festival religiously ridiculous.

Who was Born on Christmas Day?

Was Jesus born on the 25th of December? Nobody knows. Irenæus and Tertullian give the year 3 B.C. as the date of his birth. Luke's account would make it about seven years later. Canon Farrar thought it should be 4 B.C. Some have placed it much earlier, and others a little later. Our accepted chronology really dates from the sixth century. The monk Dionysius decided the exact date. And imagine the trustworthiness of fixing the date of a birth that was believed to have occurred some five centuries and a quarter before, and in a period when registry offices were unknown and no records were available. But there is a reason for fixing the 25th of December as the birthday of the Son of God; it was a favourite day for the birthdays of gods, and there is a fashion in these things. In pre-Christian Syria and Egypt, says Frazer, writing of the annual rebirth of the solar deity, "the celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued with a loud cry, "The Virgin has brought forth. The light is waxing!" In the Mithraic cult, which bore so striking a resemblance to Christianity, the birthday of Mithra was celebrated on December 25. The Egyptians exhibited a new-born god, lying in a manger, on that date. Bacchus and Adonis also had their birthdays on this date, and a Syrian Christian writer, cited by Frazer, says very frankly:—

> It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same 25th of December the birthday of the sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to the festival; they took counsel, and resolved that the true nativity should be solemnized on that day.

Decidedly, there is a fashion in these things. And for ourselves, we believe the evidence for one birth is quite as good as the evidence for another.

* * *

What Happens on Christmas Day?

The truth is that December 25 does not connote the birthday of a particular historic person; it is the anniversary of an event. The recognition of this event dates far beyond the time of Christianity, and to a much wider area than is covered by Christian influence. And one cannot even understand the origin and nature of Churches without putting one's self in the mental position of our primitive ancestors, to whom "natural law" was unknown, and who saw in all natural processes the operations of supernatural agents. To these, the decline of the power of the sun and the dying of vegetation were portents full of disaster. Magic is resorted to in order to help the sun regain its lost strength; and, as Frazer suggests, we have in the kindling of the Yule log a survival of a wide-spread sympathetic magical ceremony which aimed at strengthening the heat of the sun by kindling fires on earth. And as a matter of fact, the African Bushman to-day follows exactly this plan at midwinter, to the same end. At any rate, there is no doubt whatever that Christmas is the old Pagan festival, which in its turn was derived from the s

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belief already noted. And with this as a key, all the customs connected with Christmas are explainable. The misletoe comes to us from the Druids, who saw in it the retreating place of the spirit of vegetation. The rebirth of the infant Sun-God is plainly a symbol of the recovery of the sun after reaching its lowest point in the heavens. The general rejoicings is the delight of a people on receiving assurance of the continuance of the life of vegetation. Even the decoration of houses with evergreens is a practice of Pagan origin, the purpose being, as one authority writes, to provide the sylvan spirits with a shelter, so that they might remain "unnipped with frost and cold winds, until a milder reason had renewed the foliage of their darling abodes." In their origin all these things have a crude logic attaching to them. As survivals, they are interestingly pretty. But Christianity, by the attempt to connect them with an historical event, only ends in making them ridiculous.

* * *

The Origin of Gods.

There is no longer room for reasonable doubt that both Christmas and Easter are very ancient festivals, or that the current form of the Christ-myth represents a blend of the vegetation and solar deities—the two being ultimately one. Sacred trees are among the commonest objects of religious worship, and the god, as Robertson Smith points out, inhabits the tree "not in the sense in which a man inhabits a house, but in the sense in which his soul inhabits his body." And if we ask why *this* belief, we are brought back to the very origin, or, at least, one of the main sources, of the belief in gods. There is room here for some doubt as to the precise stages of the process, but none as to its main character. To begin with, primitive people invariably attribute the operations of nature to "spirits," amongst whom the tribal ghosts are prominent. If the crops are plentiful or scarce, it is because the tribal spirits are pleased or angry. And Mr. Grant Allen, in his essay on *The Attis* of Catullus, has given a very plausible theory why ghosts or gods should have become identified with vegetation. First, the tumulus over a dead body is freshly turned earth. Next, food is scattered over the grave to feed the ghost. Animals are killed on the grave, and their blood soaks into the earth. The result is that vegetation is likely to be richer on and around the grave than elsewhere. But this is not due to the better-fed soil, but to the activity of the ghost. It is the life of the ghost manifesting itself in vegetation, and the extension of the idea to vegetation in general is not a difficult step. And from the belief that fertility is due to ghostly action to the practice of creating a ghost, or a god, for the purpose of securing good crops is another easy step. And Professor Frazer has shown universally this has been taken. In this connection we must refer readers to the last-named author for proof that Christ is one of a group of vegetation deities annually slain to be born again in the new crops. Professor Frazer will supply scores of examples of the practice of killing someone annually, and either burying him whole or in parts to secure abundant crops. All the details of the Christian myth are there. The selection of a victim, the giving of royal or divine honours, the killing of the god, and his resurrection in the renewed life of the world. Other and later ceremonies naturally get associated with Christianity, but anthropology supplies the key to the whole. In the beliefs of the most primitive of contemporary races, we see a survival of that original frame of mind which gave religions birth. The Christian religion is to-day a principal representative of a dying superstition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The superiority of a learned man over a mere worshipper is like that of the full moon over all the stars.—*Mohammed.*

Christmas.

It is beautiful to give one day to the ideal—to have one day apart; one day for generous deeds, for good will, for gladness; one day to forget the shadows, the rains, the storms of life; to remember the sunshine, the happiness of youth and health; one day to forget the briers and thorns of the winding path, to remember the fruits and flowers; one day in which to feed the hungry, to salute the poor and lowly; one day to feel the brotherhood of man; one day to remember the heroic and loving deeds of the dead; one day to get acquainted with children, to remember the old, the unfortunate, and the imprisoned; one day in which to forget yourself and think lovingly of others.....; one day in which bonds and stocks and deeds and notes and interest and mortgages and all kinds of business and trade are forgotten, and all stores and shops and factories and offices and banks and ledgers and accounts and lawsuits are cast aside, put away and locked up, and the weary heart and brain are given a voyage to fairyland.—*Ingersoll*, "*Works*," vol. xii., pp. 351.

Christmas is here:
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill,
Little care we:
Little we fear
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The Mahogany Tree. —*Thackeray.*

SUCH is the day we are about to celebrate—a day of universal rejoicing which all mankind in the Northern hemisphere can justly claim as their own; a day on which to say, with the poet:—

Sorrows, begone!
Life and its ills,
Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.

It is the day of great and precious promises which have never yet been broken, the anniversary of the sun's return and life's sweet birthday. In short, it is Nature's supreme Gift-day, and it has, in consequence, become a day of general giving. On this account it is a pre-eminently popular day with both young and old. The Christmas-box and the Christmas tree, with Father Christmas behind and above both, how eagerly they are looked forward to, and how thoroughly enjoyed when they come. "What I want for Christmas" is by no means an uncommon expression, and the following is a partial list of the late Colonel Ingersoll's Christmas wants:—

I would have all the nobility drop their titles and give their lands back to the people. I would have the Pope throw away his tiara, take off his sacred vestments, and admit that he is not acting for God—is not infallible—but is just an ordinary Italian. I would have all the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, and clergymen admit that they know nothing about theology, nothing about hell or heaven, nothing about the destiny of the human race, nothing about devils or ghosts, gods or angels. I would have them tell all their "flocks" to think for themselves, to be manly men and womanly women, to do all in their power to increase the sum of human happiness. I would have all the professors in colleges, all the teachers in schools of every kind, including those in Sunday-schools, agree that they would teach only what they know, that they would not palm off guesses as demonstrated truths (*Works*, vol. xi., p. 375).

Christmas is an egregious misnomer, and represents stolen property. Christ belongs to the region of mythology, like Attis, Adonis, or Dionysus, and Christianity put itself in line with other supernatural religions by fixing the date of the birth of its Redeemer on the 25th of December. It is highly significant, to say the least, that the two most important Christian festivals—Christmas and Easter—should owe their origin to the sun and be closely associated with vegetation. As a cult, Paganism was forcibly suppressed, but most of its

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customs, and not a few of its doctrines, were appropriated without acknowledgment by the Christian Church. Yes, the Lamb's Bride waged brutal wars against her rivals, and, having gained the victory, indulged in wholesale looting, although by an ingenious system of camouflage, she has endeavoured to cover up all traces of the theft which becomes, in her vocabulary, sanctification. Thus, as we closely scrutinize it, the *Christ mass* is seen to be the worst species of fraud attached to a myth. On Christmas Day the pulpit will repeat the old lie under the guise of holiest truth, and the congregations will respond in some such deeply poetic lines as the following:—

O come all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sometimes Freethinkers are accused of the unspeakable folly of flogging a dead horse; but, unfortunately, the sentimental trash enshrined in the doggerel just quoted is not an outgrown weakness of which the present generation of Christians is heartily ashamed, but a living absurdity, gloried in by myriads of devout believers throughout Christendom, who, while listening to or joining in the singing thereof, are lifted up to what they regard as an altogether seraphic frame of mind. We even pay the clergy the compliment of admitting that multitudes of them sincerely believe that they are in touch with the grandest reality in the universe when they interpret the message of Christmas in terms of the Evangelical Christian faith; but that admission does not blind us to the fact that, despite their intense sincerity, they must be placed in the same category as all the Pagan priests of whom they often speak with withering contempt. The herald angels' song, "Glory to the new-born king, Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled," is fully as unreal as the angels themselves; and they who repeat it to-day dare not seriously face the facts at which they so pitifully mock. In the *Christian Commonwealth* for December 11, there is an exceptionally eloquent sermon by Dr. Fort Newton, in which he deals with the question: "Does God speak to man now? If so, how?" We agree with the reverend gentleman when he says that "what was true in the long ago is true to-day"; but we totally disagree with his bold assertion that God *did* speak to man in the long ago, an assertion of the truth of which he adduces not a single scrap of evidence. With seeming *naivete* he says: "Argument is not needed; the fact proves it." We respectfully ask, which fact? We challenge him to produce a single fact from any period in Christian history which may honestly be taken as a verification of the angelic song recorded in the Gospels. There is nothing easier for a person of an emotional temperament than to appeal to what he calls religious experience in the conviction that what is true in experience is also true in outward fact. Benvenuto Cellini enjoyed daily communion with God, and he could not find words sufficiently strong to describe the rich, uplifting, spiritual visions graciously vouchsafed to him from time to time; but the whole world knows that God's dealings with Cellini did not result in the transformation and ennoblement of his character. And history supplies us with innumerable instances of the same kind. Cellini had the experience because he had the faith; but that there was a God behind his faith who really revealed himself to him is utterly incredible to those who are familiar with the man's *Memoirs*, written by himself. The new-born King came to redeem the world, to deliver it from its devastating evils, and to fill it with the love and practice of righteousness and truth; but no one acquainted with the history of Christendom can have the hardihood to affirm that his self-appointed mission has been fulfilled. So far as the regeneration and purification of human society is concerned he was born absolutely in vain, and Christmas is the ghastliest farce in existence. But the grand old Sun has never failed us, never broken a promise, never been a moment before or behind the appointed time, and him, as the world's only real Saviour, we may, at this season of the year, address in the words of the Hebrew poet:—

Thou visitest the earth and waterest it,
Thou greatly enrichest it;
Thy river is full of water;
Thou providest them corn, for so preparest thou the earth.
Thou waterest her furrows abundantly;
Thou settlest the ridges thereof;
Thou makest it soft with showers;
Thou blessest the springing thereof.
Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
And thy paths drop fatness.

J. T. Lloyd.

A Footnote to History.

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.—*John Milton.*

Universal tolerance is the very soul of happiness to a populous and enlightened nation.—*Napoleon.*

The year 1881 was an eventful one. Two things happened which thrilled the world. Amid the Northern snows the white czar Alexander was assassinated, and away in the Great Republic of the West President Garfield met with a similar fate. During that year Charles Bradlaugh, the intrepid leader of English Freethought, was dragged out of the House of Commons during a struggle that was so fierce that the muscles of his arms were ruptured and his clothes torn to ribbons. For all that, he was as cool and self-possessed as he was on the day when he handed the N. S. S. presidential hammer to his successor, George William Foote, the first editor of the *Freethinker*, which was founded the same year.

The story of the *Freethinker* is one of the publishing romances of the world. Its advent in 1881 created a furore in advanced circles, for the new periodical was the last word in audacity. Orthodoxy, so far as it condescended to notice it, dismissed it with a sneer or a light laugh. But it was not to be sneered or laughed down, and presently it was seen that the editor knew his business. There were brains and enterprise in its pages, and it began to be talked about. Its avowed policy was waging war against superstition in general and the Christian superstition in particular. Published at a popular price, edited in a lively style, it succeeded from the first. Curiously, it was the infamous treatment of Bradlaugh by the bigots that created Foote's militancy. He has told us that he was until then practically ignorant of the spirit of persecution, and with the generous enthusiasm of youth, he fondly imagined that the period of combat was ended, and that Freethinkers had nothing else to do but to devote themselves to purely constructive work. He was rudely disillusioned by the logic of events. The illusions of hope were rudely dispelled by the insults levelled at Bradlaugh; by the disgraceful scenes in the House of Commons; by the continuous and crippling litigation; by the attacks on Mrs. Besant, when ruffians struck her and threw lime at her. It was then that Foote recognised that it was war to the end. He drew his sword,

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threw away the scabbard, and rushed to the side of his chief.

Like the brave Spartan that he was, Foote drew the enemies' spears to his own breast. Three times was he tried for blasphemy, and he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment as an ordinary criminal. "Thank you, my lord, your sentence is worthy of your creed," he remarked to the Catholic Judge North, who tried him. His sacrifice was not in vain. During this Homeric struggle the Freethought party increased in numbers and influence, and since then there has been no looking back.

Probably no journal in the world had so loyal a staff as the *Freethinker*, and this was one of the things that contributed to its success. The capital at command was a drop in a bucket, but the enthusiasm of the writers was as boundless as the ocean. To merely recite the names of the contributors is to mention some of the best-known names in the Freethought movement. Indeed, the services of the *Freethinker* can hardly be over-estimated. It kindled a new spirit in intellectual circles, popularized secular propaganda, and gave the apostles of liberty a new feeling of actuality and power. For thirty-eight years it has stood for Liberty of Thought. Thirty-eight years—half an old man's life, and the whole of a young man's. During those years Freethought, it may confidently be asserted, has progressed more rapidly than during any preceding half century.

The canvas of 1881, the year in which the *Freethinker* was born, was crowded with men and women of strong personality. It seems so long ago that many are but clouded memories now. Gone are most of the familiar faces, but through the clouds appear the smiling features of our old comrades-in-arms: F. J. Gould, Arthur B. Moss, and William Heaford, three of the staunchest veterans who ever wore the uniform of the army of human liberation.

For sixteen years the pages of the *Freethinker* were enriched by the scholarly contributions of Joseph Wheeler, the sub-editor. A journalist, he belonged to a profession of which not even the leisure is leisurely. The gentlest and most lovable of Bohemians, he carried a weight of learning easily. His frail body harboured an indomitable spirit. Away from his beloved books, he was whimsical, cross, kind, and amusing. We all loved him, and wondered "one small head could carry all he knew." The acquisition of knowledge was an instinct with him. As Chopin took to music, he took to books from boyhood. He handled them and made them part of himself. Into the pages of the *Freethinker* he put all his talents. A quiet scholar, he did his duty throughout a very stormy period. Instead of repining, he turned with unappeasable energy to help the Cause through greater ordeals than it had yet weathered. That was the sort of man he was, and that is why his memory shines with a spotless and concentrated lustre.

The contributors pass, but the journal remains. The *Freethinker* is thirty-eight years old, and, under its present editor, is more alive, more active, more full of ideas, and more widely circulating to-day than at any period of its long and eventful history.

MIMNERMUS.

There is no hostility so admirable as the Christian. Our zeal performs wonders, when it seconds our inclinations to hatred, cruelty, ambition, avarice, detraction, and rebellion; but when it moves against the hair towards bounty, benignity and temperance, unless, by some miracle, some rare and virtuous disposition prompts us to it, we stir neither hand nor foot. Our religion is intended to extirpate vices, whereas it screens, nourishes, and incites them.—*Montaigne.*

Justice, Human and Divine.

SOLEMNITY oft struts the stage too long, and tearful Tragedy, her tawdry trappings torn, loses our regard, for in the midst of death we are in mirth.

I have been cursed with a sense of humour, but I am not one of those who see "humour in all things." To my mind there is not a redeeming feature about the horrible murder of a little Belfast child by an epileptic youth, and one can only sympathize with judge and jury whose duty it was to deal with the sordid story, and to determine the fate of the perverted wretch guilty of such an appalling act. But when I read of seven learned judges sitting in solemn conclave in Dublin—during the progress of the War—to discuss and to argue the point, not whether Joseph Fitt was to be executed for murder, but whether it was in accordance with the law that a judge should pass a sentence upon him which everyone knew would never be carried out—then, I must admit, the comic opera aspect forced itself upon me.

In his famous theory of value, Karl Marx speaks of "socially necessary" labour. That phrase burnt itself into my mind, and fired my imagination so much, that it has become a habit with me to divide things—broadly speaking—into the "socially necessary" and the "socially wasteful." I cannot dismiss the meeting of the seven authorities on justice merely with a laugh and a shrug of the shoulders. The social aspect of their council is untouched by their decision as to whether a murderer of fifteen years of age may or may not be sentenced to death. What does concern me, as a serious-minded man, is the frightful waste of human labour involved in the administration of "Justice" in this and similar cases. We have been told that only by the most rigid economy could the War be won. I have scrupulously obeyed the requests to refrain from burning unnecessary lights (and even necessary ones) in the "halls and corridors" of my Ballymacarrett dug-out, although we have found it impossible to "cut down the number of hot baths in our household." Lest ambiguity may obscure my meaning here, let me say that the only place one could take a bath is in the yard, which a neighbouring lady actually does, to the infinite amusement of the lieges. We never have a fire in our bedroom, there being no grate; besides, we have no coal, so we have been doing our bit. But when I think of the seven occupants of my seven-foot square kitchen, in which physical exercise with a feline would be somewhat restricted, and our enforced "economies," and then think of the appalling waste occasioned by the seven learned jugglers with the jargon of justice, my humour is apt to be a trifle acid. Seven highly educated men, trained in universities, and living cultured, easy lives, fed, clothed, and housed in comfort and security by honest men's toil, and at a time of great national stress, the best service they render society is to split hairs concerning the age when a miscreant may receive sentence of death!

There might be some consolation if any justice emerged from the Dublin deliberations, but the crime and its problem remain just as they were. The inefficacy of punitive vengeance considered as a synonym for justice was illustrated to me several years ago by the facts of an execution in France. The culprit had outraged and murdered a young girl, and her father had been allowed to witness, at close quarters, the expiation of the crime. When Deibler's victim had "spat in the basket"—to use the playful argot of the French mob—a fatuous functionaire remarked, "Now monsieur would be satisfied." "Yes," replied the bewildered parent, "justice has been done, I know; but that does not give

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me back my daughter." I am making no maudlin plea here for the better treatment of assassins; certainly it would appear kinder and saner to cut short the career of a ruffian than to waste the lifetime of several men in caging him up. But I am thinking of justice in this respect; not what the wicked flee from, our enemies are brought to, and the unfortunate have "administered" to them, but rather the feeling that "to know all is to forgive all." Certainly, to have this in mind, to avoid all punishment that is vindictive, to give wherever possible a real chance for evil-doers to mend their ways, are ideas which are commending themselves to progressive thinkers the world over. Even the seven luminaries whose deliberations I have ridiculed were occupied in discussing the application of a point which, after all, has something humane about it—that the death penalty should not be imposed on a child under sixteen.

When, however, we turn from the human to the divine, we find that if there is sometimes a glimmering of kindness, a soupcon of sanity, here and there a spirit of forgiveness in our all too unjust "justice," earthly judges, even of the flogging and hanging variety, are all gentleness and wisdom when compared to the Great Judge whose monstrous verdicts and sentences are applauded by believers. Granted that the laws of the land might be saner, and that the wise ones might with advantage be better administered, it is nothing short of cant to talk of squaring our justice with humanitarian principles, while glorifying this unreasoning and bloody-minded Jehovah. I like a little consistency now and then. To blame the human, to approve the divine, for the same or worse conduct is the method of Christians. No sane man can give a good excuse for the Germans' sinking of the *Lusitania* in war-time; but every Christian will say there was "some good purpose" in the torpedoing by iceberg of the *Titanic* in time of peace by the Heavenly Hun! Now, if I were a Christian judge, and living up to the principles of counting hairs and visiting iniquities of the parents on the children, I'd give a man fifty years' penal servitude for saying "damn," and hang a little child if it was proved that his grandfather stole apples; for if God is good and wise and just in holding every soldier to account for each idle word spoken, in suffering the good to be killed to point a moral to the wicked, to "punish" the innocent for the faults of others, to forgive ruffians a lifetime of villainy merely for an act of credulity, to condemn to eternal suffering noble-minded men and women whose time was too fully occupied in making this world a better place to live in—then it is illogical to carp at our judicial errors. Yes, if that frightful Ogre is to be believed in, and little children taught at school that all the hooligan characteristics of the Bible God are compatible with love and charity, the less we say about the injustice of human beings, the better. There are no juries, no consultations, with God (unless the three persons debate among themselves), no counsel for the defence, no Appeal Court, no half measures, no short sentences. With Judge Jehovah, Jefferies is out-bloodied, and God's justice is infinitely more drastic than Cromwell's "To hell or Connaught."

Justice, even in the narrow sense in which the word is ordinarily employed is not at all a simple matter, and the factors are so many and diverse that even crediting men with the best of intentions, only approximately just verdicts can be arrived at. If a drunk man blacked his wife's eye I would not condemn the magistrate who disregarded the man's plea that his heredity was to blame, and sent him to the cells; but I would stick up for the ruffian who used the same argument to Almighty God. A police magistrate might well say: "I've no time to discuss Determinism here with a man who knocks his wife about. Seven days without the option." But if the drunkard told God all the facts of the case (if that were not superfluous) then he ought reasonably to expect that the All-wise Father would acquit him, instead of which he would be told peremptorily to go to hell, unless in his last earthly drunken delirium he had expressed a belief in Jesus the Saviour, when the verdict would be heavenly glory (and uncongenial company) for eternity.

Freethinkers are willing to believe that Christians are better than their creed, although humanitarian reformers have had the greatest obstacles put in their way by men of profound religious conviction who have always justified cruelties and horrors in the name of the God of love. Until the fear of a Heavenly Father, who seems to be a celestial Whackford Squeers, and the reliance upon brutal precepts from Holy Writ, as guiding principles for our conduct are completely banished from men's minds, social evils can scarcely be appreciably ameliorated, for, even in the restricted sense in which human justice is commonly regarded, Christianity has proved to be a positive hindrance to humanitarian effort.

High-souled men and women, whose lofty ideals transcend the police-court, see more in justice than the birching of boys, the jailing of housebreakers, undignified wrangling about a hypothetical black book, or repulsive strangling dignified by the black cap. While acquiescing in the principle of justice for all, these same reformers are chiefly concerned with *justice for all well-doers*. But such idealists whose conceptions of justice are based on a knowledge of the evolution of social forces, a wide toleration, fostered by experience, of all the idiosyncracies of individuals, a profound pity for the weak, and an instinctive detestation of punishment that merely perpetuates cruelty, such men and women have long outgrown the belief in the God whom Holy Willie apostrophizes:—

> Oh, thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell.
> Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
> Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell
> A' for thy glory,
> And no' for ony guid or ill,
> They've done afore thee.

J. Effel.

Acid Drops.

For fear the British people will not be so vengeful as they might be, the *Christian World* ex-Berlin Correspondent reminds its readers that a leading Roman Catholic journalist wrote in the early part of this year praising the sinking of the *Lusitania* with "joyful pride," and cites the Rev. Dr. Baumgarten as saying that the man who did not view that act with pride could be no true German. For our part, we beg to observe that both these expressions come from thoroughly Christian sources. And we have noticed throughout the War that, just as it was the civilian who—in his talk—was far more bloodthirsty than the soldier, so it was the keen Christian who showed most pleasure in the unavoidable brutality of warfare. We have culled quite a number of passages from religious sources gloating over shortness of food in Germany, and the mortality amongst women and children caused by the Allies' blockade. Less religious people regarded these things as some of the hateful—if inevitable—consequences of war, and said little about them.

The editors of the religious papers are trying hard to minimize the ex-Kaiser's piety, and the hired pen-pushers are obeying the editorial nod. The *Christian World* says: "All through the thirty years of his (the ex-Kaiser's) ascendancy men and women pointed to him, and declared that if he was the bright and shining example of the influence of religion on the hearts of men they would prefer to be without religion." Dear, dear! and the British and Foreign Bible Society used

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to point to Wilhelm as a "bright and shining example" of a Christian monarch, and solicit subscriptions on the strength of it.

The ex-Kaiser used to figure among the subscribers to the British and Foreign Bible Society, and only since the War has his name been deleted from the annual reports. His piety was so pronounced that on one occasion he actually forbade the erection of a statue to Heine on the grounds of the poet's infidelity. As a fact, no one doubted Wilhelm's religiosity until Christians found it convenient to drop him.

In the columns of a religious contemporary there are no less than twenty-two advertisements relating to patent medicines, hygiene and health. No wonder devout Christians declare "There is no health in us."

Busmen are supposed to take holiday by riding on other 'buses; but policemen have higher notions. Here is an advertisement from a provincial paper: "The Inspector of Police from Leman Street Police Station, London, will (D.V.) preach the Gospel in the —— hall on Sunday." This is a decided change from the announcement that a "reformed burglar" will speak, and, doubtless, the congregation will appreciate it.

Dr. Clifford, speaking at the National Liberal Club, said "the most religious document sent out recently was the 'Aims of Labour.'" The document, be it remembered, is pure, unadulterated Secularism.

A correspondent, writing from New Malden, Surrey, tells us that at a Rummage Sale held in his locality for the benefit of a church, there was found among the articles offered for sale a German Prayer-book. A discussion ensued as to what was to be done with it, for no English Christian patriot would read prayers in German. The suggestion that it should be thrown on a dustbin was rejected, and a Catholic clergyman —the name is given—decided that it should be publicly spat on and then burned. This was done, and the incident offers a fine example of the chastening and refining influence of religion in a time of war. Whatever unthinking savagery there is about people in war-time is certain to be intensified by religion.

A Sunday paper expresses astonishment that Westminster Abbey should contain the tomb of John Broughton, a former champion prizefighter. Some of the other deceased persons buried there were not nearly so respectable.

Godliness and gluttony are old stable companions. Commenting on the celebration of Thanksgiving Day by the Americans in England, the *Daily Chronicle* pointed out that the festival "shortened the lives of a great many turkeys." Anyhow, the birds had little reason for thanksgiving.

A special service was held at Southwark Cathedral to commemorate the baptism of John Harvard at the same church in 1607, and the sermon was preached by the Archbishop of York. It is fitting that a dying Church should hold services for dead men.

Newspaper paragraphs state that a sum of £60,000 is still required to complete the restoration of St. Paul's Cathedral. We should like to know the exact amount expended on that building from first to last. Supplying the clergy with money for its upkeep seems very like feeding sharks with sponge cakes.

How is it that so much literary criticism in the daily press seems as if it were written by the cricketing reporter temporarily out of work. In a review of Mrs. Barnett's book, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends*, in a London newspaper, it is calmly suggested that Herbert Spencer is the "most ludicrous of philosophers," and that it is the figure of Spencer "who gives most of the comic relief of Mrs. Barnett's book." Fortunately, Herbert Spencer's reputation is not in the hands of clergymen's wives, or even of penny-a-liners.

The *Daily News* recently published a letter urging that the clergy should be represented in the House of Commons, and stating that a movement was on foot to attempt to remove the political disabilities of parsons. The votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords should make anyone pause before entrusting more political power to the clergy.

The Heathen Chinee will soon be as extinct as the dodo, if the religious newspapers are to be believed. A real, live Chinaman has been consecrated Bishop of Che-Kiang. Will the almond-eyed Christian require the same salary and emoluments as his dear brother in Christ, the Bishop of London?

Rev. W. Askwith, Vicar of Matlock Bath, has been good enough to fix the date of the second coming of Christ. It is to be 1935. Only sixteen years to wait. But some people are talking of an indemnity from Germany that may take fifty years to pay off. And soldiers who are in the Army of Occupation are wondering when on earth they will come home for their discharge. Well, in 1935 they may be needed to keep the streets clear for the Second Coming—perhaps for some Jewish Lord Mayor to present the freedom of the City to our celestial visitor.

In a new book on *Tory Democracy*, by Lord Henry Bentinck, the author suggests that Lord Beaconsfield worked hard for the establishment of a "truly Christian Commonwealth." This provoked a reply from the *Daily News*: "Wherever he may now be, let us hope that Lord Beaconsfield is in a position to read this. He would have enjoyed it so heartily."

The Salvation Army unites business with its piety. In an Essex newspaper the following notice appears: "The musical members of the Salvation Army are arranging to give a few suitable vocal or instrumental selections in your neighbourhood, and ask for a generous response to their uniformed collector." This reminds us of a picture-postcard that was popular years ago, showing a Salvation Army band playing "Christians, Awake!" outside the house of a Jewish financier, who is emptying the water-jug on the musicians.

It looks as if the advertising staff of the Salvation Army Emigration Department has been feeling the strain of the War. In the columns of a daily paper, an emigration advertisement included the sentences "Book at Once! Register Now. Wives and Sweethearts and other Relatives of Overseas Service Men," etc. Is it not delicious? The words *wives and sweethearts* are sufficient to make the lions in Trafalgar Square guffaw.

The Rev. H. L. C. V. de Candole has been appointed Canon of Westminster. That ancient borough will be able to hold "de Candole" to the Devil.

The Calvinistic Methodist.

THE Methodist! Incomparable theme!
E'en as the flow'r enfolds the probing bee,
The Methodist invites, nonchalantly,
And suffocates with ample self-esteem
The bold intruder on his sacred dream.
Communing with th' Invisible, he moves;
Elect of God, he goes in rigid grooves;
A Tulkinghorn at Jahweh's door he'd seem.

Phylacteries of Mother Church he's kissed,
The while he fingered precious Non-con. cash;
In "choker" white he loves to make a splash,
Hoping some day to swell the "Clergy List";
To lift humanity he's never rash,
That lovely hypocrite, the Methodist. D. V. T.

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Our Day—January 5, 1919.

LAST week we asked all our readers to take an extra copy of the *Freethinker* for January 5, and post it to a likely subscriber.

Of course, we cannot expect that every reader will do this; but certainly two or three thousand should do it, and the effect of sending these round should be permanently beneficial to the paper and the Cause.

On the part of the reader, the expenditure will amount to twopence-halfpenny, *plus* a little labour. On our part, we are increasing the size of the paper that week to sixteen pages, which, with the present cost of labour and materials, is no meagre contribution. We shall also try to make the issue as interesting as possible.

Remember, the copy to be ordered is for January 5. This should be enclosed in a wrapper and directed to someone who is likely to be interested in the paper. The word "*Freethinker*" must be written on the back of the wrapper, in order to bring it under the newspaper postage rate of one halfpenny. As we cannot send out the paper on sale or return, all orders should be placed with newsagents by December 21, or as soon as possible, so as to avoid disappointment.

While dealing with this matter, may I, as the Sustentation Fund closes this week, heartily thank all those who have contributed to make it so great a success? The steady support given has been a great stay during the harassing War period, and the *Freethinker* stands to-day stronger than ever—one of the few papers in Britain that has not raised the price to its readers.

I have not hesitated to ask for help when needed, because I have taken it that we were all fellow-workers in a common cause. And if I have asked, I have also given. Those intimately concerned know that, apart from work, I have been one of the largest financial contributors to the paper. If I could not give in solid cash, I have kept down expenses by going without. I did not feel warranted in acting otherwise while compelled to ask others for support. And as we have all struggled through together, so I look forward to a brighter future in the same loyal and cheerful company.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 22, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

E. D. BROWN (Victoria).—Sending on portrait. Things will no doubt be brighter presently.

R. HORWOOD.—The wish was father to the statement, which is only to be expected in a clergyman. As a matter of fact, the National Secular Society is larger, in a healthier state of activity, and exerts more influence than has been the case for many years.

J. J. DARBY.—Please call and see us when you return. If you have any difficulty in getting the *Freethinker* let us know, and we will have it sent on from the office. Hope you will soon be home again.

H. ROSSDALE AND R. H. HEYS.—We cannot, at the moment, undertake to write lengthy letters to the paper you name. We are at it all the time, and we are being warned that we may over do it. But your own letter is a good one, and you seem quite capable of handling W. Phillips—whoever he is. All we can say is that the man who attributes the "Reign of Terror" to Atheism writes himself down an ass. The excesses of the Revolution were mainly due to the intrigues of the English Government with Continental powers with a view to restoring the Monarchy and undoing the work of the Revolution.

P. A.—Will do our best, but we have over a score of articles mutely appealing for publication, and with no space available at present.

TREVOR T. BERRY.—Sorry we cannot spare space for your communication.

HUGH P. MARSHALL (Dunedin).—Sorry to learn of the disappearance of W. W. Collin's *Examiner*. We can quite appreciate the difficulty of keeping a Freethought paper going in these days. Your communication is interesting, but we are afraid the event is too far off to be interesting to readers here.

T. LOVE.—Cheque received. Shall hope to soon hear that you are home again.

J. GIBSON.—Hope to see you when we visit Glasgow. The War *has* settled the religion of many, and, we think, stirred up many others to the necessity of more energetic propaganda.

MRS. C. M. RENTON.—We are obliged for cheque. There is no "religious wave" sweeping over England, although some of the clergy would like to make people believe otherwise. You may rely on our keeping at it. We are not easily discouraged, and the good wishes of our readers give us every encouragement to persevere.

J. PUGH.—We wrote you acknowledging receipt of paper, etc., and have had the letter returned. Evidently we have the wrong address.

LIBRA.—Shall look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

W. J. PITT.—Not quite there, but almost. Thanks for good wishes.

W. J.—We are really not anxious to score points, and are quite content to leave the whole matter to the judgment of our readers.

W. DODD.—We know we have your good wishes. Thanks.

J. ROLLASON writes thanking us for literature sent for distribution amongst the troops, and tells us it is being eagerly read and discussed.

M. ROGERSON.—We *are* pleased at getting through so well, so far. But we have had many willing helpers, and without these we should have been powerless. Will bear other matter in mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (December 22) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Burgh Hall, Partick. Good meetings are expected, and we hope that local friends are doing their best to see that results will exceed expectations. Trams run from the centre of Glasgow to the hall, the stopping-place for which is Peel Street. The hall is situated in Hamilton Crescent, and the times of meetings are 12 noon and 6.30. There will be some good music before the evening lecture—from 6 to 6.30.

Owing to the Christmas holidays we have to get two issues of the *Freethinker* ready for the press this week. The issue dated December 29 will be in the newsagents hands on Monday, December 23.

We should like to hear from our readers how many candidates have replied to the question addressed to them on Secular Education, the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, or the question of general religious equality. We have written quite a couple of score of letters during the past fortnight, in

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answer to requests for guidance, and a fair number of skeleton questions to help those who distrusted their own power of putting them tersely and effectively. This has meant a deal of extra labour, and we should like to know the result—if any.

Quite inadvertently we omitted to notice last week the publication by the Pioneer Press of Mr. Andrew Millar's booklet, *The Robes of Pan, and Other Prose Fantasies*. Some of these essays have already made their appearance in the *Freethinker*, and some in other journals. Mr. Millar's writings have a charm of their own, and are infused with a sense of the picturesque and the human that make them delightful reading. Elsewhere in this issue we print a brief notice of the work from the able pen of Mr. George Underwood. The price of *The Robes of Pan* is one shilling, postage three halfpence.

Another new work we have been waiting for space to notice is Mr. Joseph McCabe's *The Growth of Religion* (Watts & Co., 6s.). The fault from which the writings of the masters of anthropology suffer is their bulkiness. This is inevitable owing to the vastness of the field to be surveyed, and the necessity for giving the evidence its full weight. But it is perplexing to the lay mind, which often finds itself unable to see the wood for the trees. Mr. McCabe's work, which strikes us as among the most satisfactory of his writings, not only avoids this, but he carries his survey into the comparatively neglected region occupied by races of people who have not yet definitely outlined teachings concerning super-human, or extra-human, existences. Religious beliefs, like beliefs in general, do not come into existence fully formed. A belief is only the conscious recognition of a frame of mind that he has been gradually developing, and if we are ever to understand religion, we must gain a clear comprehension of the mental conditions that exist among races of people immediately below many well-known races of "savages." Mr. McCabe deals with this aspect of religion very satisfactorily, and in the closing chapters of his work traces the development of religious ideas on to higher levels. The author's conclusion strikes the right note :—

> We distrust the whole content of religion. It seems to be merely a case of the evolution in human consciousness of a primitive illusion. The philosopher kneeling to God—if any modern philosopher ever does—is only the other end of a series that starts with the Andaman islander pondering over his "shadow" in the water.

We are glad to note the growth of a more determined effort to get rid of the "whole content of religion" instead of crediting it with some lofty etheral impulse or aspiration to which it has no legitimate claim.

Mr. Erle B. Side writes us:—

> No doubt you have read, in the plans for demobalizing our war horses, that those who have served in the Eastern campaign are to be sold to the natives of Mesopotamia—either Arabs or Russians, etc. What a fitting reward after playing such a great part in securing victory. One shudders to think of the terrible treatment that will be meted out to these poor creatures should the suggested plans be carried out. Yes, it is the East, the birthplace of so many of the "merciful" and "loving" leaders and heroes of religion that our horses must fear. Ever since the announcement of demobilizing was published I have watched the papers carefully, but have failed to discover a protest from any of our well known shining lights of the Christian faith.

Mr. Side has written to Major-General Sir W. H. Birkbeck a protest against the callous treatment of the horses in disposing of them to people whom our own officers have noted treat their animals with extreme cruelty and neglect, but we are afraid his letter will not avail much. The bottom fact is that war, however justifiable, involves a progressive brutalization, and, with regard to the treatment of defenceless animals, the callousness is likely to be the more pronounced and the less noticed. Still, it is well that the protest should be made, and Mr. Side has made it in a very effective manner.

We are asked to announce that there will be no meetings of the Manchester Branch at the Bakers' Hall on December 22 and 29, owing to the holiday season, but a full rally of members and friends is hoped for at the President's next visit to Downing Street on January 5. The next Social will be held at the latter place on the 28th, commencing at 6 p.m. A cordial invitation is extended to members' children, for whose enjoyment special arrangements are in progress at the hands of a ladies' committee.

Owing to want of space, we are compelled to hold over, until our next issue, letters from Mr. D. Jones and "H. V. T."

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £460 7s. 7d. Sheffield Ethical Society, £1 1s.; J. Gibson, 2s.; J. C., for B. C., 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. T. Love, 10s.; Mrs. C. M. Renton, £2; Islay, 2s.; W. Dodd (second sub.), 10s.; C. R. King, £2 2s.; J. Anderson, 5s.; Two Sappers, 5s.; W. J. Pitt, 10s. 6d.; Libra, 10s.; Mrs. Mary Rogerson, 10s.; J. Higgins (second sub.), £1; W. H. Hurrell, 10s.; E. and A. Bullock, 5s.; Geo. Smith, 2s.; E. May, 2s.; F. Wood, 2s. 6d.; J. Tresillion, 10s.; J. T. Wadkins, jun., 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Wadkins, 2s. 6d.; J. Hyde, 10s.; J. Beech, 2s. 6d.; M. P., 5s.; W. H. Blackmore, 5s.; H. Crayan and A Socialist, 2s.; D. Sinclair, £3; Hugh Thomson, 5s.; Fawn, 10s. Total, £477 3s. 7d.

This Fund is now closed.

"Conceivability."

THERE was a point raised in Dr. McDougall's defence on behalf of the "Soul" that calls for a fuller notice than was practicable or even relevant in the middle of a critical discussion.

He contends that "inconceivability" is no valid objection against his assumption. With this I fully agree. But why did he not have the candour to point out that this contention, if valid, favoured the opposite or Materialistic theory more directly and obviously than it did his own? The contention is one of general application, and not one to be employed solely on behalf of superstition.

The one outstanding "argument" against the Materialistic position has been its "inconceivability"—that it was impossible to "conceive" how the *physical* was changed into the *psychical;* how the spinnings and gyrations of atoms and the dance of molecules became transmuted into feelings and thought—that is, into consciousness. And it must be freely admitted that such a transformation is absolutely inconceivable. But mere "inconceivability," as Dr. McDougall points out, is not an atom of reason against the hypothesis being true. Though I am not myself a believer in the so-called Materialistic theory, yet it is not because the change is *in*conceivable. There are, to my mind, insuperable difficulties to accepting the dualistic conception of the process—from physical stimulation to psychical awakening. I am therefore forced to believe that it is *not* a case of "change" at all, but one of concomitance. At all events, no one can ask the question "how" the "change" takes place without being guilty of begging the very question at issue. He must first prove that it *is* a "change" before a "how" can be addressed to it.

That, however, is a diversion. My object in this paper is to point out the "reason why" mere "*in*conceivability" is no argument against, or "conceivability" no argument for, any proposition, hypothesis, or theory.

The "conceivable" is simply the *familiar*, the *known*, or anything which the mind can picture like it. If you cannot picture it as resembling anything known, it is "inconceivable," but by no means impossible on that

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account. Most modern inventions based upon discoveries of unknown natural powers were more or less inconceivable before they were "born."

For example, before the advent of steam and of the steam-engine, it was not possibly "conceivable" that a combination of iron plates and bars could be made "to pull like a horse." And, conversely, had we been conversant only with mechanical powers of transport and traction, an animal machine, like a horse, would be absolutely an impossible conception.

Had Nature evolved creatures which only could crawl or walk on the surface of the earth, a *bird* or a *fish* would be quite "inconceivable," and therefore, according to the old "argument," impossible creatures.

Before the discovery of electricity and its applied inventions, a statement which said that you could dispatch messages from continent to continent in the "twinkling of an eye," or that you could hear a person speak 500 miles away, would be received with derision—they would be quite incredible, because such processes would be then "inconceivable."

Similarly, an announcement which stated that the dead could be heard speaking, laughing, singing, or sobbing in the same familiar voice as he did when alive, would be met with the same incredulity before the invention of the phonograph made it "conceivable."

Likewise, before the discovery of the Hertzian waves and the invention of wireless telegraphy, a profession to transmit messages *without wires* would not be credited, because it was not conceivably possible.

In all this babel about the "inconceivable" hardly ever any distinction is made between the mystery implied in a "why" or a "how" problem. The mental attitude of curiosity or inquisitiveness in the two cases is wholly different. The answer to a "why" supplies a cause to a given effect.

An answer to a "how," on the other hand, simply lifts the veil from over a gap in the chain of causation—brings to view the hidden links in the sequence of "Cause and Effect."

A "why" makes an inquiry about an unknown cause, whereas a "how" implies the fact that both "cause" and "effect" are assumed as known. Hence the best-established principles and the most credible theories are often the most inconceivable.

Gravity, for example, is undoubtedly a universal physical cause; but "how" it acts across "empty" space is quite "a mystery," but that fact has no effect upon our implicit belief in its truth.

Similarly every living creature resembles its parents in form, in size, in organs, in habits, in instincts, and in mental capacities. Every butterfly reproduces those spots and hues which distinguish it from every other species with the absolute regularity and certainty of the recurrence of the seasons.

There is no disputing of the causal relation of parents and offspring. But "how" this virtual identity is effected—by what "mechanism" are these replicas eternally reproduced—is enveloped in profoundest mystery.

But the question, *why* should a child resemble its parents does not seem in the least mysterious or inconceivable; it is our universal experience. The mystery would be if it occurred otherwise. Should the offspring of a cow be a dog or a lizard, it would be an extremely bewildering experience.

Though a "how" problem is never intrinsically insolvable, yet it is often susceptible of no conceivable solution. A solution to a "Why" problem, on the other hand, is seldom inconceivable, but is never final. The "forces" and urges of substances—the "causes" of Nature—are conceivable enough, because they are "pushes" and "pulls," but in themselves they are ulminate and absolute mysteries.

Now the mystery which is attached to the relation of mind and body is of the "how" order. It arises from the fact that we cannot fathom the nature of substance sufficiently deeply "to see it at work." There is not the slightest doubt as to the causal relation between physical and mental. One fact alone, out of a million, need be cited—the fact that a pin-prick causes pain. No sane person ever doubted the causal relation between them. But we have no "conception" of "how" the neural disturbance produced by the pin-point awakens the accompanying sensation.

But our ignorance in no way affects our belief in the fact that he who is prodded with a goad is conscious of agony if his neural system is normally active. "Inconceivability," I therefore repeat, is in itself no valid argument either against or for a contention.

Keridon.

Man's Feline Friend.

Even in the piping times of peace, numerous official, or, for that matter, unofficial persons busy themselves in searching for something to tax. With the appalling waste of wealth incidental to war these inquisitive people increase their efforts, and the sinister glance of the licenser fell on the harmless and homely cat at an early stage of the recent struggle. It is reported that one of the belligerent Powers imposed a tax on our feline companion, with the plainly obvious consequence that the natural prey of that useful animal multiplied beyond measure with disastrous results. For, when unchecked, the procreative capacities of destructive rodents become truly enormous, and their devastations when conducted on a large scale attain colossal proportions.

The ravages of the mouse are relatively unimportant, but those of the rat soon assume a menacing magnitude. The multiplying powers of these loathsome creatures are almost incredible. They damage property, poison food as well as destroy it, and are only too justly suspected of spreading disease. Were it not for our cats, and in minor measure our dogs, London and other populous riverside cities, with their suburban areas, would soon swarm with rats. As it is, the rat population of the metropolis must mount to millions. All our sewers are infested with these vermin, and the drains and cellars of the older houses, particularly when near the Thames, are the habitats of rats. Various were the estimates of the vast numbers of rats roaming in the basements of Holywell Street (Bookseller's Row) at the period of its demolition, some thirty years ago. At the London Docks powerful cats of the ratter type are well in evidence, and the services these animals render are keenly appreciated by those who know from bitter experience the havoc wrought by rats when these creatures run unchecked among the merchandise. Nor are the depredations of rats confined to teeming cities resting on the banks of the river. In the country the farmer has solid reason to dread the losses sustained in fields and barns and granaries where rats abound.

The writer remembers an experience at a Sussex farm where no cats were kept, and on which the professional services of the human rat-catcher had been neglected. A stack of unthreshed wheat mounted on a high stand had been left from the previous harvest to the succeeding summer, and the interval between the hay and corn gathering was selected for the threshing operations. No sooner was the thatch uncovered, and the first cornstalks thrown into the machine, than the rats were seen scampering in all directions. Some attempted to escape altogether, but the majority

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burrowed more deeply in the corn stack. Several hundreds were killed, but for many months afterwards the farm buildings and neighbouring hedges and ditches were alive with rats. What little corn remained was dark and discoloured, utterly unfit for either human or animal consumption, and represented a serious loss to all concerned. An instance such as this enables us to form some conception of the fate that would befall our large cities were our guardian cats to disappear. It is indeed difficult to estimate in terms of money our huge indebtedness to our faithful felines for their services, not only in checking the increase of the rodent race, but also in scaring the animals away.

One has only to glance at a cat's canine teeth to notice how large and powerful these organs are, and how well adapted for tearing flesh. The numerous species of the Felis genus are perhaps the most specialized of carnivorous animals. The fondness of the domestic cat for fish food apparently indicates some kinship to the Indian Fishing-cat, which subsists almost entirely on fish and molluscs.

Small when compared with the giant cats such as the lion, leopard, panther, jaguar, and tiger, yet the wild cat of Europe reaches very fair proportions. This fierce animal lingers in continental woodlands, but it has long been extinct in Southern England, although it survived in Wales down to a few generations ago. The animal was occasionally encountered in Yorkshire as late as 1840, while it lingered in the Lake Country still longer. In the Scottish Lowlands it is extinct, and the animal is becoming very rare in districts where it was common 100 years ago. A leading authority, J. G. Millais, considers North-Western Inverness and Western Ross-shire as the last retreats of the wild cat within the British Isles. The formidable character of this sharp-clawed, strong-toothed creature may be gathered from the fact that one shot by Millais in 1889, in Northern Scotland, measured nearly four feet from nose-tip to tail-end. In Ireland the animal is entirely absent.

The European wild cat is not the ancestor of our domesticated varieties. In company with various plants and other animals, the domestic, short-furred cat appears to have arrived from the East. And there are several reasons for concluding that our household pets are descended from the ancient Egyptian cat, which was about the same size as the modern cat, with tabby markings on a coat of sandy gray. Egypt was a densely peopled state in classic times, and constituted the granary of the Roman world. What more likely, then, than that the cat of the Nile country should be dispersed throughout Europe as that continent's agricultural arts extended and developed?

The wild cat was well known in our Island in British, Roman, and Saxon times; but the earliest reference to the domesticated animal seems to date from the tenth century. The English and Persian cats form two outstanding varieties of the organism. The English breed is of far greater practical value than the fancy Persian variety. It is an excellent mouser and ratter, unless reduced to a condition of dullness and inactivity by petting and over-feeding, while it is less subject to parasites than the long-haired and bushy-tailed Persian. It is also a hardier animal, and far less liable to disease. But from the standpoint of beauty of form, colour, and markings, the Persian stands unrivalled.

The short-cropped Russian cat is usually characterized by its fine blue, glossy coat, occasionally of a somewhat woolly texture. This animal is a handsome creature, and the finest specimens are distinguished by dark blue nose-tip, eyelashes, and "whiskers." Various explanations have been put forward concerning the term "Cyprus cat," which is applied to the tabbies of Norfolk and Suffolk. Some assert that this cat was introduced into East Anglia from the island of Cyprus, while others assign the name to the resemblance of the animal's markings to the pattern of the textile known as Cyprus cloth. A third theory attributes the designation to the fact that Cyprus "signifies a red or a reddish-yellow colour," and that the term simply indicates a rufous or yellow brindled cat.

The Isle of Man is famous for its tailless cats, while other felines destitute of a caudal appendage are native to the Crimea and Japan. One variety of Manx cat carries a stumpy tail, while another possesses a very long tail which sometimes measures ten inches in length. The most celebrated Manx cats, however, have no visible tail whatever.

The Siamese cats are descended from a breed long carefully confined within the royal residence. This jealous restriction has now ended, and although these animals are of a highly delicate constitution they are at times successfully reared by fanciers in Britain. Numerous other varieties exist including the beautiful Angora cat from Western Asia. It is reported, and for the sake of the residents in those regions it is to be hoped that the story is true, that the cats imported into one American country never agonize the night with their horrible screams, yells, and wails.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued).

Writers and Readers.

THOSE of my readers who have a natural or cultivated taste for the excellencies of prose style will have noted with pleasure the essays which have appeared from time to time in this paper over the signature of Andrew Millar. Of these a small selection, together with a few that were contributed to Scottish newspapers, are now printed and published by the Pioneer Press at the price of one shilling. *The Robes of Pan and other Prose Fantasies* is, I believe, Mr. Millar's first venture as a bookman, and it makes a promising beginning. It will become in time a bibliographical treasure, the cherished firstfruits of a literary talent which, if I am not greatly mistaken, will carry its lucky possessor a very long way. Like Theophile Gautier and our own accomplished stylist, Mr. Arthur Symons, Mr. Millar is an impressionist. He is a writer for whom pre-eminently the exterior world exists. He has something more than the normal sense of sight, and among primitive folk would have been hailed as a *seer*, that is, one who sees clearly what other people only half see. He has also the other equipment without which there can be no artistry, the power to make others see with his eyes, to evoke in adequate and beautiful words the impressions that come to him from the world of Nature. As an example of the power of re-creation manifested throughout this slender and delightful booklet let me quote this paragraph:—

> The amber streamlet—babbling amid its mossy stones, dinning and splashing like a child's water-mill, or gliding and dimpling in swift and silent motion, channelled in brown mould and emerald turf, in that bend by the gap in the hedgerow, where the yellow *largesse* lies so richly spent—the streamlet has been busy bearing away those fallen shreds and patches with, here and there, the gleam of brambles, the red of hips and haws from the faded finery of the sylvan god..... There is a red on the rim of the hills—red, richer than rose petals, or than beauty's lip—a still, deep, crimson bar of red, far away, and low down, in a hollow of the dim brown hills, as though the vestal Eve had but gently barred the gate behind the god of to-day, and quietly curtained his retreat..... Diana, Huntress of the Morn, with silver arrows bright and sped afar; and twilight Eve, of soft and slumbrous eye, spreading the mantle of night upon the couch of day—saffron and yellow, and gold, and tumultuous grey, above the dusky skyline, and through the still, illumined spaces, we seem to be gazing into the realms of perfect beauty and eternal rest! What a glory doth the world put on! Sombre at times, and sad, the minstrelsy of the winds, or wild their joy and rude

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their unseemly mirth; but though without *purpose*, the winds are calm or convulsed; and though without *desire* to be benign, the natural scene is full of beauty and repose—the deeper, truer significance of life is caught from those varying but eternal aspects of the earth and skies.

The essays are sprinkled with purple or silver patches equally beautiful and appropriate. Landscapes of delicate beauty sketched in with a facile and flowing brush, felicities of phrase and epithet, and here and there grandiose impressions of Nature in her mood of splendid anger. The reader who knows a good thing in literature when he sees it will agree with me in honouring the writer of the last paragraph in the essay "At the Old Harbour: Saltcoats." The description of a storm is one of the finest things I know outside the work of the greater masters of prose-style.

I have given Mr. Millar great praise, but not, I think, too great. The worst fault a writer can be guilty of is enthusiasm over an unworthy object. Mr. Millar himself makes a bad slip in this way when he talks of Watts-Dunton's "glorious" "Ode to Mother Carey's Chicken" as a "magnificent inspiration." It is really a pretty piece of respectable fifth-rate verse which stands in the same relation to the great poetry of Tennyson or Browning as does the preposterously silly romance *Aylwin* to the novels of Meredith or Hardy. This want of sure critical judgment lies at the bottom of all Mr. Millar's defects; it accounts for his occasional and distressing lapses of style, the loose construction of sentences, the want of sequence in ideas, the inability to see that matter may be good in itself, but very bad when it is in the wrong place. We note one little essay which is made up of a quotation from a friend's letter. It is a delicate compliment to the friend, but rather hard on the reader who is interested only in Mr. Millar.

If Mr. Millar will allow me to say what I think, I would suggest that he does a little more reading and use his remarkable power of intelligent observation on the work of men who have made the prose-poem an effective and lovely form of art. He need only study three masters: Tourgueniev, Baudelaire, and Poe. He will see at once—his clairvoyance as an artist will ensure his not missing the lesson—that what he needs is a more closely knit form, a greater clearness of idea, a rigorous inhibition of every thought that does not help forward the idea and an insistence on the correspondences between Nature and the human mind. I don't suggest that Mr. Millar does not recognize these conditions of the prose-poem; he does and yet he doesn't. What he has yet to learn is the immense difference between literature and mere journalism. An essay that is pleasant enough to glance through in an evening paper is not always worth the relative immortality of the more permanent form. Still, the good things more than outweigh the bad, and it has promise, which is more than I would say of more pretentious collections of impressions.

Geo. Underwood.

JUSTICE.

Justice, Justice: woe betides us everywhere, when, for this reason or for that, we fail to do justice! No beneficence, benevolence, or other virtuous contribution will make good the want. And in what a rate of terrible geometrical progression, far beyond *our* poor computation, any act of Injustice once done by us grows; rooting itself ever anew, spreading ever anew, like a banyan-tree, blasting all life under it, for it is a poison-tree! There is but one thing needed for the world; but that one thing is indispensable. Justice, Justice, in the name of heaven; give us Justice, and we live; give us only counterfeits of it, or succedanea for it, and we die!—*Carlyle.*

Obituary.

South Shields.—On Saturday, December 14, at the Harton Cemetery, Mr. J. Fothergill read a burial service selected from Mr. F. J. Gould's book at the graveside of Percy Hannan, three-and-a-half years' old, who died of pneumonia after a brief illness. Deceased was an exceptionally bright, sturdy, little boy, and deep sympathy is felt with Mr. Hannan and family by local members and friends.—R. 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.

LONDON.

Indoor.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Vital Elements in Reconstruction."

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (The Burgh Hall, Partick): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 12 noon, "The Challenge of Unbelief"; 6.30, "The New World and the Old Faith."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Councillor J. W. Murby.

Manchester Branch N. S. S.—No meetings at Swan Street until January 12, when Mr. Monks will give his paper, "The Lesson of the Bowman Case," postponed from December 15.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S. (12a Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road, Swansea): 6.30, Special Branch Meeting.

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
The Reign of Cant.—The Editor	661
Does God Speak to Man Now? If So, How?—J. T. Lloyd	662
God's Birthday.—Mimnermus	663
Religion After the War.—W. Mann	664
Our Day.—Chapman Cohen	667
Man's Feline Friend.—T. F. Palmer	668
The City and the Coast.—Andrew Millar	669
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	670
Christianity and Labour.—Ignotus	670

Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

The Reign of Cant.

The Election is over, although the results are not yet known. For several weeks the air has been vocal with the virtues of one party and the vices of all the others. But which owned the one, and which the other quite depended upon the point of view. I daresay most of the speakers believed all they said, while they were saying it, the power of the human animal for self-deception is so great. Besides, they all do it, people look for it, and candidates must "play the game." It might be argued that as the thoughtful are not deceived, and the thoughtless soon get over the illusion, little harm is done. Party followers were waiting for a lead to find out what it was they were to shout for; and party leaders—who more to-day than ever lead because they follow—were quite as eager to find out what the people expected. The followers follow because they see their own prejudices offered them by someone with a louder voice or a greater gift of verbal presentation. That a leader should lead because he is a clearer thinker, of greater moral courage, or indicates new lines of progress, is not thought of.

* * *

Gregarious Coercion.

If this insincerity, self-deception, and lack of independence were characteristic only of election time, the harm done would be trifling. The serious thing is that it is symptomatic of a wide-spread evil. The number of people capable of really independent thinking always represent the minority in a nation. Those who have the courage to express their thoughts, represent a still smaller number. Society at large cares little for independent thought, still less for fearless speech. It reads and listens not so much for instruction or stimulation as to see its own prejudices placed before it in the most attractive manner. The man or woman who breaks in on the closed circle of ideas that forms the mental furniture of most people is not hailed as a deliverer—he is hated as a disturber. Against the assertive individuality of the few is arrayed the coercive gregariousness of the many. Society, as Emerson put it, is in a conspiracy against the manhood of its members. It promises protection at the price of individuality; and this conspiracy of society against its creative individualities is in final analysis the one great obstacle to reform. Expressed dogmatism may be fought and conquered. In the act of expression dogmatism reveals its weakness and challenges opposition. But the apathetic conformity of the crowd provides no individual strength to which an appeal may be made, no consciousness of mental independence that may be roused to activity. There is only apathy, delusion, and cultivated ignorance; and against these even the gods are powerless.

* * *

The Power of Religion.

Greatest of all the forces that make for the maintenance and prevalence of this frame of mind is religion. The note of insincerity, evasion, subterfuge, runs right through modern theology. Preachers, one feels, would not believe as they do if they had the courage to submit their beliefs to careful examination and the ability to appreciate the weight of evidence. And even with those that are of a bolder and more able type, what they discard makes us more than ever suspicious of what they retain. It is impossible not to feel that they who *say* so much must *know* a great deal more, which is not said because of the consequences that would follow. Preachers do not speak out because of their congregations; congregations maintain an outward conformity because of their preachers. One-half the world is busy inoculating the other half with the virus of hypocrisy in the interests of honesty. For the peculiar feature of all deterrents—legal or social—to heresy, whether the heresy be of a religious, a social, or a political nature, is that it punishes courage and honesty only. The man who will tell a lie or act one escapes scots free. It is like promising a boy a thrashing if he tells you a lie—with the inevitable result that you get it. The necessity for a religious qualification could not shut out a *dishonest* Atheist from any office in the State. But it could, and does, shut out the honest ones. Among all the people burnt by the Christian Church for heresy, there was not put to death a single sturdy liar. The Church could bag only the honest heretics, because only the honest ones would say what they were. It is surely a delightful and truly Christian arrangement which provides that heresy added to lying may prosper, but heresy added to honesty and courage shall be sternly repressed.

* * *

The Social Pressure.

Curiously enough, the most mischievous punishments for heresy are not those that are legally enforced—even when the law is sternly and peristently applied. In England a king is not supposed to have political opinions. He is permitted to have opinions in religious matters, but here no one bothers about them. For they go with his office, they are fixed by law, and it is quite recognized that his private opinions might be different from those selected for him. So with the rest of the people. Where people are openly compelled to profess a particular opinion, the profession may be made without one sinking either in one's own estimation or in that of one's neighbours. The compulsion is obvious, and it is generally recognized that conformity under such conditions is

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no indication of conviction, any more than a Republican paying—through taxation—a part of the King's income would indicate a belief in monarchy. In such cases the conformity is wholly on the surface. The more morally mischievous conformity is that enforced by social custom and opinion. If for no other reason, because it is in operation at all times and under all forms. A legal enactment must be consciously and openly applied, and can only be set in operation in specified cases. A social enactment may be applied in all sorts of disguises, and in an almost indefinite number of directions. It commences with the child at school; it operates in the choice of a career, in the choosing of a wife; nor does it relax its hold on an individual until he sinks into the grave—and even then it will exert a supervision over his character. Legal restriction would be defied by hundreds who wilt before this many-headed tyrant of social conformity. People connected with advanced movements will be at no loss to recall cases of characters that have held out for long against this social pressure, only to go under in the end. It is not a case of frank and open surrender. People do not say, I am tired of the struggle; or, I am hopeless of good by struggling; or, I value a position in the world more than aught else; or, I have sons and daughters, and wish to place them in life. Were any or all of these reasons avowed, the one who offered them would be acting honestly towards himself and others. Instead of this, his action is covered with a hundred-and-one excuses which serve to blind others and to deceive himself. The *moral* effect of this social coercion is far greater and much more deplorable than that exercised by any legal coercion that has ever existed.

* * *

An Appeal to Heretics.

The strongest and greatest obstacle to-day to real Freethought, whether religious or political, is this social terrorism which people profess to despise even while they yield to it. It is the last refuge of a detected falsehood, and it can only be broken down by all who disbelieve in the customs and beliefs it defends saying as much with unmistakable voice and manner. There is only one time suitable for anyone to call a lie by its proper name, and that is the moment they recognize it as such, not to wait until there are singers enough to make a respectable chorus. In this case delay is a real danger. It is usually much more difficult to palter with one's sense of rectitude at the beginning than it is after a long course of dissimulation. Excuses will wait on inclination, and the truth is apt to look less alluring when we contemplate it through the distracting media of a socially easeful conformity. In strict truth every man who sees a belief to be false, and continues acting as though it were true, is doing what he can to give it a fresh lease of life. And if Freethinkers do not speak out, who shall? In these closing days of the old year we are appealing to all heretics. Theirs is more than a personal responsibility; it is a social one. Behind each opinion stretches a long heredity; the individual merely expresses the last stage in the process. Ultimately all opinion belongs to the race, and is one of the chief instruments by the aid of which progress is made. Unbelief thus brings its responsibilities no less than belief, nonconformity as much as conformity. There is no real reason why the heretic should go through life with his mouth closed or his voice attuned to a minor key lest he should hurt the feelings of the believer. There is nothing praiseworthy in paying homage to a lie because it is ancient. This policy has been followed too long, and its practical results are seen in the insincerity and moral cowardice that are among the most deplorable features of contemporary life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Does God Speak to Man Now? If So, How?"

THE above is the sub-title of a remarkable discourse by Dr. Fort Newton, delivered at the City Temple, and published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for December 11. The real subject is the Bible and what its message involves for mankind. The sermon is remarkable chiefly for its vagueness or ambiguity, a characteristic which may hide a multitude of theological sins. Dr. Newton prides himself upon being free from all dogmatic shackles, forgetting, evidently, that the proclamation of a supernatural gospel in any shape or form is a species of metaphysical dogmatism. For example, he begins the address in question with the dogmatic assertion that "the Bible is a unity in faith, in spirit, and in purpose"; but every thoughtful student knows that the Bible possesses no such unity at all. It contains several different and contradictory conceptions of God. Jehovah is invariably a reflection of the people who believe in and worship him. Mr. R. J. Campbell used to describe him as a monster of injustice and iniquity. He is "a man of war" and the "God of Hosts" long before he is conceived of as light and love. Is there a unity of spirit between the Book of Joshua and the Gospel of John? Joshua was Jehovah's commander-in-chief, whose wars of extermination and enslavement were as cruel and savage as the worst on record; and even in the New Testament the avenging Deity occupies a very conspicuous position. Again, the Bible records a violent conflict between two different types of religion, the priestly and the prophetic, or the ceremonial and the ethical. The priests and the prophets were at never-ceasing strife even as to the very nature of the religious life. There is absolutely no indication that the Biblical writers had the least idea that they were assisting in creating a sacred literature or library through which an increasing purpose, like a golden thread, would infallibly run. It is perfectly true, as the reverend gentleman observes, that the Bible "nowhere speaks of itself as a whole," for the simple reason that it never knew itself as such. It may also be a fact that "in the Bible the name 'Word of God' is never once applied to anything written"; but such a statement has only the effect of pulling the Holy Scriptures down from the high pedestal upon which the first sentence in the sermon places them. And yet the object of that statement is to justify the inference that the Word of God is "a power at once so august and intimate that no book, nor all the books in the world, can contain it." Consequently:—

> Every land, every people, every age hears it, each in its own tongue; and because there are always listening ears, however few,
>
> One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world has never lost.

If Dr. Newton is right, then Paul is wrong when he declares (Rom. iii. 2) that the Jews had much advantage, profit, or pre-eminence, "chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." In the Apostle's opinion, the Jews were the only people who had been entrusted with such precious treasures; and it was the general belief that, in consequence of this pre-eminence, it was only through them that other nations could be blessed. Curiously enough, Dr. Newton says that "God speaks in the Bible, but that he does not write"; but it surely follows that, if God speaks in the Bible, he of necessity, speaks in words, and that the words, whether he wrote them or not, are distinctly his, and it follows further that, the Bible being claimed as the divinest book in the world, God must have spoken with greater clearness and fulness to the Jews than to any

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other nation under the sun. The reverend gentleman's piety puts the Bible in a category by itself, and, inferentially, gives the Jews the prominent place among the nations, though his logic represents the Almighty as treating all nations alike, as speaking to and being heard by all of them. Unfortunately, however, in his case, piety wins a complete victory over logic.

In a preacher, piety makes rhetoric its favourite vehicle and flings logic down the wind. Argument is eschewed because it tends to act as a damper on piety, and reason is held in check because it cools the zeal and restricts the flight of faith. Reason says: Assuming the existence of a Heavenly Father we are bound to think of him as the very opposite of a respecter of persons, as one who, if he speaks, speaks to all alike. Piety knows better and unhesitatingly affirms that the Supreme Being chose Israel "to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth," to make them high above all nations which he had made, and that, naturally, he spoke to them more freely and intimately than to all others. Dr. Newton's whole sermon is based on this pietistic but wholly irrational assumption, and, consequently, the Bible is to him God's supreme message to mankind. He says:—

> Something reaches us from its pages and pulls us into the play of its realities. It is not a fiction of what life might have been; it is life itself speaking to us. Nor is this to disparage literature and its service to the human spirit. Far from it. How we love to wander in its Chamber of Imagery, amid forms lovely and haunting, where Homer sings, and Plato speaks, and Hamlet dies; and there are lines in the great poets—often even in lesser poets, which open, in the light of a flash, a vista half on earth and half in heaven. Literature is bountiful and benign, free, ideal, and richly rewarding. But the Bible is more compelling than persuasive. It does not entertain; it commands. No other book has such power to comfort and command.

That is sheer declamation, resounding rhetoric or artificial eloquence, and every word in it points to God's immoral behaviour towards the offspring of his heart. It is seldom Dr. Newton descends to concrete instances, but when he does so his selection is unfortunate. On this occasion he chooses the 51st Psalm, and maintains that when a man tries to read it "as he reads any other poem, he finds himself face to face with God and the soul, humbled, subdued, exalted"; but he is radically mistaken. Reading that Psalm, like any other poem, the natural man sits in judgment upon the character of the speaker therein who is generally supposed to represent King David. Now, David was a notorious sesualist, who committed the worst crimes for the gratification of his passions, of which he did not repent until the dread of dire punishment from above had seized him; and even his repentance was entirely onesided and selfish. He thought only of himself in the hands of an angry judge, and, like a coward, cried out: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight; hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities." He made no reference whatever to the women and men whom he had seduced, injured, and slain. We do seriously doubt the inspiration of this Psalm, and can see in it nothing but a wretched, frightened criminal basely cringing before a Being whom he believed capable of destroying both him and his house.

Dr. Fort Newton is an unrestrained idealizer. His exaggerations are boundless, his eulogy of the Bible ignores all the canons of criticism, and his practical deductions can be justified at the bar of no well-attested facts. He avers that if we let the Bible have its way with us "it will lead us infallibly in the way everlasting." "Yes, infallibly," he adds. Perhaps no persons were ever more heroically obedient to Biblical maxims than the Puritans, and the inevitable fruit in their character was narrowness, bigotry, intolerance, which gave rise to the most hateful and odious system of persecution known to history.

Dr. Fort Newton utterly fails to produce any convincing evidence that God has ever spoken, much less that he speaks to-day, and his very attempt to establish such a thesis has but one effect, namely, the reduction of the Divine Being to the human level. Indeed, in one illuminating passage he gives his whole case away:—

> Primarily, men are inspired, not writings. Wherever a man, by any means soever, learns what reality is, and what are the laws of the world, he is reading the Word of God. Often he can decipher only here a line and there a stanza, but God is speaking to him.

What a mean, contemptible apology for God. The God revealed by the action of events, the God who spoke in the terrible events of the last four years, certainly deserves neither worship nor belief, for he is robbed of sovereignty, and becomes only another name for man. For ourselves, we much prefer the old name, and to interpret all historical events without any reference whatever to supernaturalism. We learn only by experience, the art of life being acquired solely by actually living. Life is an evolutionary process, a process of outgrowing unworthy elements by reaching out towards nobler and ever nobler achievements. In the well-known words of a modern poet this point is beautifully put:—

> I held it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

J. T. Lloyd.

"God's" Birthday.

> It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
> Their saints, their —— all they fear or hope
> Are lies, and lies. —*Robert Browning.*

Why will the worldly minded man smile when his eyes rest upon the title of this article? It is severely simple. And why, if this were an orthodox publication, would the editor run his blue pencil through the offending headline? And why, if I were writing in a pious periodical, should I have to use grave words and check any desire towards criticism or light-heartedness? It speaks ill for a religious institution when it can only be discussed from one narrow point of view.

"God's" birthday is associated with humour and mirth, with feasting and merriment. At this particular season of the year the antics of the clown evoke the laughter of children, and the red-hot poker of tradition has not wholly lost its power to please. The shop windows are brilliantly decorated, and little people crowd the pavements and press their tiny faces against the glass. In countless homes folk are trying to get a little colour out of a drab existence, to impart a little warmth to life at this dullest season of the year.

The convivial features of Christmas have been noted frequently to the discomfiture of the dear clergy. For it is among life's little ironies that the alleged birthday of the "man of sorrows" should be a time of rejoicing; and that the festival of the "prince of peace" was fixed in December from the urgent necessity of fighting Pagan rituals. 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 as numerous as plums in a pudding. The public holidays were so frequent that they threatened to make life a siesta, and the hard-hearted Roman emperors curtailed them. It was to counteract the

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attractions which these Pagan holidays exercised over the people that the leaders of the Christian Churches sanctioned and incorporated some of these feasts.

Thus it is that "God's birthday" is a godless saturnalia. Years ago, grim old Thomas Carlyle made an entry in his diary on Christmas Day. It reads: "On looking out of the window this morning I noticed my neighbours were more drunk than usual, and I remembered that it was the birthday of their Redeemer." The association of gluttony and godliness is by no means the only criticism that can be levelled at this Christian festival. Why God, who is described as eternal, should have a birthday at all is a matter that Christians ought to settle among themselves. Other folk regard life as being too short for wasting time in such pleasing and unprofitable speculations. Non-Christians regard Christ as a mythical person, like all the other sun-gods and saviours of antiquity, whose careers were embellished with marvels.

The merry birthday of the "Man of Sorrows" was not kept regularly until many generations after the supposed date of the birth of Christ. In the earlier stages of the custom it was held on varying dates. The precise time of Christ's birth, like that of James de la Pluche, was "wropt in mystery," but it was not in December, even according to the legends. For shepherds do not watch their flocks by night in that unromantic time of the year. Why, then, do Christians keep "God's birthday" on December 25? The answer plucks the heart out of the Christian superstition.

It was in competition with the feast of Saturnalia, one of the chief Roman festivals, that "God's birthday" was fixed in December. The anniversary of Saturn and his wife was held from December 17 to 20, and the Emperor Caligua added a fifth day of rejoicing. On these five festal days of old Rome the schools were closed; no punishment was inflicted; the toga was replaced by an undress garment; distinctions of rank were laid aside; servants sat at table with their employers; and all classes exchanged gifts.

The propensity of converts from Paganism to cling to custom proved invincible. If the apostates were to be retained in the new religion it became necessary to incorporate the old under the mask of the new. The struggle for survival also incorporated other features. In the far-off centuries white-robed Druids cut the sacred mistletoe with a golden sickle, and chanted their hymns to the frosty air. These features were absorbed, and the mistletoe and carol-singing still play their minor, if amusing, part in the celebration of "God's birthday."

This struggle for survival is still going on. In the past the Churches sought for adherents by increasing their festivals, and crushed opposition by bribing the weak and killing the strong. In the twentieth century they are 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 themselves with social measures which appeal to the working classes.

"God's birthday," with its pharisaical profession of goodwill to men, is largely pretence and make-believe. There is no "god" nor "devil" there at all except the men who make millions out of this sham, and who hiss at the "intellectuals" who would free mankind from their influence. The clergy are not deceived; they are clever actors. When Edmund Kean as Iago, was wringing the heart of his huge audience he could still whisper in his son's ear, "We're knocking 'em, Charlie."

MIMNERMUS.

Religion After the War.

IV.

(Continued from p. 641.)

How can one speak of the fatherhood of God in any universal and all-embracing sense in the light of the terrible calamities which have fallen upon so many innocent sufferers all over the round world? How can one believe in the goodness of God when one contemplates this unexampled harvest of agony, of bitterness, and of death? How the whole dilemma that in every age has haunted the imagination of man, the dilemma: either God would not, and then He is not good, or He could not, and then he is not in control—how this dilemma has been sharpened until it seems as if it could not be evaded?—*Professor W. Adams Brown*, "*Hibbert Journal*," January, 1916; p. 339.

The individual doubter can perhaps be brushed aside, but a gigantic evil compels millions to doubt, and clamours for an explanation. In the North, the millions are asking what is the good of prayer, of intercession; things go on just as before. The thousands are saying: "Here in this vast crime God could not help interfering if He had any heart, even as much goodness as any human being. He is, therefore, either not good, or else He is not powerful enough—not capable of interfering." The charge of criminality is preferred against the Deity in a way it has never, perhaps, been before.—*E. D. Priestley Evans*, "*Hibbert Journal*," April, 1916; p. 643.

WHAT answer has the Church to the charge of not preventing the War—to the culpability of God in allowing the War, with its resulting 26,000,000 casualities, at a cost of £30,000,000,000, and its trail of desolation, famine, and disease? The apologies offered, in most cases, only aggravate and exasperate, instead of consoling the seeker after a solution of the desperate enigma. For instance, Dr. Ingram, the Bishop of London, preaching at St. Paul's on August 4 of the present year, said: "Men were asking in their hearts to-day, 'Why does God not stop the war.' Why did He not stop the Whitechapel murders of thirty years ago?"[1] Well, why didn't he? Such reasoning—if it is allowable to call it reasoning—would not satisfy a child, let alone an adult. Nor is this an exceptional example of the Bishop's reasoning powers, for not long ago he is reported to have said: "Some men said there was no God. But there must be somebody above the Devil." Fancy basing the existence of God upon the existence of the Devil, in which no educated person now believes! If this is all that one of the most influential dignitaries of the Church can offer, what must we expect from the rank and file? The Church appears to be perishing from senile decay. The vast majority of the people have lost all respect for it. The more clear-headed of the clergy know, and admit it. The Bishop of Woolwich, speaking at the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury on July 11, declared: "That the state of religion in England to-day gave cause for serious anxiety. The educated and refined were for the most part either antagonistic or apathetic. The mass of the workers did not trust the Established Church, which they regarded as the hereditary enemy of their ideals."[2]

The Nonconformist Churches are in the same position. The Rev. W. E. Orchard, after admitting the failure of the Churches, with all their unrivalled influence and opportunities for teaching, to bring home to the conscience of humanity the wickedness of war, observes: "It is useless to plead that this war is different: the attitude of the Church has been the same in all wars. It is no wonder that thousands are turning from the Churches in disgust."[3]

Another leading light of Nonconformity, the Rev. R. F. Horton, comparing two religious works dealing

[1] *The Daily News*, August 5, 1918.
[2] *The Daily News*, July 12, 1918.
[3] *The Daily News*, June 21, 1918.

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with the War, representing the Church and Nonconformity respectively, says of the first, entitled *The Church in the Furnace*, by Seventeen Church of England Chaplains: "Loyal Churchmen, startled by the discovery at the Front that the Church has lost the manhood of the country, cry out for drastic changes and reforms in the Church they love." Of the other work, *The Churches at the Cross Roads*, by Mr. Shakespeare, Mr. Horton observes: "In this volume a Free Church leader makes a similar almost agonising discovery of the failure of the Free Churches, and turns his whole strength of mind and heart—and it may be observed that Mr. Shakespeare is a very strong man—to find a remedy." [1]

No remedy will be found. The great Mission of Repentance and Hope, which was to start a new revival and fill the empty Churches was a dead failure from the start. The fact is, the War has only accelerated a movement which was in progress long before the War began, namely, the secularization of life. All the Churches, for years before the War began, were reporting, with monotonous regularity, an annual loss of membership. With an increasing population there was a decreasing membership. A state of affairs which cannot continue indefinitely. The War with its staggering atrocity—which God allowed to start and did nothing to terminate, for it was fought out to the bitter end—only accentuated the fact, which many among the congregations were already beginning to suspect, that, as Carlyle lamented: "God does nothing now." To say nothing about raising irrepressible doubts as to the existence of any such Being.

The panic-stricken Churches are calling upon one another to join forces, to amalgamate and form a huge religious combine, or Trust, in order to stay the rout and recover the deserters. But it is too late. Nothing the Churches can do now will rehabilitate them. It is religion itself that is discredited. A fact that the Churches decline to face.

The Churches could afford to ignore the criticism of the poor and unpopular little band of Freethinkers of the past, but the seed they have sown is bearing fruit now, and the foes of the Churches to-day are of her own household. The pews are revolting against the pulpit. They are demanding more intelligence, more honesty from the clergy, and that their teaching shall be more in accordance with the scientific knowledge we now possess. As Mrs. Desmond Humphreys—better known under the pen name of "Rita" the popular novelist—observes:—

> The Church seems to ignore the ability of the laity. It has not reckoned with the force of an advancing tide of criticism—criticism born of the Church's own supine stupidity; its long and tacit acceptance of unprovable facts; its aggressive attitude towards science; its blind adherence to proved errors; above all, its belief in its own appointed supremacy over the minds and souls of mankind. [2]

The child finds, when he grows up, that he must unlearn all he has been taught. "And therein," says Mrs. Humphreys, "lies the fundamental mischief at the root of all Religion. It has taught wrongly from the beginning, and it has *gone on* teaching wrongly because it does not possess the moral courage to say, 'I am wrong.'"

The Protestant priest fares no better than the priest of Rome:—"Even empty Churches and a growing tendency to criticism have not quite awakened him. He is still a slave to his own narrow-mindedness. He has accepted the Thirty-nine Articles, and all they involve, and he dares not go back upon one for fear of being compelled to recant all." [1] The Church of to-day: "must recognize that the spiritual life of the nation has passed almost beyond its influence. That the world is up against ecclesiasticism and all the old futile explanations of life's mystery." [2]

(To be concluded.) W. Mann.

[1] *The Daily News*, November 7, 1918.
[2] "Rita," *The Wrong End of Religion*, 1917, p. 5.

Acid Drops.

Months ago we warned our readers to take with a grain of salt tales that would appear in the ordinary Press concerning Russia. Just as men like the Bishop of London and Mr. Stephen Graham romanced concerning the devotion of the Russian people to a pure religion, so we knew that the moment the Revolution disestablished the Church and Religion in Russia the stream of lies would be in the other direction. The *Church Times* has from time to time published accounts of the way in which the Russian Government is oppressing religion. Now we see the *Christian World* of December 18 publishes an account of the Baptists in Russia, from their leader, Pastor Fetler. This states that since the last revolution the Baptists have been very active in propaganda, they have opened new mission halls, holding open-air services, and establishing new schools. So much for the Bolshevik suppression of religious freedom. This quite agrees with our information from other sources, which also runs that greater efforts are now being made towards the education of the people of Russia than has ever been the case before. In a year or two, perhaps, the general public may learn the truth of the situation.

A story is told of the late Dr. John Percival, Bishop of Hereford. The Bishop once entertained a colonial divine at Hereford, and the latter said: "Well, bishop, you've got a fine cathedral, a beautiful palace, a salmon pool in the river, and a decent hope of heaven. You must give up one of them." Presumably, the Right Reverend Father-in God responded in the negative.

According to a daily paper, the profits from military canteens are very considerable, and these profits are to be used for the benefit of soldiers. As the Y.M.C.A. huts made similar charges to the troops, their profits ought to be considerable. Who is to benefit by the Y.M.C.A. profits?

The Churches regard marriage as indissoluble; but during the past five years the divorce rate has doubled, and bigamy has more than doubled.

Bishop Gore approves the Labour Party, and, after throwing flowers at it, concludes: "And may God give it wisdom and understanding." A similar prayer has been offered on behalf of Parliament for generations, and the results have been exceedingly unsatisfactory.

The Rev. Professor David Smith, the ultra-Evangelical divine, says that "every time we write a date we unwittingly confess the glory of the Name which is above every name," which is complimentary neither to the Lord he pretends to serve, nor to his own intelligence. The reverend gentleman mistakes Christendom for the world, and seems to convey the impression that the Christian Calendar is the only method of distributing time into periods in existence, whereas, as a matter of fact, the calendars, now in force in different parts of the world, are practically innumerable, such as the Mohammedan, Hebrew, Mexican, Mongolian, Nepalese, Peruvian, and so forth. A calendar is simply an orderly arrangement of the division of time, and in writing a date we merely conform to the calendar in use in the part of the world in which we dwell. The act has no religious significance at all.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

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Now that Glasgow has got a start in the breaking of the Sabbath, it is difficult to know where she will stop. The principal libraries are to be open for a few hours every Sunday from the beginning of the year. We are to have regular band performances in the parks during the summer months on Sundays, and now it is announced that the two captured German submarines which have been sent to the Clyde are to be open for inspection every day for the next three weeks—Sundays included.

Is the Socialist movement in Scotland being captured by the Church? It looks very like it at present. One Labour candidate said at a recent meeting that Socialism was only an exposition of Christian ethics, and immediately thereafter threw out an appeal to his Masonic brethren for their support.

Not content with being exempt from taxation on churches, an appeal is now being made for the exemption of all property held by the Church. It is high time that churches and all church property should pay their fair share of taxation. Do they not enjoy the same protection as other properties.

As evidence of revival of religion in Scotland, we may note that the U. F. Church of Scotland Central Fund shows a decrease of £2,226. Karl Marx said that the Church of England would sooner sacrifice thirty-eight of its Thirty-nine Articles than one thirty-ninth of its income. And we are quite certain this holds good of Churches the other side of the border.

A poor old grey-headed Leinster woman was sentenced to death the other day for murdering her daughter-in-law. The accused, it was said, was suffering from religious mania, and was never tired of reading her Bible. She deserves sympathy rather than a sentence.

We feel sure our readers will be deeply grieved to learn that the Vicar of St. James, Clerkenwell, announces that the *Parish Magazine* is bound to cease publication owing to the expenses of production. We don't know whether the vicar has tried prayer as a means of saving the paper.

We are told that humility is a grace specially created by the Christian religion; and yet in daily life Christians are the proudest and haughtiest people on earth, always looking down upon and despising all who differ from themselves. To Catholics all Protestants are schismatics, while to the latter the former are followers of the scarlet woman. To the Anglican Church the Free Churches are unauthorized "mushroom growths," and Free Church people find the Established Church people sorely lacking in true spiritual religion. The truth is that humility is not a *religious* product at all, but a purely human virtue, rare everywhere and at all times, but by no means confined to the disciples of Jesus.

"Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," is a sentiment pleasing to clerical ears. It has no terror for lawyers, however, as may be seen in the fact that thirty-five undefended divorce cases were disposed of by Mr. Justice Coleridge recently in four hours.

The Young Men's Christian Association is advertising for handkerchiefs, pipes, woollen underclothing (presumably for men) and other spiritual additions to the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

The Battersea Free Church invited the six candidates for the two divisions of the Borough to their Pleasant Sunday Afternoon to state their views. The rules were no questions, no applause or dissent, and no voting. Surely, a limited-liability idea of liberty.

The Bishop of Oxford has been coquetting with the Democrats, and, in an article in a daily paper, he said: "No citizen has a right to exist unless he is a labourer with hand or mind or both." Logically, the Bench of Bishops should be shepherded to the dust destructor.

Dean Inge says that the Englishman "looks like a fool and talks like a fool"—but he wakes up when his back is to the wall. Maybe that is one reason why the dear clergy like to keep people asleep.

The dear editors are doing their best (or their worst) to discredit everything unless it is home-grown. One says: "You may hear the whisper that Santa Claus came from Germany," but he dismisses the notion with scorn. If this sort of thing goes on we shall hear presently that Jesus Christ was a Welshman.

The leading article in the *British Weekly* for December 12 is entitled "The Calmness of Jesus Christ." Two sentences therein are noteworthy. One is as follows: "The footprints of God are hidden." No statement could be truer; of the Divine existence and activity there are no traces whatever. This is the other: "Jesus Christ was always calm." Change *was* into *is*, and this statement also is perfectly true. Christ never does or says anything; but was the Gospel Jesus calm when he cursed his enemies, calling them "hypocrites," "serpents," "offspring of vipers," as recorded in Matt. xxiii.?

A sum of £64,000 is to be raised for the new Bishopric of Bradford. £37,000 has been already received, and it is hoped to secure the rest this year. This creation of new bishoprics strikes us as a scandalous waste of money, and a trading upon the gullibility of a too gullible people. Perhaps a larger circulation of the *Freethinker* in the district and a more vigorous prosecution of Freethought work might have a salutary effect.

Wise Men, and Holy!

WHEN Holy Men
Are wise
They tell most lies,
Most terrible lies!
But then,
They are but wise
For their creed!
A *deed*
They rarely do,
And when they do,
They do belie
Their creed,
And so give the Lie
To all Their Breed!
When they rave—
As they sometimes do—
They save
Truth,
Forsooth!—
They save
As they never saved before.
And after,
In the calm,—
Increasing the Doubter's laughter
They do deplore
All such ravings,
And do their best—
Just like each other similar pest!—
So then to cancel
All such savings
By devious ways,
Such as are full known to them,—
And to all who enquiry condemn—
By prayer or praise,
By wise stealth,
Or wealth
Spurned from the Unwise!—
By such wordy embalm
That slings ever to Their Chancel!
How Wise!—Holy Men,—How Wise!

C. B. WARWICK.

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Our Day.

OUR New Year's Push has, we are glad to say, caught on. We have had many letters from readers saying they intend to do their share, and some have sent postal orders with lists of addresses for copies of our New Year's issue to be sent direct. We shall be very pleased to attend to these instructions.

What we are asking is that each of our readers shall take an extra copy of the issue dated January 5, place it in a wrapper, and send it to a friend or acquaintance to whom it will be acceptable. *Freethinker* should be written across the back in order to secure the benefits of the halfpenny newspaper rate.

We are increasing the paper for that week to 16 pages. This is costly, but if we are not deceived as to the number of copies that will reach new readers it will pay ultimately.

At the cost of twopence halfpenny each one can give the *Freethinker* a good send off for the New Year, and perhaps secure a regular reader.

There are thousands of potential readers scattered about. We hope to pick up a fair number of them by this method.

Readers must order their copies early from their newsagents. They must also bear in mind that in an effort of this description everyone counts.

We see that some have been giving substantial sums to Churches as a thank-offering for the War having come to an end. Let each *Freethinker* reader take the suggested plan as a thank-offering for survival. *Our* War is still proceeding, and we are proposing a method of peppering the enemy with explosives of the highest order.

Don't forget, then, to secure an extra copy of the *Freethinker* for January 5. It is the opening of a new volume. The first shot in the campaign of 1919.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

F. AGATE.—It is a good plan to leave used copies of the *Freethinker* in train or tramcar, and it is adopted by many of our readers—with good results.

HUGH THOMSON.—We agree with you that we need to be on our guard against the after-War reactionary forces. They are very active just now, and Prussianism in Britain may be even more difficult than Prussianism in Berlin.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—"Ernest," 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—"Ernest," 2s. 6d.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—E. Lyons, 2s. 6d.; George Proctor, 2s. 6d.; S Clowes, 5s.; W. F. Ambrose, 2s; W. Darge, 2s.

A. J. PREECE.—You are quite mistaken. The Secularist is asking for no sectarian teaching in schools. The Education Code itself defines the meaning of "secular," and all the Freethinker asks is that the education in State schools shall be confined to subjects that come under that head.

VERA C. DICKINSON.—Pleased to hear from a new reader who is so interested in the paper. See "Acid Drops."

T. H. GUNNING.—Copies of January 5 issue will be sent to addresses given. Thanks.

J. HIBBOTT.—Pleased to hear from so old a Freethinker as yourself, and to learn that in your opinion the *Freethinker* stands to day higher than any of its predecessors. Sending what is required. Please accept with our compliments. Papers sent are interesting and useful.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour bf 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 January 5 Mr. Cohen opens his New Year's work with two lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwick, Manchester. We hope that Manchester Freethinkers will do their best to make the meetings as widely known as possible. There is no advertising like personal effort. The Manchester Branch has made splendid headway, but it is only a mere skeleton of what it ought to be in a city with a population of well over half a million,

The Glasgow Branch adopted a new, but a very admirable, method in advertising Mr. Cohen's lectures. The notice of the meeting was accompanied by a reprint of "The Principles and Objects of the N.S.S." This should be effective in calling attention to the purpose for which the Society exists.

Strong efforts are being made by the Glasgow Saints to get the *Freethinker* placed in the reading rooms of the public libraries.

We mentioned some time ago that Ireland would be moving in a Freethought direction after the War. We are glad to note that a well-attended meeting was held recently in Belfast, and it was decided to form a Branch of the N. S. S. in that city. Mr. Cohen has been asked to pay Belfast a visit, and he will take the earliest opportunity of doing so. Meanwhile, will Belfast Freethinkers note that meetings are held in the City Studio, 3 High Street, Belfast, every Friday evening? Secretary, Mr. J. F. Lessels.

We have received Dr. Lyttelton's promised article, but owing to getting out two numbers of the paper in a week, we regret our inability to publish until January 5. As, however, that issue of the *Freethinker* will reach a much larger number of readers, the author will lose nothing by the slight but unavoidable delay.

THANK GOD!

Cassander was one of the greatest geniuses of his time, yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence. Being by degrees driven into a hatred of all mankind from the little pity he found amongst them, he even ventured at last ungratefully to impute his calamities to providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of heaven and ask mercy from him that made him; *if God*, replies he, *has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from him hereafter?* But being answered that a suspension of justice was no argument that should induce us to doubt of its reality; "let me entreat you," continued his confessor, "by all that is dear to be reconciled to God, your father, your maker, and your friend." *No*, replied the exasperated wretch, *you know the manner in which he left me to live, and* (pointing to the straw on which he was stretched) *you see the manner in which he leaves me to die!*—*Oliver Goldsmith, "Citizen of the World."*

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Man's Feline Friend.

II.

(*Continued from p. 658.*)

ANNE MARKS, in her instructive and entertaining volume, *The Cat in History, Legend, and Art*, notes an instance in which the warmth-loving cat has been completely adapted to intensely cold conditions. "A special breed of cats," she states,—

> is used in American (and possibly in other) cold-storage warehouses. The ordinary cat could not live in the temperature, but some robust individuals having at length become acclimatized in one such place, their offspring—strong, thick-furred animals—able to withstand the cold, are now domiciled in these warehouses, and the variety, sturdy and answering the purpose, continues to flourish.

An ardent lover of cats, our authoress enters her protest against the vulgar error that these animals rank far below dogs in the scale of intelligence. Doubtless some clever cats easily excel many dogs. Individual felines and canines vary widely in mental power. In certain cases the dog's sagacity proves superior, while in others the cat shows itself quite equal or even greater in intelligence than its canine competitor. One shrewd and experienced American trainer claims, as a result of long and patient study of the animal, that the cat is really more intelligent than the dog. In reply to the complaint that while man has made the dog an obedient and trustworthy companion and servant, and has trained the horse and other creatures to labour for his benefit, the cat has invariably refused all human attempts to induce it to toil in man's service, this observer answers that the cat's obstinacy is the outcome of its astuteness. In any event, it is indisputable that cats

> thoroughly understand their own wishes and the way to realize them, and they invariably succeed in compassing the end they have in view, unless prevented by resolution and patience equal to their own, aided by the superior resources at the command of a human opponent.

The cat group ranges throughout the Eastern and Western Worlds. The lion may be regarded as the head of the family, even ranking above that terrible carnivore the Bengal tiger. The jaguar, leopard, ounce, ocelot, puma, serval, the civet cat, mungoose, and caracal are all members of this extensive order. Another famous feline is the Caffre Cat, the probable ancestor of the domesticated European cat. This animal occurs in Africa where it extends from Egypt and Algeria to the Cape, while it is native also to Syria and Arabia. Formerly common in Cape Colony, it has receded with the spread of civilization into the less-frequented regions where it is still abundant, and constitutes the representative wild cat of the once Dark Continent.

The Caffre cat was tamed at an early period in ancient Egypt, where it became the object of adoration and worship. But, although the modern house cat is mainly descended from this stock, there can be little doubt that a fair amount of intercrossing has occurred with the native wild cats of the various European countries. Moreover, the untamed Caffre cat once dwelt in Europe, and its fossilized remains have been discovered in the cavern deposits of Gibraltar. The presence of the animal in Spain presumably dates from the period when the Iberian Peninsular was still united with the African land-mass.

From remote times the cat has been familiar in China and India, but nowhere else has the animal occupied so exalted a position in the estimation of the people as in ancient Egypt. There it was venerated; it possessed its peculiar divinity; cities were dedicated to its service; sculptors and painters made it the subject of their respective arts, while at its death its remains were solemnly embalmed in costly raiment, perhaps to await a glorious resurrection. The cat-cult of Old Nile varied locally, and the feline goddess Bast bore many names. Bast is portrayed in art with a human body surmounted with the head of a cat, while figures of cats and kittens were adored as emblems of the divinity. Medals stamped with the likeness of a cat were worn as charms, and from their sale the priests of Bast derived a handsome revenue. We gather from the Greek historians that pet cats resided in all the Egyptian temples.

The cat was associated with solar ceremonies, and the animal seems to have been worshipped in the great City of the Sun—Heliopolis—because, it is said, "the pupil of its eye was observed to vary with the height of the luminary above the horizon."

A world-wide superstition connects the cat with the lunar orb. The size of the cat's pupil was supposed to fluctuate with the phases presented by the waxing and waning moon. The pupil of the eye was believed to expand with the orb's increase, while it contracted with its dwindling. Further affinity between the silver moon and the cat was evidenced by their common nocturnal preferences. The queen of the nightly skies was regarded as the mistress of the feline race, and the lunar divinity was thought to be influenced through the reverence of the people towards her terrestrial servants.

When Hamlet meditated over the skull in the Elsinore graveyard his thoughts turned to the ignoble employment to which the dust of Cæsar and Alexander might one day descend. But little did the early Egyptians imagine the unromantic if practical purposes to which a less religious age would devote the embalmed bodies of their sacred cats. Yet, when quite recently thousands of mummied cats were unexpectedly unearthed in an Egyptian cave in which they had for centuries reposed, many were spread over the adjacent fields to enrich the soil, while the remainder were shipped abroad for the same purpose.

The cat became man's companion in prehistoric times, and conclusive proofs of this relationship are of great antiquity. The "cat" employed by the ancient Greeks was probably the marten. But there can be little doubt that the true cat was domesticated in Europe centuries prior to the Christian era. Professor Mivart, in his splendid monograph, states that:—

> There are signs that it was domesticated amongst the people of the Bronze Period, and the supposition that it was first introduced into Western Europe by the Crusaders is of course an altogether erroneous one."

In the East, the monuments of Babylon and Nineveh, in addition to those of Egypt, preserve evidences from remote times of man's close acquaintance with the animal. The earliest known representation of the cat occurs in the Necropolis at Thebes, and dates back at least 4,000 years. Various extremely ancient models of the animal may be seen in several European museums.

Mainly from religious motives, the crime of cat-killing was in old Egypt visited with the punishment of death. In later Europe the penalty was mitigated, but the value of the cat as a vermin-destroyer was clearly recognised, and the heavy fines inflicted on a human cat-persecutor sufficed to protect the animal from fatal injury. During the Middle Ages the death of a cat incurred the forfeiture of a ewe, or of a quantity of wheat—a commodity both scarce and costly—sufficient to cover the animal's body "when it was held up by the tip of the tail with the nose touching the ground."

The traveller in Persia who expects to greet the

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splendid long-furred beauties so familiar in England will be greatly disappointed. The native cats of Persia are miserable emaciated felines, and these animals are regarded by the people with cold indifference. As a matter of fact the magnificent Persian specimens so admired in Europe are the artificial creations of the selective breeders of pedigree cats.

With the Arabs, on the other hand, the cat is affectionately treated, and Arabian folk-lore contains several stories of the native fairies assuming the form of the cat. The Jinns, or fairies in feline form were believed to hallow the dwellings which they entered.

In the Far East generally the cat is both venerated and valued. It is stated that in China the cat's eye serves as a chronometer. The pupil of the animal's eye contracts with the advancing hours after dawn until it becomes a mere slit at noon. Then it begins to dilate until its full expansion approaches as the twilight deepens into night. By observing these fluctuations the people tell the time much as our own rustics note the hour by looking at the sun. The Celestials appreciate the cat as an article of food, and the animal's flesh is considered a dainty. Large cats are exposed for sale on the provision stalls in Eastern lands. The animals are chained up on the farms where they are fattened for the market. The cat was formerly a much commoner comestible than at present. We gather that after the removal of the head and tail, and presumably the intestines also, the cat's carcass is suspended in the open air to purge it of its powerful flavour, when, after the interval of a day or so, it is ready for cooking, and is by some "considered almost as sweet as rabbit."

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

The City and the Coast.

It seems to the writer that an impression of "Glasgow Fair," 1918, will not be out of place in the pages of the *Freethinker*, but may even be a diversion as agreeable as the holiday itself. On this hint he speaks.

They are "Fair" folk, and folk who are very fair—beautiful, he means, especially the women-folk. Health and happiness and freedom have a way of making even the plain face beautiful. The city, when it comes to the coast, transforms the hamlet there; and when the weather is superb, as it has been, the natural beauty of the particular scene transforms, nay, transfigures, the citizen. The clouds and azure, the rocks and seas, the island alps and fairy isles, the wonder of the woods, the winding ways, the wistful splendour of the maturing summer; and always over all, transcending all, that great inverted bowl we call the sky, with tranquil fleecy clouds, or "barred" horizon, turned to incandescent gossamer and silvery filagree, still white vapours between the earth and the dazzlingly splendid sun, loftily poised in the intense inane, so wondrously, weirdly suffused and shaped and shaded in the perfect dome of azured light. The inland hills are solemn and sublime, steeped in the sunset haze, when the quiet West from silver turns to gold, anon to deeper red, expiring fires.

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And the sons of God looked upon the daughters of men, and behold they were very fair. And it is so to this day, only more so. The pensive penman is quite positive the ladies dressed not so daintily of old; and evolution, with selection, in a word, refinement, has been beautifying the human form divine, and shaping and irradiating the female face, in colour and contour, eyes that mislead the morn, eyes that shine eternally pure and bright and soft and sweet and holy even over the brutal paths of glory and the grave.

It is said fine feathers make fine birds. It is not true; not wholly so; but rather fine birds desire—and deserve—fine feathers. And surely never in the history of the world were our womenkind so attractively, so fittingly, attired—not even the mythical Mother Eve herself in all her unadornment—nor the goddesses of old Greece and Rome. In the forefront of his picture the writer sees a bevy of four—if four is a bevy—four girls, arm in arm, and dressed in white, or shading off into indescribably delicate hues—fine feathers *and* fine birds, young and sweet and wholesome, winged beauty, with fairy draperies waving in the wind—a poem, a picture in petticoats, or the very essence and inspiration of poetry and art. Were they morally good or otherwise? Oh, ye moralists, ye dream-dispellers, ye joy-killers, ye undertakers! know ye not that health and happiness and liberty, and the desire to be good and beautiful and beloved, are the true safeguards of, and incentives to, morality itself? These were truth and beauty, and tending towards the light as do all delicate and beautiful things.

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The wagonette rides east and west are popular. The brake horses, and the broken horses, have not quite the fun of the Fair. One salutes the dumb animal, and hopes he will receive his well-earned corn and water, bedding for his weary bones and galled hide, and for the repose of his *mortal* soul!

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There is the cry-baby, and the urchin's tears, and the sad-faced man and woman here and there. We cannot all be happy at once, or all the time, and yet it is so *easy*, and so *natural*, to be happy. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Gospel of misery, is out of date. The gospel of hope, and gladness, and realization, is breaking at last in waves of light on the shores of chaos and old night. The writer noticed it particularly, even the plain face was pretty; and he felt quite handsome himself!—the past relegated, the future undreaded, the present moment the life and opportunity of man. Those darlings, in those dresses, are foam flakes on the crest of those rolling, glittering, glorious waves. The plain root virtues, the natural strength, fertility, and growing goodness and intelligence of the race, in murmurous music, in hoarse strivings, in deep calling unto deep, in soundings near and far, in the universal *sub mer*, make possible this adorable beauty, this flower and fruit of the ocean of existence, which, as the Holiday Spirit, is now rolling, and will more and more advance upon the world-weary shores of human kind.

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Some reader may ask: whence this wholesale optimism in one who professes to be a free and serious thinker? Well, it is in the air, in the sun, and partly inspired by a wonderful companion from the city whom the wise will know as Ingersoll Redivivus, who imparted so much information, who made the world larger, brighter, better, by his very presence. This man, as a Freethinker and a philosopher, as the fountain of a thousand generosities, mental, moral, and material to all he meets with everywhere—this man, and this woman, and this superb summer scene, are the proofs of what despised Nature can produce, and the prophesy of better still to come, when man at last exchanges the jangle and the shadow of the creeds for the harmony and the light of earth.

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It was fitting, also, that the writer and his friends should stand on the little rocky eminence, known as

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Ardrossan Hill, and observe the passing of the perfect day. The inevitable preacher was young, and glib, and earnest, with much more faith than knowledge, "most assured" indeed. The setting sun made a path of silver o'er the deep to where the Cumbraes dwelt in shade. The silver turned to gold and dusky dreamy red. The ancient ruin on the hill alternately frowned and grinned as the passing shadows fell. The party heard but heeded not the youthful exhorter; theirs were older heads and richer imaginations, and there was an infinitely grander, nobler, sermon in the silent stones of the grim old castle wall, and in the soundless eloquence of that sunset splendour amidst the hills and sea.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Writers and Readers.

IN commenting a little while ago on the preposterous Billing case, I called attention to one of Mr. Justice Darling's many foolish remarks. The counsel had been pointing out instances in *Salome* where Wilde had transcribed the actual words of Holy Writ. The "learned" judge, who is supposed, by his legal friends, to cut something of a figure in polite letters, was astounded. Poor Wilde was then a rank plagiarist. He was not only abnormally vicious, he was also a mean pilferer of other people's phrases and ideas. I suggested that, by condemning Wilde for using the actual phrases of his source our "learned" Judge was equally condemning Shakespeare. Now, it would seem that there are still some people who resent any censure of Shakespeare, our literary fetish. If we do not fall down and worship, we are blasphemous unbelievers. A correspondent who thinks that I am too hard on the God of his idolatry, has asked me to say where Shakespeare is guilty of "lifting" other men's ideas and phrases.

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The difficulty is rather to say what Shakespeare did not borrow than what he did borrow from other people. In the first place, the Wilde count is paralleled by Shakespeare's treatment of North's *Plutarch* in the Roman plays. The prose of the translator is often turned almost literally into blank verse. It is not recast; the poet was in too much of a hurry to get his play on the boards. With the sole exception of *Love's Labour Lost*, the construction of which is singularly inept, the plots and the plays are all borrowed. Even the great plays are the revisions of the work of hard-working contemporaries and predecessors. Scenes and characters he "lifted" entire. In *The Winter's Tale* he appropriated the whole of the plot from a novel by Robert Greene, who at the time could not object, poor man! because he was dead. He had an irritatingly high-handed way of treating the work of his fellow-dramatists; and everyone, I presume, knows Greene's indignant reference to him as an "upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers." His way at first was to take plays which had gone out of fashion, touch them up a little, and allow them to pass as his own. Anyone who does not think with the late Mr. Foote and others that Shakespeare is understood better the less we know about the conditions of his workmanship, will agree with me that there is much in even the great plays that was not written by him, while *Titus* and the *Henry VI.* group were in all probability the work of his minor contemporaries. We have just to make up our minds to accept facts as they are. Shakespeare never invented a character, a scene, or a plot if he could come by it honestly or dishonestly. Justice Darling's gibe at Wilde was simply another instance of legal foolishness.

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Talking of the fatuity of "learned" judges reminds me of a good story Coleridge tells of Lord Kenyon, who tried a bookseller, Thomas Williams, in 1798, for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*:—

> In his charge to the jury Kenyon enumerated many celebrated men who had been sincere Christians; and, after having enforced the example of Locke and Newton—both of whom were Unitarians and not Christians—proceeded: "Nor, gentlemen, is this belief confined to men of comparative seclusion, since men, the greatest and most distinguished both as philosophers and as monarchs, have enforced this belief, and shown its influence by their conduct. Above all, gentlemen, need I name to you the Emperor Julian, who was so celebrated for every Christian virtue *that he was called Julian the Apostle?*"

Kenyon was consistently ignorant to the very end. He left instructions that *Mors janua vita* should be cut on his tombstone. His legal friends explained the bad Latin by saying that he was too parsimonious to pay the extra charge for the diphthong in *vitæ*, but it is more likely that his acquaintance with Latin was on a par with his knowledge of Christian origins.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Christianity and Labour.

IT is with cordial concurrence that one reads a recent appreciation by "Mimnermus" of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and Slavery*. The facts garnered by Mr. Cohen need to be continually presented and driven home. How true it is, as "Mimnermus" observes, that the clergy "in their hearts care as little for the welfare of the working classes as the Sultan of Zanzibar for his slaves"! Even in Nonconformist Churches, which like to think themselves democratic, and free from the vices of the Government religion, class distinctions are firmly established, although the pastors are for ever killing these distinctions "with their mouths," loudly proclaiming that in the House of God all meet together on an equal footing, and that the Lord is no respecter of persons.

Unfortunately for these statements, some of us have inside knowledge of the manner in which the business of Church and Chapel is transacted. In this connection let it be said that the observation and experience of the writer goes to show that the Conformists are more democratic than the Nonconformists. It is true that a working man may be found acting as a member of a managing board of a chapel—a point which "Mimnermus" must not forget—but how often are his views adopted and acted upon in preference to the views of his minister or his wealthy fellow-member? Not once in ten thousand times. Can we wonder that workmen with any brains or independence of character turn from this kind of snobbery and toadyism with disgust?

At the same time, we must not be deceived by an easy optimism. Certainly, I believe that a great many Labour men are opposed to priestcraft and the pretensions of clericalism; but many "Labour Leaders" are permeated by religiosity, and pay homage to the "Lord of Lords" with all the fervour of the cleric. Mr. W. Adamson, M.P., is a prominent Baptist, and officiates regularly at religious services. Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., is an outstanding Wesleyan, and one of the most popular lay preachers of his communion. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., is a Godite also, and not so long before the War was, on a United Free Church Assembly Platform in Edinburgh, expatiating upon the happy co-operation between Christianity and Labour. Mr. R. J. Campbell on one occasion dubbed Mr. Snowden, M.P., the "Bishop of Blackburn." The same Mr. Campbell was responsible for the ill-mannered and insulting statement that Mr. Robert Blatchford was a Christian without knowing it. The writer was once present at a Sunday meeting of a large I.L.P. Branch when the addresses, given by two Unitarian ministers, were on the subject of "Religion and Socialism." These two gentlemen took up very much the Campbell position, which found favour with their hearers, and when a questioner of the N.S.S. type got up and described the religion expounded that evening just as much superstition as any other sort, a pained "ooh" went through the audience, being particularly audible amongst the women.

In view of all these facts and considerations, is it quite safe to conclude that there is marked and universal hostility on the part of the labour leaders to the clergy? Frankly, the writer has not heard any "hysterical appeals" by clergymen to labour leaders to remember that God and the Churches have always been on their side; and he thinks that the clergy are astute enough to prefer other methods. Is it quite safe

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to conclude that "Christianity has let the mastery of the democratic movement pass to other forces"? We would be glad to think so; but is it the case?

Most labour men choose to call themselves Socialists. Now, logically, no man can be simultaneously both a Socialist and a Theist. Necessarily the Socialist must disapprove and seek to destroy many things "ordained of God." "Christian Socialism"—taking the term "Christian" to describe the Churches and Chapels as we see them—*must* be a contradiction in terms. If we, however, use the adjective "Christian" in the primitive impracticable sense, then, of course, the terms of the expression are congruous; but, in that case, the expression describes something that has no existence—which is absurd.

What Freethinkers ought to strive to make people (including the clergy themselves) understand is that they are out not to patch up but to completely renew. Thus, we do not make it our policy to change or modify the power of clerics. We seek their total abolition. Plainly our objective is, *first*, to eject the Spiritual Lords from Parliament; *second*, to disestablish all Established Churches; and *third*—well, the third—will be able to take care of itself, when we think of the new vigour which the Freethought movement throughout the whole world has lately shown.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

SOUL-SALVING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have read with interest and appreciation the articles by "Keridon" criticizing the obscurantist views of Dr. McDougall. There are, however, some points in the articles open to criticism, and, in order to assist the writer's endeavours to introduce some clear thinking, to replace the question-begging methods of Dr. McDougall, I venture to ask for some of your valuable space to continue the discussion.

In the issue for December 1, "Keridon" defines energy as "that which can do work," thus laying himself open to the charge of viewing energy as an entity. This is also the interpretation which might be put upon his conception from his other references to energy in the article. Knowing full well the poorness of our language to express our ideas clearly, I recognize the necessity of personifying abstractions in ordinary conversations and discussions, and it may be thought that I am hypercritical in calling attention to a possible interpretation which I think "Keridon" himself would disavow. Justification, however, may be admitted when it is pointed out that energy is frequently asserted to be an entity even in the writings of authors of considerable scientific attainments.

Another point open to criticism is his strictures on Dr. McDougall for the reference to "potential energy" as a "convenient fiction." This is my own conception, and, in referring to it in this way, I should not like to be thought to "sneer" at a convention whose utility is recognized. "Keridon" may be right in his description of the original meaning of the term, but, if so, its meaning has completely changed, as a reference to a modern text-book on physics will show. Therein potential energy is usually referred to as a distinct form of energy, and, moreover, it is used as a proof of the theory of the conservation of energy, or alternately, as a deduction from the theory. It would take up too much of your space to enter into a discussion upon the correctness of this view, but if any of your readers desire further information, I would refer them to an article, entitled "Meta Mechanics," by An Old Millwright, in *Engineering*, for August 30, 1912.

I gather from his remarks that "Keridon" does not accept the common view, and, in that case, I fail to see how he can object to Dr. McDougall referring to "potential energy" as a "convenient fiction."

H. V. T.

METAPHYSICS.

SIR,—May I say, in regard to the article by Mr. J. T. Lloyd in your issue of December 8, that I used the word "Metaphysics" in the letter on which he comments in the *popular* sense? This, in addition to the definition Mr. Lloyd gives, embraces those subjects that are now more correctly classified under "Psychology" and "Ethics."

When I referred to the large amount of attention paid to metaphysical research, I had in mind the spread and growth of Christian Science, Theosophy, and the New Thought teachings, together with the increasing number and circulation of books on "Mind Power." My reference to love, life, truth, goodness, should have made this obvious.

Mr. Lloyd's attitude towards metaphysics in the article on the subject is curiously ambiguous. He regrets that he should have been thought guilty of placing metaphysics on a level with "dogmatism"; he regards metaphysics as an *important* subject; he hates all dogmatism except that which inevitably accompanies actual knowledge; and agrees with Ingersoll that metaphysics is (in brief) "the Science of Fools"!

It is by a careless reading of my letter that he accuses me of forgetfulness. I wrote, not that it is impossible to conceive of space and time, but that it is impossible to conceive of these *as finite*.

Is it not true that the tendency even of scientific discovery is from the finite to the infinite? Has not the discovery of the disintegration of the atom and the subsequent electron theory of the composition of matter tended that way?

Mr. Lloyd's plea that people who desire answers to such questions as those I propounded (viz., why absolute memory persists in the subconscious mind and the utility of the experience of a lifetime if the ego ceases to be at death) look at life through selfish eyes, is quaint. Does he not agree that all desire is selfish? In any case, the point is that the subsequent annihilation of a mind equipped with experience and knowledge acquired through a lifetime conflicts with the law of the conservation of energy.

J. DOWELL JONES.

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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TO the affectionate memory of Mrs. Alice Wilson Arbuckle Reid, formerly of Kirkliston, Linlithgowshire, N.B., and Wandsworth Common, London, S.W., wife of James Reid, of Kincraig, Cutcliffe Grove, Bedford, who died December 7, 1916, aged 64 years.—JOHN A. REID.

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