

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 16

SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1913

PRICE TWOPENCE

It is not from one argument only but from the whole of modern science that the tremendous result is derived.
"There is no such thing as the supernatural."

—ERNEST RENAN.

Reason and Intuition.

THE contention of M. Bergson is that the intellect cannot explain the phenomena of life, because it is merely "the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools, and of indefinitely varying the manufacture," "the faculty of making and using unorganised instruments." Instinct, on the contrary, uses and even constructs organised instruments, "plainly deals only with things upon which it reacts." Such is the distinction M. Bergson makes between intellect and instinct. Inasmuch, then, as the intellect is concerned with forms, and instinct chiefly with matter, it follows that, in the attainment of knowledge, these two faculties "occupy separate provinces, the one seeking out the forms of things, the other the substance." In this manner the great metaphysician tries to convince us of the utter inadequacy of the intellect to deal with life. It is acquainted only with solids, and its noblest work is to fabricate. "Whatever is fluid will escape it in part, and life will escape it altogether." Poor old intellect, it "cannot grasp mobility," its dealings being almost exclusively with the "discontinuous." In reality everything is mobile, immobility being at best but apparent and relative. Hence, the only object on which the intellect can form a clear idea is seeming, deceptive immobility. In other words, it is fit only to contemplate and be fascinated by so-called dead matter. Life is too much for it altogether; it puzzles and bewilders it even to madness. "The intellect is characterised by a natural inability to comprehend life." How vastly superior is instinct. "While intelligence treats everything mechanically, instinct proceeds, so to speak, organically." Now, what is intuition? It is instinct glorified, "grown disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely." "Intuition is mind itself, and, in a certain sense, life itself." Consequently, intuition is the only safe guide of life.

It must be frankly admitted at once that the intellect is extremely restricted in the scope of its operations and in the quantity of its results. It cannot explain vital phenomena. There are innumerable problems which it is incapable of solving. In consequence of this, M. Bergson takes for granted that intuition may be taken as a perfectly adequate guide in all questions touching life and its interests. But this is an inference unsupported by a single fact. Throughout *Creative Evolution* the author attacks theories of which he disapproved, and having demolished them to his own satisfaction, he assumes the truth of his own theory, and speaks of it as if it had been victorious all along the line. Such is this savant's method in all his books, and we are bound to characterise it as a false and mischievous method. As a matter of fact, all knowledge comes through the intellect, none through intuition. There are, it

is true, self-evident truths, such as mathematical axioms, and general principles, deduced without trouble from logic. What is called intuitive knowledge belongs to that category. Truths of perception are also self-evidenced, and have no need to be formally demonstrated. Intuition, in this sense, is but the handmaid of the reason, not its supplanter.

We have furnished the above slight sketch of M. Bergson's theory in order to expose the fallacies in it as applied to theology. Mr. R. J. Campbell is evidently a diligent student of the Parisian Professor's works, as is shown in a sermon of his published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for April 9. Two-thirds of this discourse may be described as a series of attacks upon the human intellect. Its great fault is not that it cannot find God, but that "its tendency is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion." There is a long quotation from Newman's *Apologia*, in which the great writer refers to the world as giving the lie to the Christian doctrine of God, and to himself as tempted by "the sight of the world which is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of lamentation, and mourning, and woe," to become an Atheist, or a Pantheist, or a Polytheist. Newman was of opinion that "the unaided reason, when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in a future retribution"; but Mr. Campbell doubts it, and says that it is "a contention which would not be admitted by the scientific mind of to-day." Then he adds:—

"If we had nothing but the intellect to rely upon in our quest for God, we should never find him. Can you imagine anything more antecedently improbable on rational grounds than that from all eternity a single being should exist, all-wise, all-powerful, all-perfect in every way, and the author of all things, visible and invisible? Why, the proposition is far too stupendous to be grasped by any rational being. We are obliged to do our thinking in terms of cause and effect, and we cannot grasp the idea of an uncaused cause of all existence, especially if we are to predicate of it that it is infinite in intelligence and creative energy."

For a believer in God that is a terribly humiliating admission to make, considering that the reason, as well as every other faculty, is supposed to be a gift from God. Mr. Campbell makes a more naïve statement still:—

"As Cardinal Newman says, the difficulty becomes intensified when we look at the state of creation. In the name of all that is reasonable, why is the world so wretched, and why—supposing that there is a God—has it been allowed to remain so for unnumbered ages? I do not know; nobody knows. To all rational seeming such a God as the Christian believes in might have been expected to create a better and happier world, and it is no explanation to say that he did so, but that his plans were vitiated by the perverseness of his creatures; we want to know how or why they could be vitiated. Would it not have been as easy for God to secure to his creation perfect immunity from pain and evil, as to make it at all? And, in any case, why has he chosen to remain so strangely silent about the matter? Why should anyone in the wide world be left in any doubt as to what God is doing and what is expected from us?"

All that has been said, and much better, innumerable times before, by prominent Freethinkers. What is remarkable about the present expression of it is that it was uttered from a Christian pulpit. Mr. Campbell, however, tries to break the force of the wonder felt at the failure of the intellect to find God by pointing

out its limitations when confronted by the problem of man's existence. What he means by that remark is not clear, for the existence of man is an ascertained fact. No one has ever been fool enough to ask for proofs that he himself exists. And at this point the reverend gentleman shows how imperfect his understanding of the scientific conception of the Universe is. While accepting the theory of evolution, he wants to know "how it was that there was anything to evolve." He speaks of "the tiniest speck of matter that first occupied the limitless void of space," and asks, "How did it come there?" He wants his uncaused First Cause, after all, because, without it, it is to him inconceivable how the evolutionary process was ever set going. He must have his Almighty Starter, who created the first tiny speck of matter, and then gave it the Original Push. But science recognises no beginning, knows nothing of a current of consciousness flowing down into matter as into a tunnel, endeavoring to advance, making efforts on every side, forcing its way through hard, rocky materials, and at last breaking out into the light once more, and has not even the faintest idea what is meant by such unscientific phraseology. Mr. Campbell's point, of course, is that the reason can no more explain the existence of man, or of Nature, than it can that of God; but he forgets that he must *prove* God's existence before asking for an *explanation* of it. "To postulate the existence of God," he says, "is not a more staggering proposition than to account for the existence of man." Man's existence is an established fact; that of God is not. Why postulate an existence of which no evidence can be adduced? There are mysteries in abundance in the Universe the existence of which nobody doubts—why introduce another mystery, which is greater than, and only calculated to deepen, all the rest?

Just here Mr. Campbell becomes simply a Bergsonian. What instinct, matured into intuition, is to M. Bergson, that faith is to the City Temple oracle. He even has the temerity to assure us that instinct is a much more wonderful thing than reason, though admitting that the latter has largely superseded it in man. If he is right, the lower has largely superseded the higher, which is inconceivable. He confesses that he finds it rather difficult to knock such an idea into people's minds, and we are not surprised, for it is an essentially incredible idea. Faith, we are told, is instinct spiritualised, which is surely the very worst thing that could have happened to instinct. What does faith do? Nothing but imagine and abnormally excite the emotions. Translated into feeling, faith says, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in him"; but reason says, "That is a lie; look at the world and see how terribly out of joint with that declaration it is." Calm, enlightened reason flatly contradicts the falsely comforting assurances of "the spiritual instinct," and ought by all means to supersede it. Newman had firm hold of the truth when he said:—

"If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living busy world and see no reflection of its Creator."

And yet while no reflection of God can be seen in this living busy world, faith ignores the fact, and cries out, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is." This is an irrefutable demonstration of the essential hypocrisy of all supernatural beliefs. If a Creator existed, how infinitely humiliated he would be to know that there was no reflection, not even the slightest hint, of himself in the work of his hands. Far better have no Creator at all than *such* a Creator. Christian emotionalism is a sort of mental enebriation and is, in the long run, much more injurious than bodily intoxication. Mr. Campbell acknowledges the fact emphasised by Newman; and yet, like Newman, he can shut his eyes to it and sing the praises of him who, if he exists, is directly responsible for it. We prefer to believe that such a Being does not exist, and to put our trust in Monarch Reason, who, in spite of all the parsons, is slowly

coming into his kingdom; and under his sagacious and benevolent reign we shall ere long enjoy a new earth, in which justice and love shall join hands and secure universal peace and plenty.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Pathology of Conversion.—II.

(Continued from p. 226.)

IT was shown in my last article that the state of mind religiously described as "conversion" is practically confined to the period of life that falls between the ages of twelve and twenty-five. That this was the case has, naturally, been always recognised by religious organisations. The pressure of facts has compelled them to adjust their methods to the situation; and these methods, as will be seen, offer a first-rate example of the manner in which religion distorts and diverts to its own interests feelings that have, normally, a purely natural significance. Apart from professors of religion, the fact of conversion being an adolescent phenomenon has been recognised of late years by a number of psychologists, who have found the experimental method a useful and powerful instrument of research. But even with these the full significance of the facts is not seen, or, if seen, not acknowledged. There has been a too great readiness to accept the religious explanation of the subject, even after the mechanism of it has been made plain. Instead of asking why physiological and psychological changes that are common to all human beings are expressed by some—it may be the majority—in terms of religion, writers fall back on such expressions as "the awakening of the religious life," the "development of the religious instinct," etc., which are not only hopelessly unscientific, but which really miss the vital point disclosed by their own investigations. Once the real significance of adolescence is recognised, there is not alone no need for a religious explanation of what takes place, but it is not difficult to show that, from the point of view of social and individual wellbeing, religion represents a distortion of human values.

From several points of view the period of adolescence is the most important in the life of the individual. It is a time of significant organic growth, bringing about the development of new functions, with a corresponding change in both the emotional and intellectual output. Before puberty, one may say that the individual has been mainly concerned with growth or acquisition. After puberty vast tracts of nerve tissue are awakened into activity, and an era of rapid development occurs. This is strikingly true of the brain, which up to that point increases more in bulk than it develops in function. There is probably a rapid growth of new nerve connections, which occasions both physiological and mental unrest.* With the physical changes there come even greater and more striking psychological changes. The nature of the individual undergoes what is little less than a transformation. He or she is less concerned with self, and more concerned with others. They become susceptible to impressions, to sights, to sounds, by which they were formerly but little influenced. Each is conscious of new feelings, strange desires, unusual attractions, all of which find expression in that feeling of unrest, the desire to do and to spend oneself, the need for the company of the other sex, which are characteristic of youth in both sexes. The childish desire for protection weakens; the mature desire to protect expresses itself.

Now, the whole significance of these changes, physical and mental, is fundamentally sexual and social. On the one hand, it may be said to be nature's plan for the perpetuation of the species. On the other hand, it is society's method of per-

* See Donaldson's *Growth of the Brain*, pp. 231-248.

petuating itself. And it is part of the "plan," so to speak, that there shall be developed instincts and capacities suitable to each phase of life as it develops. Thus it has been shown that the lengthening of infancy—the time, that is, during which the young human being is dependent upon its parents, which is much greater than that of any other animal—is nature's method of preparing the human animal for a greater degree of the capacity of adaptation or adjustment. In the same way it has been shown that the play instinct, universal throughout the whole animal world, is again nature's method of preparing the young for the more serious business of adult life.* So, in a similar manner, as childhood is being left behind and maturity approaches, there is a development of both structure and feeling, all of which find their legitimate field of operation in family and social life. If society and the race is to continue, it is essential that there shall be an emergence from the world of childhood that so largely centres around self, into that larger world in which the co-operation of others, and association with others, takes on the character of an organic need. This is the fundamental nature of what appears in the religious world as sacrifice, or, in a more normal form, the desire to serve. The whole significance of adolescence is, then, the entry of the individual into the life of the race. Its connection with religion is purely accidental.

Now, it is a statement quite beyond disproof that if we eliminate religion from the environment there is not a single feeling experienced at adolescence that cannot receive adequate gratification, not a single function that cannot be adequately exercised. It is idle to say that some people have a craving for religion at this time of life. Where an individual is in complete ignorance of the nature of his own development, and those around him are no better informed; where, moreover, there are others in a position of authority ready with a special interpretation, it is not surprising if the religious explanation is accepted. But in reality we have to form a judgment, not on the basis of what some declare they cannot do without, but on the basis of what others actually do without, and show no real loss in consequence. The value of alcohol is decided by the ability of people to go without it, not by the craving of some for it. So with religion. That some, even though it were the majority, express themselves in terms of religion proves little or nothing. It is far more significant that so large a number should find complete satisfaction for their whole nature in purely secular activities.

Leaving this aspect of the matter for the moment, let us see what is the real nature of the religious process of conversion. It has already been pointed out that the central feature of adolescence is that it is a period of rapid change and numerous fresh adjustments. But all periods of change are periods of instability and of susceptibility. While the individual is in a condition of what a scientist would call unstable equilibrium, he is peculiarly susceptible to the suggestions of those around him. In Starbuck's collection of cases, 34 per cent. of the females and 29 per cent. of the males described their conversion as being directly due to imitation, social pressure, and example. From the descriptions one reads of revival meetings, it is probable that this is an underestimate of the percentage of conversions due to these causes. Religion, like dress, has its fashions, and people moving in the same social circle are as likely to imitate in the one direction as in the other.

The full power of suggestion would be more properly considered in dealing with religious epidemics; but it is not out of place here to call attention to this factor in such a recent case as the outbreaks in Wales under the influence of semi-demented persons such as Evan Roberts. Here, apart from the suggestion and imitation operating in the actual meetings themselves, it is quite evident

that people went to the gatherings in many cases quite prepared to act in accordance with the published reports. And behind this particular revival, there were numerous other revivals which had handed down the tradition of certain behavior as the characteristics of an "outpouring of the Spirit." In America, these outbreaks seem to assume a more extravagant form than amongst us. Mr. Stanley Hall, for example, thus describes a Kentucky camp meeting, in which the prevailing feature was "jerk-ing." He says, quoting from an eye-witness, that as the meeting progressed:—

"The crowd swarmed all night round the preacher, singing, shouting, laughing, some plunging wildly over stumps and benches into the forest, shouting 'Lost, Lost!' others leaping and bounding about like live fish out of water; others rolling over and over on the ground for hours; others lying on the ground and talking when they could not move; and yet others beating the ground with their heels. As the excitement increased, it grew more morbid and took the form of 'jerkings,' or in others the holy laugh. The jerks began with the head, which was thrown violently from side to side so rapidly that the features were blurred and the hair almost seemed to snap, and when the sufferer struck an obstacle and fell he would bounce about like a ball. Saplings were sometimes cut breast high for the people to jerk by. In one place the earth about the roots of one of them was kicked about as though by the feet of a horse stamping flies. One sufferer mounted his horse to ride away when the jerks threw him to the earth, whence he rose a Christian. A lad, who feigned illness to stay away, was dragged there by the spirit and his head dashed against a wall till he had to pray. A sceptic who cursed and swore was crushed by a falling tree. Men fancied themselves dogs, and gathered round a tree barking and 'treeing the devil.' They saw visions and dreamed dreams, and as the revival waned, it left a crop of nervous and hysterical disorders in its wake."*

We have nothing quite so bad as this to show in British revivals, although the home phenomena is not different in its nature. Thus, a medical observer of some of the earliest Methodist revivals thus describes the symptoms attending these "divine" seizures:—

"There came on first a feeling of faintness, with rigor and a sense of weight at the pit of the stomach; soon after which the patient cried out as though in the agonies of labor. The convulsions then began, first showing themselves in the muscles of the eyelids, though the eyes themselves were fixed and staring. The most frightful contortions of the countenance followed, and the convulsions now took their course downwards, so that the muscles of the trunk and neck were affected, causing a sobbing respiration, which was performed with great effort. Tremors and agitations ensued, and the patients screamed out violently, and tossed their heads from side to side. As the complaint increased, it seized the arms, and its victims beat their breasts, clasped their hands, and made all sorts of strange noises."

In other instances connected with the early days of Methodism, one girl is described as "lying on the floor as one dead." Pews and benches were broken by the struggles of the converts. One woman "tore up the ground with her hands." Among the children who felt "the arrows of the Almighty" was a boy "who roared above his fellows, and seemed, in his agony, to struggle with the strength of a grown man. His face was as red as scarlet; and almost all on whom God laid his hand turned either very red or almost black." John Wesley personally interviewed a number of the people who were seized in this manner, and was quite convinced of the supernatural nature of the attacks. He said he had "generally observed more or less of these outward symptoms to attend the beginning of a general work of God," although he admitted that in some cases "Satan mimicked the work of God in order to discredit the whole work."† But whether God or Satan, there was no question of the supernatural origin of the phenomena.

(To be concluded.)

C. COHEN.

* On this subject, see the fine works by Karl Groos on *The Play of Animals* and *The Play of Man*.

* *Adolescence*, vol. ii., pp. 286-7.

† *Southey's Life of Wesley*, chap. xxiv.

"The Religious Bad."

"To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and man which pervade the tragedy of *The Cenci*. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind adoration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intently the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check."—SHELLEY, Preface to *The Cenci*.

It is a common belief that because a man is a religious man he is also necessarily a good man. One of the hardest tasks of the Freethinker is to convince people with a religious training that a religious man may also be a bad man. The conviction that morality is the result of religious teaching has been so dinned into him that the belief in it has become a second nature. They will argue that a bad man cannot be religious; that a bad man who professes religion is a hypocrite—that he uses religion as a cloak for his badness. Or, when driven to the last ditch, they say that the religion of such a person is only superstition. In effect, they argue, all religious people are good, and all good people are religious!

Now, according to the statistics of our huge prison population, the unbelievers in some kind of religion are very few. Are we to say, then, that all these thousands are destitute of religion, or hypocrites, or the devotees of idle superstition? Put in this form, the question answers itself with all rational thinking people.

We seldom look at the *Spectator*; it is usually so old-fashioned, conservative, and pharisaical in its religious views that we have long given it over as hopelessly fossilised. But, glancing listlessly over the contents index of the issue for March 15, our interest was arrested by the title of an article upon "The Religious Bad." Turning to the article—which was anonymous—we were surprised to find that not only was the existence of the religious bad admitted and deplored, although the writer of the article in question is a believer in religion, yet the facts of the case are rammed home in a fashion not unworthy to adorn the pages of the *Freethinker*—which some of it will do before we have finished.

In the whole course of our reading we have never met with such a whole-hearted abandonment of a position which has been, and is still, so stubbornly defended by apologists for religion. The exclamation of the pious upon reading the article will be, "An enemy hath done this."

The writer begins by observing that "The religious bad are the worst enemies of religion," and goes on to explain that he is not speaking of hypocrites, or of those superstitious people who believe that luck lurks in the practice of religious formula, and who "might hesitate to plan a murder on a Friday lest the rope should reward their want of ceremony." But, setting aside the hypocrites and the superstitious, says the writer:—

"There remain sufficient people who are religious but not moral to harass the minds of believers and fill disbelievers with scorn. As we have said, they are not hypocrites. The tenets of the creed in which they were brought up appear to them to be undeniable. Acts of worship give them pleasure. The spell of Christianity is upon them. The sacred literature of the Jews appeals to their artistic sense. They have a peculiar delight in enlarging publicly upon the (to them) very real sensations of the soul. Their religious

experience is at everyone's service, and they have an unbounded curiosity to hear about someone else's. Their talk is of spiritual symptoms. Their religious bedside manners and their jargon impress many people but disgust more. If we come across them in business we shall find that they are 'not slothful,' and it is not at all improbable that they will take us in. They are as sharp as they are sanctimonious, yet we cannot say they are secular. Their minds are not bounded by the narrow limits of materialism, by birth and death, good living, and pretty things. They are aware of the things of the spirit. Their organism is sufficiently sensitive to perceive what to so many better men is imperceptible. It is the existence of such religious people as these which causes some men of affairs to say they trust no man who makes a profession of religion."

No, these men are not Secularists or Materialists—we are very glad of it—for they can perceive those things of the spirit which "to many better men" are imperceptible. The better men in this case being those who have no religion, the Secularists and Materialists.

The writer goes on to observe that money is not the only thing to which they give way. "When they yield to the sins of the flesh the scandal of their conduct is even more detrimental to the prestige of the Church." But worse still:—

"Another grave moral defect is, alas! typical of the religious bad. They are too often pitiless. That pitilessness should accompany genuine religious feeling is unaccountable, but it is a fact that it sometimes does. Men and women who can accept the consolations of religion without its obligations become far harder than the ordinary indifferentist. For such an indifferentist the sorrows of life are common property. Suffering, separation, and poverty are the inexplicable burden of man, and end only, as they believe, with the quenching of the individuality; the secularists are often truly sorry for their fellow ophemeridæ. For the religious man, be he bad or good, the common lot is not without explanation nor without hope. The hard-hearted religionist looks upon pity as savoring too much of a criticism on the dealings of Heaven with men. To the bad religious man this is the best of all possible worlds, and he will rebuke an acquaintance for the want of faith which makes him unhappy."

Which, reduced to shorthand, means that Secularists are justified in their pity for their fellow-men, but the religiously bad, who believe that everything is ordained to happen by an Almighty God, will look upon such pity as a presumptuous criticism of God's actions; their creed, says the writer, acting like "an anæsthetic, destroying sensation in that part of the consciousness wherein kindness appears to dwell." The writer continues:—

"Allied to these hard natures we find the religious tyrants. They are the lineal descendants of the persecutors. The law of the land is against them, but Satan can always find a job for their cruel hands—a weak person to crush, a child whose spirit they can break, or an old man or woman they may humiliate. We forget sometimes that the devil is a 'doctor of divinity.' They are no hypocrites, these hard religionists; they are honest, but they are bad; bad though they call their will their duty, bad though they hide their cruelty under a cause; yet they also may be spiritually minded, though Christians they are not.....Why it should have pleased Almighty God to reveal the truths of religion to unworthy persons who appear incapable of repentance we cannot say, but it is certain that a vast amount of truth—religious, scientific, and philosophic—is revealed to persons of very paltry character. So far as religion is concerned, the dispensation must be regarded as a mystery, and one on which the reason throws very little intellectual light."

So a man may be cruel, he may be a swindler and a sensualist, and yet a fervent believer in God. What, then, becomes of the argument so often addressed to Freethinkers that they do away with the moral restraints of religion? That if they destroy the belief in a God who will punish the bad and reward the good they will overthrow the basis of morality? Here we are faced with the fact that there are plenty of men who really and wholeheartedly believe in and worship God; they know that God sees all their actions, but they still persist in their wickedness.

Robert Louis Stevenson, the novelist, has recognised this fact of "the religious bad" in his novel, *The Merry Men*. After recounting how Markheim murdered the Jew for his wealth, and then becomes the prey to imaginary terrors: he fears the walls may become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; that the planks might yield under his feet and detain him in their clutches beside the body of his victim; that the house next door might catch fire and the firemen invade him from all sides. "These things he feared," continues Stevenson, "and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice." Yes, that is how the religious bad feel. About God they are at ease. He is on their side whatever they do, and all the time.

Again, in his novel *The Ebb-Tide*—written in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne—when the two murderous ruffians, Captain Davis and Huish, are in the boat on their way to murder their benefactor Attwater—who, being a dead shot, they have decided to first blind by throwing vitriol in his eyes—the scoundrel Davis actually began a silent prayer:—

"Prayer, what for? God knows. But out of his inconsistent, illogical, and agitated spirit a stream of supplication was poured forth, inarticulate as himself, earnest as death and judgment.

"'Thou Gawd seest me!' continued Huish [his companion in crime]. 'I remember I had that written in my Bible. I remember the Bible too, all about Abinadab and parties. Well, Gawd,' apostrophising the meridian, 'you're goin' to see a rum start presently, I promise you that!'"

"The captain bounded. 'I'll have no blasphemy!' he cried, 'no blasphemy in my boat.'"

He did not mind helping to commit a horrible murder, but he would not allow blasphemy. That gives a true picture of the working of the mind of the "religious bad."

"But," it may be said, "these are only fictitious characters, and prove nothing." Very well, then; here is a character which is not fictitious—namely, that of Louis the Fifteenth, surnamed the "Well-beloved." Mr. Lewis Melville—himself a learned biographer and historian—in reviewing Colonel Haggard's book,* *The Real Louis the Fifteenth*, observes that Louis "had only two predominant interests in life—women and religion." His first mistress, the Comtesse de Toulouse, was followed by intrigues with several daughters of Madame de Nesle, and later with Madame de Pompadour, and after her death with the infamous Madame du Barri, who some years later paid for her sins in the tornado of the French Revolution, when she was borne shrieking to the guillotine and beheaded. But these were only leading ladies; there were a multitude of others. And through it all he was pious. The teachers of his youth had taken particular pains to instruct him in matters of religion, and Mr. Melville cites Colonel Haggard as saying: "These impressions never left him through life; even in the most libertine moments of his later years he would instruct the poor young girls whom he debauched, after having torn them from their homes or bought them for his pleasures." Such is the value of the restraints exercised by religion upon the lusts of the flesh.

W. MANN.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

An eminent High Court judge, travelling in the Holy Land, had gone through a very tiring day at Jerusalem, visiting the Garden of Gethsemane, the Holy Sepulchre, Mount Calvary, and other sacred spots, sanctified through past ages by the Gospel story, and made familiar to our own by Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son's excellent tourist arrangements. So deeply had the judge been impressed by the

sight of these holy places, that on retiring to rest that night he had an extraordinary dream, fairly rational as dreams go, but so far incongruous and odd in that it presented some of the events of the sacred narrative in a strictly modern light, and under the sub-conscious influence of a modern judicial mind.

He dreamed that he was walking in Jerusalem some nineteen centuries ago, and, hearing the newsboys shouting the latest edition of the *Jerusalem Evening News*, he bought a copy of this paper. Glancing through its columns, he came across a judgment by a learned judge of the King's Bench Division relating to a case which had been tried by him in Jerusalem a few days before. So vivid was the dream that on awaking next morning the judge clearly remembered every word of this judgment, and, wishing to preserve from oblivion so curious a result of dream cerebration, he at once committed the whole production to writing. It was as follows:—

"This is a case in which the accused—an itinerant preacher, self-styled prophet, and alleged worker of miracles—is charged on three separate counts; firstly for brawling and creating a disturbance in the Temple, secondly for sedition and riot, and thirdly for armed resistance to lawful arrest and causing grievous hurt.

"I am of opinion that the first charge does not come within the jurisdiction of a civil court. The alleged brawl in the Temple seems to have arisen out of a difference of opinion between the accused and the priests regarding the rights of certain money-changers and sellers of doves to carry on their business within the Temple precincts. The civil power does not in any way interfere in the usages obtaining in the Temple of Jerusalem, and I must accordingly decline to give any further consideration to this charge, which should be dealt with by the Jewish ecclesiastical tribunal.

"The second charge is a serious one, and comes properly within the purview of this Court. The prisoner is here accused of proclaiming himself King of the Jews, of riding into Jerusalem in state, and of thereby causing a riot in the streets and a disturbance of the public peace. These are, indeed, grave charges, and if proved merit severe punishment; but on carefully weighing the evidence, it does not appear to me that the incidents really bear the serious interpretation which has been put upon them. It is true that the four principal witnesses agree broadly as to the facts, but their account of the affair convinces me that it should be regarded rather as the exploit of a foolish mountebank seeking notoriety for his fanatic notions than as a serious act of sedition. It is scarcely conceivable that a person really claiming to be King of the Jews would select such a ludicrous method of asserting his regal status as that of riding through the streets of Jerusalem on a diminutive donkey. The excitement of the populace, and the shouts acclaiming the prisoner as the 'Son of David' and the 'King of Israel' appear to me to be indicative not so much of a tendency to riot and rebellion as of a spirit of good-humored fun and a natural wish to make the most of a good joke. Seeing the self-styled 'King of the Jews' riding along on his little borrowed donkey, with a folded overcoat for a saddle, and surrounded by his solemn-visaged attendants, the populace seem to have thoroughly entered into the fun of the thing and to have given him all the adulation he expected, and perhaps even more. This view of the affair is borne out by the remarkable fact that the so-called riot seems to have subsided as suddenly as it began, and that the streets along which the mirth-provoking spectacle had passed relapsed into their usual sobriety as soon as the 'King of the Jews' had moved on.

"I now come to the third charge—that of armed resistance and causing grievous hurt. The evidence here is not at all satisfactory; indeed, there is no evidence whatever against the accused personally, and the whole account is discredited by several suspicious features. The first three witnesses mention the fact that soon after the party entered the garden the prisoner's attendants fell into a deep sleep, and yet we are given a circumstantial account of certain words and acts of the prisoner while the only possible eye-witnesses were buried in slumber. As to the so-called armed resistance, the first two witnesses stated that one of the prisoner's disciples cut off an ear of one of the arresting party. The third witness said it was the 'right ear' that was cut off, and that the prisoner miraculously healed the wound. This was surely a sufficiently striking incident to have impressed itself strongly on all the witnesses, yet the other three seem to know nothing at all about it. The fourth witness also specifies the 'right ear,' and gives the name of the owner of the ear as Malchus; but it is curious that the prosecution has not called this man Malchus, whose evidence would have been more decisive than that of all the other witnesses combined. The fourth witness, moreover, gives the name of the disciple who committed the assault, which none of the others do; and he makes a most remark-

* *Daily Chronicle*, July 21, 1906.

able statement to the effect that, on the prisoner inquiring of the officers who had come to arrest him as to whom they sought, the whole party 'went backwards and fell to the ground.' This is, of course, alleged to be another miracle, and the fact that it is mentioned only by the fourth witness throws considerable doubt on his veracity. Indeed, the whole evidence of this fourth witness is open to grave suspicion, and has to be received with the greatest caution.

"The prosecution has attempted to bolster up a weak case by bringing forward some incidents of the prisoner's past career which are supposed to prove that he was a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, and given to wanton destruction of other people's property; and, before closing this judgment, I should like to make a few remarks on these points. The alleged Sabbath-breaking is of such a trivial nature as to be scarcely worth notice. The eating of grains of corn while walking through a field would appear to any rational mind to involve no greater desecration of the Sabbath Day than the eating of bread in one's house. And as to the performance of miracles on the Sabbath Day, the law prohibits work only, and it is doubtful whether the performance of a miracle would come under this description, as it seems to be the essential nature of a miracle that its performance requires no physical effort whatever—a mere act of volition on the part of the miracle-worker being sufficient to bring about the most stupendous results. The blasphemy alleged against the prisoner seems to have consisted in his declaration of a divine mission, and of a mysterious filial relationship to the Deity. Now, blasphemy really means an insult to the Deity, but I can find no element of any such insult in the prisoner's words or conduct. These seem to me to indicate, not blasphemy at all, but merely an exaggerated megalomania. As to the wanton destruction of property, the most serious case put forward is what the learned counsel for the defence wittily described as the 'Devilled pork affair.' To a believer in the reality of demoniacal possession, the prisoner's conduct in this case of the Gadarene swine should seem quite justifiable—indeed, it is difficult to see how he could have acted otherwise. It seems that devils have a strong partiality for occupying the bodies of human beings, and therefore to eject a 'legion' of them from a man without providing other habitation would be merely to court public disaster, for in all probability they would speedily invade the bodies of other people, and thus many would suffer for the relief of one. It was obviously the wiser and more humane course to accede to the devils' own request and permit them to enter the swine.

"To sum up, I find that no valid case has been made out against the prisoner, who seems to be not the seditious agitator, the dangerous rebel, the aspirant to the throne of David, which his enemies represent him to be, but merely an ignorant fanatic, believing himself to be charged with a divine mission, and to be possessed of supernatural powers. I accordingly acquit him of the accusations brought against him in this case, but would advise him carefully to avoid in future any breach of the public peace while propagating his opinions. In a free country, any and every opinion, however extravagant, may be openly proclaimed—any doctrine, however eccentric, may be freely taught; but this inalienable right involves the corresponding duty of respecting the existing conditions of social order."

THE BELLS.

An American tourist was contemplating—from the outside—a quaint old chapel in one of the cathedral towns of England. In a near-by spire the chimes began to ring. A venerable clergyman issued from the ivy-covered pile, and, observing the look of rapt attention upon the stranger's face, was moved, out of the goodness of his heart, to approach and engage him in conversation appropriate to the time and the place.

"My friend," he began, "does not the sound of those sweet bells fall like a benediction upon the soul?"

The American gazed at him blankly and cupped one hand behind his ear in order to hear better.

"Which?" he inquired.

The old rector raised his voice and shouted louder.

"I say that those lovely chimes seem to float down to us like a message of love and peace from on high. Do you not agree with me that theirs is a message from Heaven?"

"I'm sorry," said the visitor, "but still I don't seem to get you."

The clergyman made a funnel of his hand in front of his mouth.

"I merely wished to ask you if you too did not feel that the music coming from that tower yonder was truly celestial music, freighted with hope and beauty and glorious tidings?"

"Mister," explained the American, "the truth of the matter is that those damned bells make so much racket I can't hear a word you say."

Acid Drops.

If you start flogging for one offence there is really no reason why you should not flog for all. It is a short and easy method with offenders, a kind of universal cure for wrong-doing, and, above all, one that appeals powerfully to lazy minds and brutal natures. A witness before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which is inquiring into the number of accidents in the London streets, said that in West Ham danger was incurred by children riding behind tramcars. The witness said that the West Ham Stipendiary entirely endorsed the view that the magistrates should be empowered to order the birch "as the only effective deterrent in the case of children." Again, we say, why not? The exercise of a brutal feeling cannot be curbed by an age limit. And there is no reason that we can see why this admirable Stipendiary's advice should not be carried still further. Nothing effective has yet been discovered that will stop children climbing trees, swinging on gates, shouting in the streets, or throwing snowballs at passers-by. May we venture to suggest the birch for all these things? And if anyone is of opinion that a birching will put common sense into the heads of certain advocates of the whip, he may put our name down as in favor of that recommendation also.

When the Government does take in hand the education question, it looks as though some kind of "right of entry" will be proposed. Lord Crewe, in the course of a semi-official speech said:—

"I think it ought not to be impossible to devise means by which those parents who would prefer that their children should attend a school of an undenominational character should have a better chance of doing so than they have at this moment; nor do I altogether despair of the possibility of getting over what we all agree is the difficult fence—the giving of special religious instruction by a particular denomination."

We do not think that there is much hope of "right of entry" being agreed to by Nonconformists, and the objections to it from a purely educational point of view should be decisive. Still, it is just possible that by outlining a showy scheme of educational reform the Government might induce the rival religious sects to agree with their proposals. And in that case we should have the blunder of 1870 repeated. A new form of the religious incubus will be established, and it will prove itself as obstructive to educational progress as did the 1870 compromise. If only the Government could screw up its courage and end the religious squabble by proposing a measure of Secular Education, it is within the bounds of probability that it would pass, and the road be cleared for genuine educational development. At any rate, failure of the Government could not be more humiliating, nor its position more contemptible, than in connection with its previous attempts to please those whose really vital interest in the schools is to use them as training grounds for church or chapel.

Very late in the day the *Christian Commonwealth* awakens to the lying character of the orthodox religious tract. It says that "the stories themselves, the incidents they retail, are simply not true, and would not impose upon an intelligent frog. To hand such literature to chance wayfarers is equivalent to the exposure and sale of indecent prints." We quite agree; only we would point out that tracts of the kind described are written for neither intelligent frogs nor intelligent human beings. They are written by the congenitally religious for the incurably stupid. And it is really complimentary to class such productions with indecent literature. Indecent literature usually shows more intelligence than the average tract, and is not nearly so harmful in its effects. The harm in life is not done by the frankly indecent or by the obviously dishonest, but by indecency masquerading as purity, and by falsehood posing as truth. We agree with the *Christian Commonwealth* that "there is an obscenity of the spirit as vile as anything which the police have orders to suppress." It only needs adding that Christian circles have been unusually rich in the production of this kind of "obscenity."

The worst forms of misconduct are those which the law does not and cannot touch. The comparatively trifling offence of circulating bogus coins comes within the range of police activities, but the circulation of false notions on matters of morals and of the intellectual life are necessarily beyond them. There is no safeguard here save a keen sense of personal honor and of social responsibility. And we have always insisted that in this direction the pulpit occupies a fairly low position in the life of the nation. In no other department of public life are statements made with so little care for their accuracy. It is the simple truth that if a man

carried into the political, or even into the business, world the practices of the pulpit, he would soon find his career at an end in the one case, and his credit ruined in the other case. The *Christian Commonwealth* says "we are beginning to think that what is most needed in religious journalism at the present time is the same standard of personal honor that we expect from secular journalists, which will prohibit them from writing what they do not believe." We do not think that "secular journalists" are very scrupulous on the subject, but their laxity here is very often traceable to religious influences. At any rate, it is quite true that religious journalism in general falls below journalism in other directions, just as pulpit veracity falls below the veracity of the Secular platform.

Rev. Lord William Cecil appears to rejoice that the Turks, "who in times past despised Christians," are now defeated. We do not know that being defeated will make intelligent Turks despise Christians less. It is certain that the treatment of the Turks by the Allies will not make them love Christians more. The West may overcome the East, but that is quite a different question as to whether the East is benefited or not by the subjugation. The West, says Lord Cecil, must inevitably conquer because she is the strongest, and "where she has been resisted, she crushed." This is quite true, and this is the sole ground of Christian advance. At present the balance of brute force lies with the Christian nations of the world, and Christians are not slow to press their advantage. It was sheer brute force, for example, that established Christian missionaries in China, a country in which Lord Cecil seems peculiarly interested. Apart from that, Christian missionaries would have had the same chance there as other propagandists, and would have given it up as hopeless. It is a mistake to imagine that the Chinese ever objected to peaceful propaganda by alien religions. What they did object to was the religion that came with the gunboat, and used the latter to set native laws at defiance and to trample upon native customs. Western civilisation, apart from Christianity, says Lord Cecil, is an awful thing. We beg to say that Christianity, using the resources of civilisation as a means of spreading its teaching, is a still more awful thing, and one that many of the weaker nations have good cause to remember, and hate.

Rev. Thomas Sheepshanks, of Harrogate, left £95,252. He couldn't have done much better (or worse) if his name had been Goatshanks.

From a special article in the *Christian World*, we learn that during the past ten years the Salvation Army has "helped" 400 men from the farm colony at Hadleigh to Canada. Some have come from "various unions, boards of guardians paying their expenses." This has been done, we are told, in accordance with the plan outlined in the late General's book. We beg to differ. The plan outlined was to get hold of the human refuse of the cities, bring them back to manhood on a farm colony, and then send them abroad. How many of these 40 cases per year represent human wreckage saved by the Salvation Army? Precious few; and of these the expenses have been paid by others, the Army merely getting its usual profit. Moreover, what proportion does this emigration of 40 per year bear to the Army's total activity in this field. For or five years ago the Army was boasting of sending out nearly 20,000 annually. On this number it received a capitation grant from the Canadian Government and commissions from the shipping companies. All of this represented a mere business. Consider the proportion of the 40 "helped" to the 20,000 total, and one gets a fair conception of the relations of the philanthropic activities of the Army to its business enterprise.

In the *Burton Daily Mail* for March 31, there is a report of a sermon preached by the Rev. A. Graffey Smith in memory of the Rev. G. W. Allen, late vicar of Bretby Parish Church, in which he related that the late vicar was once upon a time a member of the Christian Philosophical Society, London, in connection with which he was said to have converted Atheist after Atheist to a saving belief in the Christian religion. Mr. Smith said:—

"Instead of going to the finest services, he made his way Sunday evening after Sunday evening to Hyde Park, to convince souls as keen and intellectual as his own of the truth of the Gospel. He was successful in winning back some of those Agnostic intellectuals, and many in London would ever thank God that they came across that great mind which exposed the fallacy of their early belief."

Some of the world's greatest men pass their lives in obscurity, and we must confess our ignorance of the redoubtable Mr. Allen's existence, as also of the "Agnostic intellectuals" who have been led by him back to the faith. It

is not by any means the first time we have heard of such wonderful conversions, and the brilliancy of the performance is only equalled by the modesty which refrains from giving verifiable names. Candidly, we are wondering whether the late Mr. Allen had been romancing on his own account, or whether Mr. Smith has been romancing for him.

We cut the following from the *Leeds Mercury* of Wednesday, April 9:—

"Extraordinary scenes were witnessed in Barnsley last night. A man, quietly dressed in an overcoat and cap, mounted an orange-box on Market Hill, and commenced to speak on Atheism.

"It was not long before he had raised a hornet's nest about his ears. He was pulled down from his stand by the crowd, who commenced to hustle him.

"He tried to make himself heard, but it was of no avail. He was driven up and down the hill for a time, but eventually he moved in another direction. He tried to go up Market-street, but found the road impassable. Still buffeted from one side to another he went along Cheapside.

"By this time the crowd had attained alarming dimensions, and he was followed by thousands of men, women, and children, all hooting and yelling frantically. From Cheapside he turned up New-street and then along Wellington-street, across Peel-square, and to his starting place at the foot of Market Hill.

"He unsuccessfully tried to break away, and it appeared as though he was going to have an even rougher passage, when the uniform of a police-inspector loomed in the centre of the crowd. The unfortunate man was escorted by the inspector, still followed by his enormous and unwelcome retinue, to the borough police-office, where there was another big shout as he entered.

"The police could not say last night that any particular charge would be preferred against him, he had been locked up for his own safety."

"The unfortunate man" sends us the cutting himself. He is the young man who was sentenced to three months' imprisonment some time ago under the Blasphemy Laws. He had been lecturing under the name of Bullock, his real name being Stephens. He appears to have been holding meetings again lately, some being quiet and orderly, and some otherwise. He asks us to advise him whether he should return to Barnsley. We really cannot do anything of the kind. Everyone must decide for himself in these cases. We should have to say the same if Paul asked us whether to should return to the "beasts at Ephesus."

We are no friends of assassination or of any other kind of violence. If the evils of the world cannot be cured by reason, they will never be cured by armies and navies, battleships and big guns, rifles, swords, or other "respectable" agencies of wholesale slaughter; neither will they be remedied by the knives and pistols of assassins or other retail killers of their fellow men. But why should the low-class murderer be the object of unlimited denunciation while the high-class murderer is the object of unlimited praise. The King of Greece, to our mind, stood on no higher moral level than the obscure citizen who shot him. Each took life for his own purposes. The assassin, however, took but one, while the "valiant King" was taking the lives of thousands. In due course the assassin will be put to death by some "civilised" process of annihilation, or relegated to a death-in-life of continuous torture; while the dead King, after being buried with every mark of honor, including the blessing of God through the lips of hireling priests, goes down to history as a noble martyr. Such is human justice and human sense!

Neither the intellect nor the character of King Alfonso sheds any lustre upon Spain. But there seems no reason to suppose that the next King of Spain would be any improvement on the present one. Killing him, therefore, would be foolish as well as wicked. No doubt it will be firmly believed that his escape from the assassin's bullet was due to the intervention of Providence; but no explanation will be offered as to the lack of providential interposition in the case of the King of Greece.

Why do not English journalists try to reconcile their piety with a little attention to the English language? They persist in describing the action of the assassin, whether attempted or successful, as "dastardly." Now that is precisely what it is not. The man goes to certain death (or worse) himself. He knows his risk and runs it, he knows the penalty and pays it, he treats his own life as a pawn in the game. He may be stupid and immoral, but he proves he is no coward. We repeat that "dastardly" is the most inexact description of his conduct. That it is always used on these occasions shows the brainlessness of ordinary journalism.

"There could be no greater misfortune," says the *Catholic Times*, "than that reforms which would leave women without the protection assured them by the Christian religion should meet with success." We really do not know what protection has ever been assured to women by Christianity. Our social records show that it never protected them against the most villainous exploitation in mines and workshops, nor did it prevent women, when married, losing the legal protection they once possessed against brutal husbands. It is true that some measure of this protection was afterwards regained, but Christian opposition had to be beaten down first. Historically, Christianity has been fairly consistent in preaching the subordination of woman to man, and has powerfully assisted in getting that subordination legally expressed. All that the *Catholic Times* has in its mind is the possibility of the institution of marriage developing beyond the control of Christian Churches. But it will take more than the obscure warnings of religious papers to prevent the gradual secularisation of marriage. In all its essentials this is a social institution, and its precise form should, and must, be ultimately determined by social requirements. The interest of the Church in marriage is that control of it gives it the first clutch on the children. Release marriage from the control of the Church, and it will no longer be so easy to convert parents into the unconscious enemies of their children's welfare.

The late Pierpont Morgan was a very rich man, but his great fortune only represented *acquisition*; he produced nothing, he added not one cent. to the world's wealth, every dollar he made involved a dollar's loss to some other person or persons. His nose and mouth showed his place in the biological scale. We are quite pleased to know that he belonged to the Christian fold. He had even made his own arrangements for his funeral, including the services of three Bishops and a negro soloist. It is presumable that he is now in heaven. A French lady said that God would think twice before damning a gentleman of quality. No doubt the same Being would think thrice before damning a multi-millionaire.

The Welsh parson who threatened to burn the Welsh Church Bill on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral put himself on the level of the women who throw filth into letter-boxes. In not carrying out his threat he showed that his courage was worthy of his intelligence.

It was Montenegro that first unfurled the banner of the Cross during the Balkans war. It is this same Montenegro that Sir Edward Grey accuses of pursuing a war of conquest in the operations against Scutari. That is really what the soldiers of the Cross have been doing from the very beginning. Turkish tyranny was only a pretence.

The Church of England Peace League recently made an endeavor to get clergymen to pass resolutions in their churches in favor of the Peace Movement. A thousand circulars were sent out, and only six felt that the matter was important enough to warrant reply. Only three passed resolutions in favor of peace. Three only out of one thousand! And these are the people who are telling us so much about Christianity being the religion of peace!

A lady, Mrs. Carus-Wilson, is delivering a course of lectures at the Church House, Westminster, on "The Present Crisis in the Church." Naturally she opposes Disestablishment, and quite as naturally she cites France as an awful example of what Disestablishment leads to. France, we are told, has suffered twice by Disestablishment—once at the time of the great revolution, and again within recent years. A less prejudiced student of the subject would be inclined to say that what France really suffered from was the establishment of the Church, not its disestablishment. It is simply beyond question that amongst the agencies that reduced pre-revolutionary France to a condition of almost unimaginable distress and degradation, so far as the mass of the people were concerned, none played a more sinister part than the Church. It held to its feudal rights with even more tenacity than the ordinary nobility, and, worse than that, dragooned the people to the service of the small governing class. It is true, as the lecturer said, that Napoleon re-established the Church; but this was not because Napoleon had any real fondness for the Church, but purely from motives of policy. Quite apart from the fact that Napoleon saw that the Church could materially help him at his own game, the Disestablishment of the Church did not mean the destruction of religion. The mass of the people were still religious, still Christian; and in the interests

of social order it was felt that the Church must be controlled. This has been felt by great statesmen from the time of Constantine onwards. When the mass of the people have grown beyond religious belief, affairs can be left to look after themselves. But with the mass of the people intensely superstitious, the Churches possess a power of social disruption that ruling statesmen have always felt must be regulated if chaos is to be avoided.

The second awful example is supplied by the answer recently given to a question by a French schoolchild. Asked as to whom it owed breath, food, life, and all the privileges it enjoyed—a question to which "an English child would naturally have answered, 'God'"—the French child replied, "L'etat." We do not know whether the story is genuine or not, but we are quite prepared to affirm that the alleged answer of the French child is more intelligible and more justifiable than the assumed answer of the English child would have been. For we really do get all the privileges we enjoy from the State—or, as we prefer it, from Society. It is social life that gives us our language, our manners, our customs, and which protects us from the cradle to the grave. No one knows that "God" has anything to do with it. Society is a tangible fact; "God" is a mere hypothesis, and of no use to anyone or anything when we use it. Answer for answer, we vastly prefer to put our money on the French child's reply. And if a recognition of the power and reality of social intercourse is one of the products of Disestablishment, the sooner it comes the better.

A little time back, Southport, being an exceedingly moral and religious town, declined to permit anything so demoralising as Sunday trams. Sunday tides are still in vogue, but their cessation is more properly a matter for prayer than legislation. But we learn from the Vicar of St. Andrew's, of Southport, that the town is "notorious for its Sunday picture shows, in which concerns we have no doubt many of the Christians who voted against the trams running on Sunday have money invested. The vicar now calls upon all pious souls to be up and doing. He does not oppose "a clean, instructive cinema on weekdays," but he strongly protests against these clean, instructive shows on Sunday. Other towns do not allow them, he points out. "Liverpool, Bootle, and Birkenhead scout such an idea." The vicar might have added that many other towns do allow them, and there is a general testimony from the police that they have a wholly beneficial effect on the moral health of the town. But to have pointed this out would have been to have put the case fairly, and fairness is certainly not a marked characteristic of the "Christian conscience" to which the vicar appeals.

We see from the *Christian* that an American converted baseball player, Mr. Sunday, after one week's revival campaign, received as his share of the proceeds 21,000 dollars. There were 18,833 "inquirers," so that Mr. Sunday received over one dollar per head for each "inquirer." Mr. Sunday says that he would have worked just as hard if he hadn't received a cent. And he asks, "What do I want with the money?" We don't know, but it is clear that he got it. If Mr. Sunday finds its possession troublesome, we have no doubt that the churches in which he preached would be glad of it. We imagine, too, that Mr. Sunday finds a share in the gate-money of a revival meeting a little more remunerative than playing baseball.

The Executive Committee of the Protestant Reformation Society protested against the Admiralty placing a British warship at the disposal of the Papal Legate for the purpose of conveying him to the Eucharistic Congress at Malta. The Committee considers it an insult to "loyal Protestants" all over the empire. We do not see that the Admiralty is less justified in doing what it has done for Roman Catholics than it would be in doing a similar action for Protestants. Roman Catholics are as much part of the State as Protestants, and as long as the State is not sensible or logical enough to leave all religious sects alone, it is at least an approach to fairness to treat them all alike. All or none implies a sensible policy. A selection involves not only unwarranted favoritism, it is a direct encouragement to sectarian bigotry and stupidity.

I've been properly amazed to find how often I catch myself seeing eye to eye with the Almighty.....I've lived so near to God, that 'tis with me as it was with Moses on the Mount. I've caught a bit of the Shine.—*Eden Philpotts, "Widcombe Fair."*

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £107 2s. 5d. Received since:—M. J. Charter, 10s.; Anno Domini (per C. Cohen), £2; R. Miller (delayed), 2s. 6d.; W. P., £2 2s.; W. W., 2s. 6d.; E. Adams, £2; G. L. Alward (per Miss Vance), £1 1s.
- A. MILLAR.—“The still sad music of humanity” is Wordsworth's, not George Eliot's.
- KATHERINE TINNEY.—Pleased to have your sympathetic little letter. We are glad to know that many readers look upon us as “a very dear friend” without any personal acquaintance, merely for the work's sake.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for your well-selected cuttings.
- R. N. McNAIRN.—A pertinent illustration.
- T. C. P. (Rhodesia).—We decline to soil our pages with such Christian filth. Contradicting it is merely giving it currency. We wonder you don't see this.
- E. B.—Thanks for enclosures.
- M. J. CHARTER.—Shall be pleased to see you at the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday—with other Tynesiders.
- A. J. MARRIOTT.—Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* (in English) is not now in print, but can sometimes be met with secondhand.
- JOSAPHINE M. HURCOM.—You can fully rely upon the “Personals.” Mr. Foote is ever so much better. It is he who tells you so, and thanks you for your pleasant letter.
- T. P. W.—We cannot recall at the moment any publication devoted to the subject and dealing with the period you name. Files of advanced newspapers might provide you with the information desired. With regard to your volumes of the *National Reformer*—1871-80, an advertisement in our columns might secure you a purchaser for them.
- H. PHILLIPS.—Miss Vance has written you on some of the points in your letter. We regret, with you, that there has been a dearth of Freethought lectures in Cardiff of late, but there is no good reason why this should continue. We believe that a large part of South Wales is ripe for Freethought propaganda, but it lies with those on the spot to take the initiative. Glad you have derived so much benefit from the *Freethinker*.
- E. RICHMOND.—Thanks. Crowded out this week, but will be used in next issue.
- A. P., subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes:—“I shall be glad to find in next week's *Freethinker* that you are again in the saddle—though your supporters have no fault to find with the conducting of the paper during your illness. Would that the *Freethinker* could pay for a permanent ‘sub’ with anything like the ability, learning, and zeal of the late Mr. Wheeler.”
- W. DODD.—Certainly you could not claim exemption on the ground stated, as the law distinctly provides for the affirmation of those having no religious belief. Apart from that, your treatment by the chairman appears to have been ungracious enough. He, apparently, thought that courtesy was unnecessary with an Atheist; and Atheists must, we suppose, expect such treatment from those whose Christianity leaves no room for the exercise of either good taste or good manners.
- B. E. NOAKES.—(1) We do not know the particulars of Cardinal Vanutelli's entry into the Roman Catholic Church, but there is nothing surprising in men sacrificing possessions in their devotion to an idea. Whether it be a religious idea or a secular idea matters little. And even the Church cannot live on interested folly. Disinterestedness has to play its part there as elsewhere. (2) We do not pretend to explain why certain scientists profess themselves devout Christians. We are content to assert that their Christianity finds no warrant in their science.
- A. BONAR.—The pansy is the floral emblem of thought, and is the one generally adopted by Continental Freethinkers. The colors of the N. S. S. are as near as possible the old Northampton Bradlaugh colors.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office 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.

Personal.

THE real winter of 1912-1918 is just upon us—in April. Balmier weather would do me, and many other people, a lot of good. But we must all wait for it with as much patience as we can. And I have always been fairly well provided with that quality since I waited twelve months for a door to open. So I go out of doors, and roam about as much as I am able, gaining a little fresh strength every day. And I shall want it soon—for I see some hard fighting before me in the near future. Meanwhile I have once more to thank Mr. Cohen for occupying the editorial chair in my absence. I think I may promise a front-page article in next week's *Freethinker*. I started writing one for this week's issue, but found I had not enough mental elasticity to do the subject justice. If it had pleased my readers it would not have pleased me.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The following message from the West Ham N. S. S. Branch arrived too late for last week's *Freethinker* :—

“This Branch expresses its sincere sympathy with Mr. G. W. Foote in his grave illness, notes with much relief the improvement in his condition, and heartily wishes him a speedy return to health. May he live to enjoy many years of activity and leadership in the cause of causes.”

Mr. Foote acknowledged this beautiful message by letter, but that does not preclude its publication for the readers of this journal.

There was another fine audience at Stratford Town Hall on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Lloyd. A little opposition was offered at the end, and a few questions asked, each of which was satisfactorily dealt with. The person who made himself so obnoxious on the previous Sunday wisely stayed away, and there was nothing to mar the harmony of the evening. To-day (April 20) Mr. Lloyd visits Leicester, and we hope that the Leicester folk will give him the large audience he deserves.

The last of the Stratford lectures will be delivered by Miss Kough. We trust that East End “saints” will see that the course finishes in good style and with a full house. Miss Kough's title is an attractive one, and it should be a good occasion for Freethinkers to introduce lady friends to the meetings.

“One of the speakers at a meeting held in London recently to demand the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was George Bernard Shaw, the playwright. In order to maintain his reputation for eccentricity, Mr. Shaw ‘referred to Atheists as genuinely religious persons because under this system of religious persecution in Great Britain nobody but a thoroughly religious person could call himself an Atheist. This, he admitted, might seem a paradox to superficial persons.’ Mr. Shaw seems to be seized with the mistaken view that all sincerity of conviction is of necessity religious. This led him to say that ‘the Blasphemy Laws, so far from being directed against persons who vilify Christianity, are directed against the persons who affirm the truth of Christianity.’ If he had said ‘the truth about Christianity’ he would have scored, but if that was his idea he failed to get it over.”—*Truthseeker* (Now York).

Sir Hiram Maxim's volume entitled *Li Hung Chang's Scrap-Book* has for its sub-title “Missionaries and Opium—The Case for China.” It will be published on April 25. Having seen an advance copy, we are already in a position to say that the missionaries and their friends will have something to answer. But will they do it? Or will they resort once more to the old conspiracy of silence? We shall see.

Cross and Crescent in the Balkans.

IN my article on "Religion and Rapine in the Balkans" (*Freethinker*, February 2), I stated that the Balkan nations have sullied their triumphant career of conquest and racial revenge by a revival of the crusading spirit of the Middle Ages, and I drew attention to the massacres, rapes, and robberies inflicted upon the hapless Jews of Salonica as evidences of the brutalising influences of Christianity when motives derived from religious animosity are imported into modern warfare. If we may judge by the consenting silence of that amorphous thing which christens itself public opinion, the prayer of modern piety in this country (and other countries, too) is but a smug variant of the familiar petition: "Give us this day our daily press." Our daily press, with few but honorable exceptions, supplies the need of the hungry Christian soul for journalistic pabulum, and its voracious readers are fed, so far as the Balkans are concerned, with the bread that is either treacled over with lies or sodden with slimy half-truths. We hear little of the fatal leap back taken by our twentieth-century civilisation to the all-but-forgotten savageries of the Middle Ages, nor of the guilty connivance of our Christian governments—a connivance partly of soulless *laissez-faire* and partly of callous approval—in the nameless and all but unparalleled abominations that have marked the Bulgarian, Servian, Montenegrin, and Greek armies, which, in the conduct of the Balkan War, have taken Christ as their watchword and extermination as their guiding principle. The sensation created, a few weeks ago, by the wholesale forced conversions of Catholics and the brutal murder of the heroic Father Palic, who declined to be "converted," have indeed, brought the might of Austria into play against the mediæval Montenegrins, but, unfortunately, Austria's intervention is not made on behalf of humanity, *per se*, but for Jingo ends and for the protection of her Catholic subjects against the proselytising ferocities of the Greek Church.

The Albanian Catholics are lucky in having elicited the sympathy of Austria, but the raped, robbed, and murdered Jews of Salonica, and the murdered Moslems in the conquered country generally, have found no champion amidst the chancelleries of Europe. The outrages, therefore, are to go on, and the work of extermination is to be continued, so far as European governments are concerned—first, because the Turks are not Christians; secondly, because there is no national axe to grind on the millstone of intervention; and, thirdly, because of the avowed plea that, pending the final termination of the war, the nation that would seek to stay the hand of destruction would be open to the suspicion of intervening for base ulterior purposes.

No serious attempt has been made to deny the general accusation against the conquering Christians of terrible cruelty committed upon the Moslem "bottom dogs" in Thrace and Macedonia. Since my last article was written, these accusations found terrible expression in a Munich paper, *Mars*, in an article written by the well-known and respected Dr. Hans Barth. I am indebted to our Lausanne contemporary (*La Libre Pensée internationale*, March 1) for the heartrending particulars which this indignant eye-witness gives of these Balkan abominations. Dr. Barth's article is, unfortunately, too long for presentation here; I can only attempt to reproduce from his horrifying descriptions some of the more salient features of atrocity. Never, he says, has the shocking abyss that yawns between Christian doctrine and its putting into practice struck him more forcibly than during this war:—

"In all their lives, Cæsar Borgia, Torquemada, and Tilly did not carry on so many ravages as the Balkan clergy, the true instigator of these horrors, have committed during these few months. Even the most furious Spanish fanatic must sink into insignificance when compared with these priests who cut Turkish throats in the name of Christ!"

In a vivid description, he shows us the filthy "popes" (or Greek priests), with their tresses of hair agglutinated by dirt, drinking heavily at the café, perhaps to drown the nauseating stench of the piles of corpses around, while offering their hands to be kissed by the soldiers, who, "with the benediction of the papà's," rush forth to the commission of fresh murders!

Dr. Barth states that at Salonica and its environs the work of massacre has gone on gaily. He cites a letter from a consul stating that (apparently in Macedonia only) "at least 240,000 Turks have been assassinated"! As a pendant to this, he declares that, at a lunch at which he was present in one of the Embassies at Constantinople, the statement—which he believes to be perfectly true—was made that at least 84,000 Turkish women and children were strangled by the Bulgarians alone, their sole crime being that they were not Christians! And Dr. Barth adds that neither for these victims nor for the 240,000 victims in Macedonia did the innumerable bands of priests who accompanied the Christian army raise a single finger to save the poor wretches!

If the enlightened reader imagines that the Middle Ages are a thing of the past, let him ponder this awful description of these "soldiers of Christ" who have risen and put their armor on. The words I now give are those of Dr. Barth:—

"See how beautiful they are, these modern cavaliers of the Cross! The twenty thousand heads of hair tied with buckles dripping with grease, these men in a costume half bandit and half melodrama, with a poignard stuck in their clothes! Twenty thousand furious brothers in Christ, with whom it is not prudent to take two steps in the street, especially the Cretes, individuals comparable to the most savage brutes of all ages, and who, only two years ago, under the leadership of Greek officers, burnt the villages of their allies and impaled and sabred the inhabitants! But what are these Greek assassins as compared with the Bulgarian comitatjis? Perambulating arsenals, their heads like those of wild beasts, with hair on end, and all uncovered! Monsters than whom I would prefer to embrace a hyena! Alas! how these super-hyenas are mild, and tender, and supple when the priest comes near them. How they rush to lick the hands of the 'pope.' As for the pope himself, servant of Christ and minister of the doctrine of pardon, where and when has he, even once, uplifted his hand to pardon or to reconcile?"

Dr. Barth insists that it was not solely the so-called bandits, the non-military elements, who performed these atrocities. The regular troops were no less culpable. The Bulgarians were as bad as the Servians. As for the Greeks, go to Salonica, says Dr. Barth, and the German, Austrian, French, and Italian Consuls and the different European colonies there will give you a tale of horror that will make your hair stand on end with dismay.

Dr. Barth enters into the most painful particulars of these abominations. On the capture of Caralia, arrest was made not only of Turkish functionaries, lawyers, rich people, but of a lot of poor wretches whose crime consisted in not being Christians, together with a large number of Jews, "who were particularly odious to the Greeks because they are friends of the Turk and tolerant in religion and politics." Every night, at about 9 o'clock, some dozens of prisoners (the first batch consisted of 30) were taken out of prison, stripped of clothing to the waist, tied three by three, and flung into the dried bed of a river. Then came the atrocious butchery. With poignards, yatagans, bayonets, they slashed and cut to pieces the human heap of suffering until there was nothing left but an enormous mass of bleeding flesh. The ruffians left the still palpitating heap of convulsive bodies, and on the following evening came with a fresh number of victims. The Reign of Terror lasted for ten days, and during that time the mangled bodies remained without burial, empoisoning the air. The whole population went to the scene where these butcheries were transacted, and the European eye-witnesses of these horrors assure Dr. Barth that many of these poor wretches were hacked to pieces from head to foot. One of the specialities of Chris-

tian piety consisted in the mutilation of the sexual organs*—all for the crime of being Turks or Jews. Dr. Barth insists that these atrocities were known to the foreign Consuls, and although the ordinary diplomatic means of communication were open between the Consuls and their respective governments; although, in fact, two foreign ships of war were actually in the port of Caralla at the time, the murder and mutilation went on without protest. For this cowardly connivance with a great crime, history will call our twentieth-century politicians gravely to account before the eyes of posterity.

Confirmation of these atrocities is all too certain. An able Russian author, M. Pawlovitch, writing in *Contre la Guerre*,† cites a long series of articles in the well-known Russian review, *Kijewskaja Mysl*, giving terrifying pictures of executions *en masse* and without trial, of innumerable hangings and murder of wounded Turks while under the care of the Bulgarian Red Cross, and the systematic slaughter of entire columns of Turkish prisoners by the Christian soldiers who escorted them. *Kijewskaja Mysl* asks, despairingly, where are the thousands of wounded Turks which the Bulgarian Army Staff boasted before Europe that they had captured? According to Pawlovitch, the details published in the Russian review make it clear that all the excesses in the wars of the last five decades pale before the atrocious details of the Balkan War, in which the conquerors openly declared that everything was permissible in dealing with the Turks. If even a Liberal Russian writer, Doroschewitsch, could write that "it was necessary to tan the hides of the Turks"; if he could accept the doctrine that the Turkish prisoners should be "treated like caged hyenas, without hatred, but with all disgust"; and could enjoin upon the Slav armies to drench their natal soil with the blood of the infidel, "and pave the road to liberty with their corpses"; if all this could be written in the Russian "Liberal" press, not much stretch of imagination is needed to picture what would be the attitude of the Bulgarian and Servian press towards the "damned unbeliever," the traditional enemy of the Christian Church. All wars bring to the surface the savage atavisms of the primitive brute in man, and no war is exempt from atrocities, in spite of the "love one another" inculcations of a hypocritical two-thousand-years-old Christianity. The wars of the five last decades were, at least, sought to be conducted according to the conventional rules of butchery established by international compact. But in the Balkan War the Turks were kept without the pale of all human law; there was no limit and no restraint. This war of Cross and Crescent is a war of extermination; no distinction is made between combatants inflamed with the intoxication of fight on the field of battle and the unarmed and defenceless prisoners; between the army that fights and the peaceful population which, in many cases, has been exterminated by sword and fire and literally extirpated from the soil.

The same number of *Contre la Guerre* publishes at length a letter from Bulgaria, stating that in the villages Mimitly and Kropnik, in Macedonia, all the Turks whose lives were saved by the Bulgarians were obliged to accept conversion into the orthodox religion. As for those who were unwilling to change their creed so easily, the civilising Bulgarians threw them *en masse* by night into the waters of the River Struma. More than 800 men and women perished in that manner! The writer goes on to say that in the churches of every village the "popes" openly deliver addresses against the Turks and preach in favor of massacring the infidels. No Gladstone arises to-day to thunder against the "atrocious" Bulgarians, because "our" Christian "charity" covers or condones the multitude of their sins.

* NOTE.—The Spanish bigot, even in our own modern times, loves this fiendish diversion, especially when he has unbelievers at his mercy.

† *Contre la Guerre*, March 5. (Paris: Bi-monthly; editor, Dr. Charles Rappoport.) To say that Anatole France, Pierre Loti, Alfred Naquet, etc., write for this paper is a sufficient indication of its quality.

There is, however, one great writer, Pierre Loti, whose mouth is not to be gagged, nor his pen silenced. His article on "The Savageries of War," in *Contre la Guerre* (March 15), should arrest the attention of our politicians, who have so long stopped their ears and sealed their hearts. He declares that "the Bulgarians, in absolute tranquillity, under the closed eyes of their accomplice, Europe, are proceeding with the systematic extermination of the Moslems in the invaded provinces." In proof of this terrifying allegation, he claims that "there are legions of unimpeachable witnesses, Austrian and German, functionaries, doctors, pastors, and officers." He mentions as his witnesses Doctor Ernst Jaekb, General Baumann, Colonel Veit, Captain Rein, and Professor Dühring, whose well-documented reports, supported by hideous photographs, speak of pillagings, incendiarism, violations amidst aggravating circumstances of Sadism, and mutilations of indescribable horror; the massacre of non-combatants; old women locked in barns which are set fire to; Mussulmen drenched with petroleum before being piled up in mosques and therein burnt alive.....! Then come these accusing words:—

"Over all this savagery there brooded a base and bestial fanaticism. The funereal *stela*, having Koranic inscriptions, were broken and the tombs profaned. The name of Christ was mingled with these assassinations, and sometimes the murderers baptised by force before they began the massacre. More enraged still than the invaders, and more cowardly, the Ottoman Christians went forth to meet the conquerors and guided them to the Turkish houses, first of all towards the richer ones, and divulged the hiding places where money was concealed; or the young women pillaged along with them and took part in the killing.....A naive detail, full of touching novelty, took place amongst these scenes of horror. The young Moslem women, from whose faces the veil had been torn away—their first great outrage—before they were driven forth to be pasture for the hungry lusts of the soldiers, had covered their faces with a deposit of thick mud gathered in the gutters by the road side....."

And all this vileness wrought in the sweet name of Jesus!

Pierre Loti concludes by saying that—

"this is going on and will continue so doing as long as there remains in the province of Adrianople a single village that has not become a mass of burnt ruins, with corpses filling the streets. And all the Chancelleries know this with an absolute knowledge, and all of them keep silent, and everywhere the public conscience is wantonly deceived."

In this conspiracy of silence for the purpose of hiding the bankruptcy of diplomacy, the failure of civilisation, and the shame of our vaunted Christianity, the *Freethinker* will not join. We are not concerned to say that the Turks are angels of light, or that the Christians have not suffered bitter wrongs, either in this generation or in the historic past. But we are concerned to uphold and to vindicate, above all the rivalries of Cross and Crescent, of Christian and Mohammedan, the great ideal of an all-embracing Humanity; and it is because we feel that this beneficent ideal is trampled under foot by these armies of revengeful religionists, who, not for the first time in history, are made trebly brutal by their cruel and exclusive creed, we raise our feeble voice against these hideous revivals of mediæval bigotry as being of evil augury for the future.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

"The Nation and Its God."

A NOTABLE feature of the address of the Chairman of the Free Church Council is its title. Nationality naturally enters into the conception of Deity formed by every Deist. The deistic inhabitants of these islands, particularly those with insular habits of thought and insular prejudices, cannot very well do other than regard their God as a Britisher who thinks in English. We may go further. Environment is bound to have an effect in determining the

idea that people form of God. Thus each class has its own God. The orthodox squire has his God. The orthodox tradesman who supplies the squire with groceries has his. Some have even gone the length of saying that with regard to believers who have had the advantages of a liberal education and surroundings of refinement and culture, each man must make his own religion and his own God *for himself*. The Duke of Norfolk and Viscount Halifax cannot very well have formed the same idea of the Deity as, say, Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. R. J. Campbell. And one would suppose that there would be differences to be found in the conceptions of the Deity formed by, say, Mr. Rockefeller on the one hand, and an ignorant but enthusiastic iron puddler on the other.

Well; but with the increase of opportunities, the greater dissemination of knowledge, and the advance of freedom of thought, the multiplicity of ideas inevitably resulting must necessarily be embarrassing to a Christian apologist who adopts such a title for a sermon as "The Nation and Its God." The very title suggests inferentially that each nation may have its own particular God. Of course, the ardent British believer is satisfied that his God is the "one living and only true God," and that all other believers in other gods—of whatever nationality—are steeped in darkness. But the puzzling feature in the whole situation is just this: that there are millions who believe in *their* gods with all the firmness, temerity, and intensity of conviction that any Christian believer can believe in *his* God. For example, there are many devout and devoted believers in Allah and Mohammed as well as in Jehovah and Christ.

There is apparently, moreover, a sort of inexorable Salic Law which regulates the governance of the universe. The sex of the Almighty according to Christian doctrine has, it seems, never been challenged up to now. But, with the advance of women, may we not expect to find some feminine rival to the Ruler of the Universe? We have had queens as well as kings, all, indiscriminately, according to orthodox teaching, of divine appointment. Why, then, should a goddess not have supreme control instead of a god?

Now, the President of the Free Church Council (very free) had a good deal to say about his impressions of the nation and how it is getting on; but he gave precious few of his impressions of the nation's God. He was frankly pessimistic on many points, and was compelled to say certain things which, to put it mildly, could scarcely be regarded as flattering to the nation's God. Possibly, the features of our time upon which he deemed it necessary to animadvert at some length have been productive of a demand for change, and may thus account for the appearance of many new-fangled creeds and suggestions for new divinities. Christian Science, Theosophy, New Theologies, are features of the twentieth century. The Christian apologist does not fulminate nowadays. He—gentle creature—never gets angry with the enemies of his truth. He never gets the gloves on nor gives the enemies of his God some straight blows from the shoulder. No, he only gets sad, and sometimes lachrymose and maudlin. He sighs over and prays for the poor infidel, who, he trusts, will find out his terrible mistake before it is too late. The confident impudence and assurance of these worthy persons is too amusing for words.

But, at the end of it all, and notwithstanding all the discouraging signs of the times, the Christian has still—hope! Churches may empty, subscriptions go down, and distinctions gradually disappear between the orthodox and the heterodox—still, he has hope. Because, observe, says the occasional optimistic Christian of the Meyer type, while there are certainly things to discourage, there is a great advance in modern thought, and in the end it will be found that the Christian religion is sufficiently embracing to take in everything and everybody. If Atheists talk like that, they are pitied—or boycotted. From the lips of accredited representatives of Christianity, it would seem to be a happy and consoling utterance.

Of course, Christianity depends for its continued existence on its adaptability to changing and improving human requirements. But that just means that it loses all definite and distinct character of its own. A Babai missionary lectures in our midst. Christian ministers appear on his platforms by the dozen and crack him up and clap him on the back. Why shouldn't they? The indisputable gullibility of the great British public is past finding out. The gulls don't think they are stupid. Let them learn this if they can: that in the supernatural hocus-pocus, *they will never find one of our medicine men running down a fellow craftsman.*

But this all-embracing kind of modern Christianity has not only the effect of robbing Christianity of its essential features. It makes God a vague, visionary, and withal futile and ungraspable personality, who may be anything that anybody likes, and it encourages the "intellectual twisters" in our midst to the disadvantage and prejudice of sincere inquirers: so true is it that to-day the average member of a Christian community does not know where he is—or where God is either.

We want less rubbishy cant talked and written against Materialism and Paganism. Materialists and Pagans have often been the friends and saviors of humanity. But, as Christianity has flourished in the past on downright mendacity, so in the future it is to depend on—adaptability. And is the "nation's God" of to-day at all like the "nation's God" of Cromwell's time?

SIMPLE SANDY.

The Eternal Priestess.

WOMAN stands on slippery places. Her position is not secure. For ages she has been represented as an inferior being—decreed and destined to be subject to man.

We call our civilisation Christian, we say the Bible is the foundation of our morality and the basis of our laws, and yet the despoiling of women presents a fearful indictment against both civilisation and the Bible upon which that civilisation is founded.

Upon the altars of the Church have been forged the chains that have bound woman for nineteen centuries. The Christian dogmas have insulted and enslaved the mothers of the race. The man-made religion of a man-god, administered by a man-priesthood, has dishonored and degraded woman through all the Christian ages. Nature is remorseless and exact; falsehood, injustice, and wrong bear their pitiless and inevitable fruit. In the degradation of woman we are reaping the harvest sown by the hand of the Church in the field of the world. The problem of the social evil is a world problem. It is as wide as Christendom. It is not peculiar to any nation, or city, or social condition. It is pre-eminently an adjunct of Christian civilisation. It follows the flags of all nations. Wherever the Christian armies of Christian Europe are stationed in Asia or Africa, heathen women are requisitioned for Christian soldiers. Methods of government may differ; social and political institutions vary, but throughout all the Christian nations in one respect, in one fateful feature, there is uniformity; it is the prostitution of woman.

Now and then a community awakens to a more or less vivid realisation of the sadness and the shame of it all. Commissions and committees investigate and report, raids are organised, arrests made, resorts closed, discussions and controversies maintained as to the evil and how to combat it. However well-intentioned these spasmodic expressions of the public sentiment may be, they nevertheless produce more hysteria than wisdom.

The attitude of society towards these unhappy women ought not to be one of condemnation and revenge, but rather of pity and compassion. She is there, maybe, through ignorance or weakness, or through the very excess of love and devotion; she is there, maybe, through no fault of her own, or at

best through a fault but half her own; she is there, also, knowing full well that the door of hope and reclamation is closed to her for ever; there to hide behind a mask of abandonment and boldness an aching heart; there to suffer, to despair, to die, having no refuge but the grave, no friend but death.

Ah! who would add one drop to the bitterness of her cup, one pang to her grief? We can do little for her now. The way down is easy, the way up all but impossible; they go down as with wings, and up with broken hands and bleeding feet.

In pre-Christian times the position of women was more honorable and more secure than in any Christian land in this dawning twentieth century. Our orthodox friends never tire of telling that woman owes all she has to the Christian religion. The fact is, she owes her subjection and her age-long subjugation to the Christian religion.

Egypt, pre-eminent among the older civilisations, gives us the strange story of the Matriarchate, the mother rule. The Egyptians worshiped as their chief deity the goddess Isis. They revered the goddess Semiramis as the mother of their civilisation. One of their greatest monarchs, Rameses III., caused this inscription to be put upon monuments, "To unprotected woman there is freedom to wander throughout the whole country without apprehension of danger." There is no city or country calling itself Christian on the entire globe where that inscription could be made and safely followed. It is a keen and striking comment that hundreds of years before this era a pagan monarch should choose as a certificate of the glories of his rule the statement that woman was safe anywhere within his realms.

In pre-Christian Rome the people worshiped goddesses. The most sacred treasures, as well as the destinies of the empire, were kept and guarded by the vestal virgins. The tutelary divinity of Athens was a goddess. Wherever a people has a goddess among its deities, it has a priestess among its people, and wherever a religion has a priestess, the women are secure.

The Christian is masculine. There is no feminine element in the godhead. The Christian dogmatists had to violate the principles of interpretation in order to make their god masculine. The word "Jehovah" is susceptible of a translation that makes the gender male and female, or a mother and father god. The dogmatists left the mother off and have always called Jehovah "him." The New Testament words for the third person in the Trinity are all feminine in the Greek, but the Christian dogmatists made every one of them masculine and called the Holy Spirit "him" or "it." There you have the dogmatic god, a triune masculinity, a triple man, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There is no place in the godhead for the mother or the feminine element—God the Father, and that alone, is the certificate and excuse for the Christian subordination of woman.

Until the Church is able to say "God the Father and God the Mother," it will not be worthy of the devotion and loyalty of women. In that prayer, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name," "hallowed" means "whole, complete, integral, rounded, entire, self-supplementing," "Our Father, whole, complete, be thy name," wherein there is a hint of the lost word of occultism. Perhaps when the lost word is found, even Christendom will see and say "our father and our mother." Maybe when that lost word is found, an apostate Church will see that a masculine god and a masculine priesthood are things for women to shun.

The teachings of the Bible are explicit and unmistakable with regard to woman. She was created after man; she was not a part of the original plan, but was an afterthought; she was created for man, a doctrine which the Church has loved to reiterate. She was first in sin; she brought the undoing of mankind by her transgression, and through her came the curse and the banishment from Eden, and the doom of ultimate death.

Under the Old Testament dispensation she was not permitted to enter the inner circle of the temple; she could stand without while more righteous man entered in. When she gave birth to a child, she was compelled to pass through a period of ceremonial purification—forty days if the child was a son, twice that long if the child was a daughter.

The New Testament dispensation did not improve in the slightest the condition of woman. Indeed, the Apostle Paul took pains to make her subjection more complete. He said, "Wives, obey your husbands." Why should a woman obey the husband any more than the husband obey the woman? The idea of obedience on the one side and mastership on the other has its root in the fundamental conception of woman's created inferiority. "Be subject unto your husbands, sit in silence, keep the head deferentially covered, as a sign of humiliation, meekness, and subjection. If you wish to know anything, ask your husbands." These are the inspired utterances of the Apostle Paul. These are the teachings of the Christian Church, yet women revere that Bible as the Charter of their salvation. It is the declaration of their utter sinfulness, the certificate of their inferiority and the cause of their age-long subjugation.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). J. E. ROBERTS.

(To be concluded.)

OUR PAGAN SURVIVALS.

"Pagan London" is by no means a bad "Letter to the Editor" lay, and congratulations to the *Daily Telegraph* on its perspicacity in the matter of vacation variety. But are we not a little unfair to the Pagans in comparing them with Londoners? Most of our feasts and festivals and many of our season customs are Pagan survivals. Christian Rome borrowed many of its rites and ceremonies from Pagan Rome, and the Protestant Church keeps many of the festivals that were connected with Pagan celebrations. The Yule log of our Christmas time comes to us from heathen Saxons, who burned one on the night which is now our Christmas night, and burned it as an emblem of the returning sun and the increase of light and heat. And the heathen Saxons kept up the festival of sun worship until the twelfth night. It was the feast of the winter solstice and was the heathen worship of the Sun God.

I have seen in the newspapers that the old custom of beating the bounds is to be abandoned by the City of London. This parochial perambulation is also an old Pagan survival. The feasts called Terminalia were dedicated to the God Terminus, who was worshipped as the Guardian of Fields and Landmarks. The landmarks were not beaten with rods as is our custom to-day, but twined with garlands and occasionally sprinkled with the blood of human sacrifice. In our own Church the parish was originally perambulated by the clergy and the parishioners. The priest asked the blessing of God on the fields that they might bring forth the fruits of the earth in abundance.

The ceremony is associated with Rogation Week, the period which the Saxons called Gangdagas, or Days of Perambulation. And this will be the first year the custom has not been carried out in the City of London since its existence as a city. But it is a Pagan survival. The perambulation of the landmarks with sacrifices and offerings to the god Terminus was originated in the days of Numa Pompilius, and that philosophical monarch was born on the day that Romulus laid the foundation of Rome.

All the pretty emblems of May Day are Pagan survivals. Most of the ceremonies indulged in by the Pagans in honor of the goddess Flora are continued in the May Day celebrations of Christian England. There is no necessity to multiply instances. The fact is beyond dispute that many of our Christian festivals are directly descended from Pagan festivals. But where the old Pagans are injured by the comparison with our Pagan Londoners is that the Pagans feasted and made merry in honor of a god in whom they believed and whom they sought by their performances and their sacrifices to propitiate. Our modern Pagans feast and make merry entirely for their own gratification. Some of them "believe" in a kind of a sort of a way, and some don't. But all are indifferent.—G. I. Sims, "Referee."

What I want reminding, and what I go to the Bible and Hayward for, be just the other great truth, that he's a God of Justice too, and have his sword always drawn in secret for the sinner, though it be hid in his shining robe.—*Eden Phillpotts*, "Widcombe Fair."

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.

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Why Persecutest Thou Me?"

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, a Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "Who Made God?"

OUTDOOR.

DUDLEY (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—April 20, at 7.30, "Thomas Paine and Some Local Calumniators"; 21, at 8, "Science, Religion, and the End of the World"; 22, at 8, "Piety and Dog-Days"; 23, at 8, "Christ: Man, Messiah, or Myth?"

HANDSWORTH (Town Gates): Joseph A. E. Bates—April 17, at 7.45, "Rationalism and Monarchy"; 18, at 7.45, "People with One Idea."

**Determinism or Free Will?
By C. COHEN.**

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

CONTENTS.

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.

(POSTAGE 2d.)

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

America's Freethought Newspaper.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD EDITOR.
L. K. WASHBURN EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscription in advance \$3.00
Two new subscribers 5.00
One subscription two years in advance 5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra
Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,

Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,

62 VESSEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

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?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

TO LET.—One large Room on First Floor, furnished or unfurnished; bath, etc., on landing; electric light; small rental; near Tube; 'bus passes door; quiet house.—H., 157 Uxbridge-road, Shepherd's Bush.

It would be a distinct gain to all my Freethought Friends, if I could persuade them to give me an order for one of my special 1913 Lounge Suits to-measure,

Price 33/- Cash paid.

The material is good and fashionable. The cut and finish is the latest, and best Satisfaction always guaranteed. Patterns and self-measure forms free to any address. Agents Wanted In every town. **JAWACOD** 61, Dorset Street, Bradford.

A LIBERAL OFFER—NOTHING LIKE IT.

Greatest Popular Family Reference Book and Sexology—Almost Given Away. A Million sold at 3 and 4 dollars—Now Try it Yourself.

Insure Your Life—You Die to Win; Buy this Book, You Learn to Live.



Ignorance kills—knowledge saves—be wise in time. Men weaken, sicken, die—not knowing how to live. "Habits that enslave" wreck thousands—young and old Fathers fail, mothers are "bed-ridden," babies die. Family feuds, marital miseries, divorces—even murders—All can be avoided by self-knowledge, self-control.

You can discount heaven—dodge hell—here and now, by reading and applying the wisdom of this one book of 1,200 pages, 400 illustrations, 80 lithographs on 18 anatomical color plates, and over 250 prescriptions.

OF COURSE YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW—

- THE YOUNG—How to choose the best to marry.
- THE MARRIED—How to be happy in marriage.
- THE FOND PARENT—How to have prize babies.
- THE MOTHER—How to have them without pain.
- THE CHILDLESS—How to be fruitful and multiply.
- THE CURIOUS—How they "grewed" from germ-cell.
- THE HEALTHY—How to enjoy life and keep well.
- THE INVALID—How to brace up and keep well.

Whatever you'd ask a doctor you find herein.

Dr. Foote's books have been the popular instructors of the masses in America for fifty years (often re-written, enlarged) and always kept up-to-date. For twenty years they have sold largely (from London) to all countries where English is spoken, and everywhere highly praised. Last editions are best, largest, and most for the price. You may save the price by not buying, and you may lose your life (or your wife or child) by not knowing some of the vitally important truths it tells.

Most Grateful Testimonials From Everywhere.

Gudivoda, India: "It is a store of medical knowledge in plainest language, and every reader of English would be benefited by it."—W. L. N.

Triplicane, India: "I have gone through the book many times, and not only benefited myself but many friends also."—G. W. T.

Panderma, Turkey: "I can avow frankly there is rarely to be found such an interesting book as yours."—K. H. (Chemist).
Calgary, Can.: "The information therein has changed my whole idea of life—to be nobler and happier."—D. N. M.
Laverton, W. Aust.: "I consider it worth ten times the price. I have benefited much by it."—R. M.

Somewhat Abridged Editions (800 pp. each) can be had in German, Swedish, or Finnish.

Price EIGHT SHILLINGS by Mail to any Address.

ORDER OF THE PIONEER PRESS,

2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

FOR FREETHINKERS AND ENQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

BY

G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

WELL PRINTED ON GOOD PAPER AND WELL BOUND.

In Paper Covers, SIXPENCE—Net.

(POSTAGE 1½d.)

In Cloth Covers, ONE SHILLING—Net.

(POSTAGE 2d.)

ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL BOOKS EVER PUBLISHED.

INVALUABLE TO FREETHINKERS ANSWERING CHRISTIANS.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join to participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Batcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

AT

Stratford Town Hall,

(Under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.)

April 20.

Miss K. B. KOUGH,

“Why Persecutest Thou Me?”

Doors Open at 7. Chair taken at 7.30.

Questions and Discussion Cordially Invited.

ADMISSION FREE.

PIONEER PAMPHLETS.

Now being issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

No. I.—BIBLE AND BEER. By G. W. Foote.

FORTY PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 3d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

No. II.—DEITY AND DESIGN. By C. Cohen.

(A Reply to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace.)

THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

No. III.—MISTAKES OF MOSES. By Colonel Ingersoll.

THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

IN PREPARATION.

No. IV.—CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. By G. W. Foote.

No. V.—MODERN MATERIALISM. By W. Mann.

Special Terms for Quantities for Free Distribution or to Advanced Societies.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.