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Let us believe that the whole of truth can never do harm to the whole of virtue.—WENDELL PHILLIPS.

God and the War.

To Freethinkers war is a most illuminating calamity. Dr. Campbell Morgan frankly admits that to him, as minister of the Word, as prophet of the Lord, the task of delivering a message on this mournful subject is, on the whole, the most difficult that has ever fallen to his lot in all the years of his public ministry. Unbelievers in God experience no such difficulty in approaching the subject, because to them war is a wholly intelligible thing. They know that, in the majority of instances, it originates in fear, ambition, greed of territory, jealousy, and the instinct of self-defence; verifying the fact that civilisation is only a thin veneer that can be washed off in a moment. War implies a return to the primitive savagery of human nature. All wars can be explained on this principle, even religious wars being no exception to the rule. The object of the present article, however, is not to investigate and interpret the causes and aims of the regrettable war now raging so fiercely, but, rather, to contemplate it in the light of Freethought. Now, it is impossible to meditate upon the existing situation, with any degree of sincerity, without discerning more clearly than ever, *the utter absurdity of the God-idea*, in whatever form it may be held. Dr. Campbell Morgan exhorts us to pray, but confesses that "it is not easy to pray to-day." It is difficult to pray simply because it is beyond our capacity to believe in a God worth praying to. Of course, men and women of faith must pray, the reverend gentleman informs us, but even to them, in this hour, it is the most arduous undertaking in the world. The divines are perplexed and confused because they cannot hide it from themselves that war is absolutely irreconcilable with any Christian doctrine of the Deity, and because in their teaching on the subject they are bound to contradict themselves. For example, Dr. Campbell Morgan assures us that "no one wants war." "I affirm that," he adds, "of the whole of Europe." But, if no one wants war, why on earth has war spread like wildfire all over Europe? Again, if no one wants war, it follows of necessity that war is of God; and that this is a rational inference appears from the reverend gentleman's assertion that the Divine Being "is now reigning and ruling, not in spite of the storms, but by having the storms themselves under his control." Let us pay special heed to the words:—

"Yea, the Lord sitteth as king for ever: there is no possibility of his dethronement, not the remotest chance of his defeat. Though cedars crash and fall, and forests are stripped bare, and desolations and devastations be everywhere, the Lord is king. It is the language of magnificent, triumphant faith."

So it undoubtedly is, and if it is true, there is no possible escape from the conclusion that God is the author of the present war, the Kaiser being merely the instrument in his hand. This is exceedingly good theology, but the moment Dr. Morgan begins

really to face the facts he forgets all about it, and speaks thus:—

"Suppose, for a single moment, that to-morrow morning the news were given to the world that there would be no war, think of the gladness that would sweep over every country, even those which, for the moment, seem to be clamoring for battle. Here is the devilishness of the situation. Some force, impalpable, spiritual, devilish, seems to be attempting to compel war, confusing the issues, paralysing our counsels, stirring our animosities. As the heavens look down upon Europe to-day they see great nations mobilising, marching, preparing for that which, in their deepest hearts, they hate; preparing, like men in a dream, under the mastery of some giant evil spirit, from which they cannot escape. That is the devilishness of the situation."

Theologians had much better leave the subject of war alone altogether than make fools of themselves in that fashion. God's absolute sovereignty is nothing but the vainest of dreams, as they very well know and implicitly confess when face to face with the awful facts of human life. These impel them to allude to "some force, impalpable, spiritual, devilish," which successfully opposes and defeats the God in whom they believe. He who is supposed to be doing "according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth" cannot prevent his righteous purposes from being set at defiance and frustrated by some mysterious evil powers which he himself brought into existence. In this connection, another explanation of the war is suggested which makes the case for God much worse. Dr. Morgan says:—

"The nations of Europe decided to secure their individual safety by physical force. They decided that it would be well for them to make certain of the absence of war by federations on the ground of suspicion. The reigning God has compelled them to work out their own choices to their ultimate issue, and men who have looked upon war, and preparations for it, as characterised by pomp and pageantry, are probably to be brought within the next few months face to face with the ghastly reality. Nations that have based their friendships upon their suspicions of others, and have made treaties with these in order that those may gain no advantage, are finding the hopelessness and the helplessness of their cleverness. God is compelling humanity to work out its own choices."

After all, God is the author of the war, and he has brought it about out of revenge on the nations for their devilish cleverness. This is very bad theology and an atrocious explanation; or, rather, travesty of the facts. The truth is that the facts politely bow the Deity out of court.

In the *British Weekly* for August 13, the leading article, presumably by the editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, is entitled "The Christian Community and the War." It is replete with pious platitudes such as the average Christian finds so palatable. These are admittedly trying times, and Sir William is on the hunt for some things that will help his public to keep the faith. Of course, the chase is a successful one, though the value of the "finds" is highly questionable. One is God's alleged power to bring good out of evil. Are we, then, to understand that God causes evil in order to display his ingenuity by bringing good out of it? If God is supreme, that is exactly what he is guilty of just now. But what is the good brought out of the present evil war? "We have seen this," says Sir William, "in the

sudden arrest of all internal strife in the country. Parliamentary faction and industrial unrest are in suspense for the time being: the common cause commands the undivided loyalty of the people." Surely, the lesser evil vanishes at the advent of a greater; but, as Sir William observes, only for the time being. Granting that this is a good secured by the presence of a European war, it most certainly required the intervention of no God to bring it about. The laws of Nature are supreme in all such matters. What is the use of reminding us that the horrors of war are often greatly exaggerated? If war is an evil, as all the divines declare, no consideration can ever convert it into a good. Sir William maintains that "war is elevated by sacrifice, by the mixed effect of glory and grief, and in this aspect of it is not the enemy, but the ally, of faith"; but is not the reverend knight aware that it is also degraded by the cruel looting, sexual licence, and other wickednesses indulged in by soldiers on entering a conquered city or town? The long abstinence, the terrible privations, the numerous sufferings, more or less cheerfully endured during the march, are now at an end, and a great reaction naturally ensues. Sir William forgets that there are two sides to the shield, and that he who has only seen one side cannot give an accurate and full description of it. In any case, St. Paul was quite right when he said that sin should not be encouraged in order that grace might abound; and the great apostle's successors should follow his example.

Towards the end of his article Sir William expresses his sympathy with those who shall be subjected to great suffering and losses during the present conflict, and says:—

"Not to pray for all this mass of care and sorrow is the sure way to lose faith. Who can bear it but God? Who could bear to think of it except with God? O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

The curious fact is that God, if God there be, *does* bear it all without melting sufficiently to put an end to it. There are noble-minded men and women in abundance who will do their utmost to alleviate the various evils attendant upon battles, but God will remain absolutely silent and inactive through it all. Dr. Morgan confidently assures us that "we are at the end of the devilish heresy that God is on the side of the big battalions." Are we, though? The reverend gentleman may ignore the numbers and efficiency of armies, and decline to calculate, cooing his fears to sleep with "God is going to win"; but that is empty rhetoric, tolerated alone in the pulpit. In the circumstances, the war may have been inevitable, and its result is as yet an unsolved, and, with our present knowledge, insoluble problem; but all the armies implicated proceed on the assumption that the issue will be determined exclusively by the strength and efficiency of those engaged in it.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Bankruptcy of Christianity.

THE Society of Friends has just issued a manifesto "To Men and Women of Goodwill in the British Empire." It is concerned with the present crisis, and aims at pointing out the duty of Christians in the face of a state of affairs such as the present. And one must admit that if any Christian sect has the right to lecture others on the evils of war, it is the Society of Friends. Alone amongst Christians they have protested against the use of brute force in either public or private life. And the appreciation of their attitude by other Christians may be seen in the fact that the Society of Friends is a dwindling body, and has never represented but a small minority of believers. From one point of view the policy of the "Quakers" may be said to show the impossibilist character of Christian teaching. Unqualified non-resistance is a sheer absurdity. Qualified non-resistance only means in effect not resisting more than

is necessary. In practice it means the substitution of one form of resistance for another. It was possible for the Society of Friends, individually or collectively, to disclaim the use of force, because they were living in a society which applied the measure of force needful for their protection. They did not resist in person, but, so far as force was needful for their protection, they did resist vicariously. The police, the courts, the whole organisation of society, apply the force necessary to individual protection.

There are some things in this "Message" with which all Freethinkers will agree. This war, we are told, "spells the bankruptcy of much that we have lightly called Christianity." Certainly it spells the bankruptcy of Christianity, not lightly so-called, but properly so-called. The war proves—if proof were needed—the utter worthlessness of Christianity as a civilising factor. The nations engaged are not fighting non-Christian Powers; it is so far a family quarrel. Germany, Russia, Austria, England, Serbia, are professedly Christian nations. They all worship the same God, profess what is fundamentally the same creed. They are all brothers in Christ, but that does not prevent their cutting each other's throats on the battlefield with the utmost goodwill. Nor can their common religious faith be counted on to render the combat less bitter or less bloody. On the contrary, one can safely say that, so far as religious feelings enter into the quarrel, they will only serve to prevent a lasting peace being secured. In the Near East the quarrels of the followers of the Greek and Latin Churches are as fruitful of trouble as are those of Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

Intellectually, Christianity is manifestly bankrupt. What the present war does is to emphasise its social bankruptcy. I am not concerned with a Christianity that *might* have existed in the primitive ages, or with a Christianity that may exist in the very distant future. The only Christianity we have to bother about, and the only Christianity that is worth bothering about, is that which meets us as an historic fact. And that Christianity is bankrupt in every conceivable direction. It has not alone failed to bring people of different nations and races to the point of living together peacefully, but, through its official representatives, it has never ceased to provide excuses for national iniquities, and to cover them with a cloak of moral and religious justification. When the European nations wanted a religious justification for their buccaneering expeditions in Africa, in China, and elsewhere, the Churches supplied it. When excuses were needed for the wholesale exploitation of the "lower" races, the Churches found all that was needed. The war in Europe is not a war for the maintenance of national possessions or liberty in Europe; it is very largely a war for the control of races outside Europe, and for purposes of sheer exploitation.

It is a plain truth that if the Christians of the world could only live at peace together, war would be a thing of the past. A Mohammedan power such as Turkey could not threaten the peace of Europe. There is little to dread from Japan—if other nations treat her fairly and decently. And, at any rate, it was only the cupidity and bullying of Christian powers that compelled Japan to become a great military and naval power. China has centuries of peaceful traditions behind, and is only showing signs of breaking away from those traditions because of the action and influence of the Christian powers. It is the Christians of the world that have taught mankind the meaning of the "mailed fist," and that the only way to prevent aggression is to be able to apply sufficient physical force to make successful aggression impossible. And when mutual suspicion and the competitive exploitation of heathen races have made a disastrous war inevitable sooner or later, there is much talk of the justice of this nation or of that nation in joining in the conflict. Of course they are justified. If one burglar attempts to take from another his share of the "swag," the one attacked is justified in resisting. But it would

have been far better had they both been brought up in a different school, and so acquired tastes that would have turned their energies in a quite different direction.

Christianity is bankrupt because it never possessed the capital needful to run the business of civilising humanity. Its brotherhood of man never meant, even in theory, more than a brotherhood of believers, and in practice it did not always mean that. It recognised duties and obligations between members of the same church or sect, but outside these boundaries it applied a different code of ethics. What kind of brotherhood did Christians bestow on Jews and heretics for hundreds of years? Christians in their hey-day of power would have looked with amazement on anyone who claimed consideration for either. What kind of brotherly attention did the inhabitants of ancient Mexico and Peru receive from their Christian conquerors? How fared the Redskins of North America, the Maoris of New Zealand, or the inhabitants of Africa at the hands of their Christian brothers? In practice nearly always, and in theory often, Christians have shown that their doctrine of brotherhood meant little more than the mere brotherhood of a gang. Within the gang rules must be observed. Outside the gang they might be broken with impunity.

What is there about Christianity that would teach people of different nations or races to live harmoniously together and so make warfare impossible? Is it the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God? When and where has it shown the slightest influence in this direction? There is no doctrine that Christians have been more ready to fight about. Christianity has no social doctrine, no theory of social life or of the nature of human association that would bring a more rational spirit into affairs. Its business from the outset has been to save souls. Not to make useful citizens but to fashion candidates for the New Jerusalem. It was this that led it to neglect the splendid civilisation of antiquity, and to allow its institutions to fall into decay. One must admit that it has pursued this work with a certain amount of earnestness. And its very earnestness in this direction has spelt disservice to civilisation. It directed energy into unfruitful channels. Had the energy that Christianity expended, generation after generation, in the attempt to prepare mankind for a mythical heaven, been spent in teaching the merest rudiments of a sane social life, Europe to-day might have been a gigantic commonwealth instead of an aggregation of armed camps.

"To many will come the temptation," says the Friends' manifesto, "to deny God, and to turn away with despair from the Christianity which seems to be identical with bloodshed on so gigantic a scale." Certainly there are a number of people in the world who seem to need something startling to occur before they will exercise what intelligence they possess, and it may well be that the present war will lead some to inquire as to the value of religious beliefs in general and of Christianity in particular. We are told that we ought to "seek the forgiveness of Almighty God." The position seems to me the other way about. If there is an Almighty God, he should be seeking our forgiveness for not fashioning man better than he has done. Either God made man or man made God. If the latter, then religion may be dismissed as a myth. If the former, then the responsibility for man's conduct rests with him, and we surely have no need to ask God's forgiveness for our being as he made us. In any case, things could not be worse without the belief in God. That they are as they are with it is certainly good ground for questioning its value.

All Freethinkers will agree that "the only possible permanent foundation" for European culture is "mutual trust and goodwill." But that mutual trust and goodwill cannot be based upon religious belief, about which people have always differed, and concerning which they will never cease to differ. It must be built upon something deeper and more inclusive than religion, something that appeals to men and women

of all nations and races. Even in such a thing as warfare it is not religious belief that binds people together. The differences of religious belief remain what they were during the progress of a war, and the British soldier or sailor who finds himself at one with all around him in carrying out his duty, separates from him when it comes to religion. Catholic and Protestant, Methodist and Episcopalian, soldiers will fight side by side; but, if they can, they will separate when it comes to a religious service. In war, as in peace, it is the common, unextinguishable, social needs that drive people together, while religion serves to separate them.

Let men put ideas of religion on one side, let them give their whole energies to social affairs, and they will the more quickly realise that the cause of human civilisation is never advanced by warfare, however inevitable it may be. And if warfare has become repugnant to a larger number of persons all over the world, if it is denounced as a crime against humanity and against civilisation, it is surely because of the growth of a secular philosophy that has taught people to fix their minds upon fundamental facts, and to substitute the idea of a common humanity for that of a body of devout believers in a religious doctrine. Whatever may be the shortcomings of Freethought, it has at least never failed to hold up the ideal of a common human brotherhood that overleaps all barriers of sect, nation, or race. I am no believer in the gospel of expansion as applied to nations. But I am a devout believer in the gospel of expansion as applied to man. From the tribal state until to-day man has grown by the expansion of his feelings, his obligations, and his duties, over an ever-widening area. From the horde to the tribe, from the tribe to the nation, from the nation to the race, is the true direction of human growth. And if the aftermath of the present war only serves to drive home the lesson how ill the course of human progress is served by the most lavish expenditure of blood and treasure on the field of battle, it will not be without its benefits.

C. COHEN.

Bayonets and the Beatitudes.

"In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text."

—SHAKESPEARE.

"Uplift thy cross and go. Thy doom is said."

—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

EUROPE has been hurled by the ambitions and rivalries of its Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, and Romanoff dynasties, and jealousies of its emperors who govern by "divine right," on to a slope slippery with blood. On that awful down-grade the nations are launched, and the voice of reason is but a whisper against a hurricane. The countrymen of Moliere are cutting the throats of the countrymen of Goethe, and the compatriots of Kossuth are disembowelling the brothers of Tolstoi. The women of Europe, "like Niobe, all tears," are mourning their dead. Think of it! Whole nations, professedly Christian, engaged in wholesale murder. Yet who can deny that, if the commands of Christianity had penetrated in the least degree beneath the surface of human life, to make weapons of destruction would be viewed as an awful crime? Yet the flower of the manhood of the Christian nations is spilling human blood like water. From the Spree to the Elbe, from the Seine to the Neva, Europe is a slaughter-house. The death-moan of tens of thousands is drowned in the *Te Deums* of the victors, and the regimental standards are blessed in the name of "The Prince of Peace."

The mockery of it all! It is a complete indictment of Christianity, which has proved itself the most powerless thing on earth. The millions who profess to be followers of Christ are, practically, wholly unaffected by his teaching. When passion or self-interest is aroused, every precept is forgotten. Even in times of peace in every Christian country, side by side with the hypocritical pretensions of

orthodoxy, will be found codes of legislation which violate every injunction of Christianity and resembles only the *lex talionis* of the old Pagan jurisprudence.

The effect of this divergence is seen when a few obscure individuals are treated as criminals for attempting to take the Christian religion seriously, as with the Peculiar People in England and the Stundists and Tolstoyans in Russia. So far as the prelates of the different Christian Churches are concerned, the profession of Christian ethics is a damnable farce. Whether they be Catholic cardinals, Anglican bishops, or priests of the Greek Church, the fact is the same. The professed followers of the poor carpenter of Nazareth enjoy princely salaries and live in palaces. Even the Nonconformist leaders get what they can, and follow their Savior laboriously on the salaries of Cabinet officials. Not one amongst them is better than the other. Some wit has said that "singing psalms never yet prevented a grocer from sanding his sugar." This jest expresses in a happy form what may be said in all seriousness of the impotency of Christianity to affect ethical conduct.

The Christian religion is not only a failure, it is a priestly robe covering a skeleton. Mohammed has a direct influence over his professed disciples; Buddha still colors and controls human life; Brahma affects the lives of millions; even the followers of Joseph Smith carry out Mormon teaching; but where in all Christendom is the Christian? The God of the Christians is not the sad-faced Nazarene, but the rubicund, self-satisfied form of Mammon, with the leer of the miser. There is no crown of thorns, and no spear-wounds in his side, but in the jewelled hands of the new deity are the money-bag and the sword. The purple robe covers the huge imposture of an organised hypocrisy. Could the pale shade of the poor carpenter that slinks past the costly altars, but speak, it would bewail an agony of spirit deadlier than that which drenched Gethsemane in blood. The dethronement of Christ is complete, and men now worship Mammon:—

"A wondrous God! Most fit for those
Who cheat on change, then creep to prayer;
Blood on his heavenly altar flows,
Hell's burning incense fills the air,
And death attests in street and lane
The hideous glory of his reign."

MIMNERMUS.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—V.

(Continued from p. 523)

"I remember discoursing with a very charming French official on the difficulty of eradicating fetish customs. 'Why not take the native in the rear, Mademoiselle,' said he, 'and convert the native gods?' I explained that his ingenious plan was not feasible, because you cannot convert gods. Even educating gods is hopeless work. All races of men, through countless ages, have been attempting to make their peculiar deities understand how they are wanted to work, and what they are wanted to do, and the result is anything but encouraging."—MISS KINGSLEY, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 346 (1898).

"The faith of the Greenland Eskimo is of great interest towards the elucidation of the questions above touched upon. It is so primitive that I doubt whether it deserves the name of a religion. There are many legends and much superstition, but it all lacks clear and definite form; conceptions of the supernatural vary from individual to individual, and they produce, as a whole, the impression of a religion in process of formation, a mass of incoherent and fantastic notions which have not yet crystallised into a definite view of the world. We must assume that all religions have at one time or another passed through just such a stage as this."—FRIDTJOF NANSEN, *Eskimo Life*, p. 224 (1894).

"But if the aborigines of Central Australia have no religion properly so called, they entertain beliefs and they observe practices out of which, under favorable circumstances, a religion might have been developed, if its evolution had not been arrested by the advent of Europeans."—J. G. FRAZER, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, p. 92 (1913).

WE have seen how primitive man, having arrived at a belief in a soul or spirit, through dreams, shadows, and reflections, also came to the conclusion that

everything, living and not living, possessed an indwelling soul or spirit.

It seems extraordinary to us that any human being could believe that stones and trees and such things can be possessed with a soul. Nevertheless, that is the belief of a very large proportion of the primitive races, as we shall see. And it follows logically enough; for if the savage believes that he has seen the soul of his dead father or brother in his sleep, then he must logically believe that the weapons and clothes, etc., he sees with them must also be the souls of the things, and not the things themselves.

Before scientists began to study and compare the beliefs and modes of thought of primitive man, these beliefs were looked upon as stupid and unreasonable—of the same substance as a tale made up by a child. How they could believe such rubbish passed all understanding. But science here, as elsewhere, brought order out of chaos, and we now know—through the researches of Tylor, Lubbock, Frazer, and others—that primitive man simply could not help arriving, in the absence of science, at the conclusions he did regarding the supernatural.

As Miss Kingsley points out:—

"The more you know the African, the more you study his laws and institutions, the more you must recognise that the main characteristic of his intellect is logical, and you see how in all things he uses this absolutely sound but narrow thought-form. He is not a dreamer or a doubter; everything is real, very real, horribly real to him."

"This," continues the same writer, "may seem strange to those who read accounts of wild and awful ceremonials." But "It is this power of being able logically to account for everything that is, I believe, at the back of the tremendous permanency of Fetish in Africa, and the cause of many of the relapses into it by Africans converted to other religions."*

But, however logical you may be, you cannot arrive at right conclusions if you start from wrong premises, any more than you can give the correct answer to a sum if you start with wrong figures; and, as we have seen, primitive man started wrong by mistaking a subjective impression—namely, a dream, which had no existence outside his own mind—for an objective spiritual existence.

Nor has this error been confined to one tribe; it is found among savages as wide apart as the African from the Eskimo, the South Sea Islander from the North American Indian—tribes who have never come in contact, who are not aware of one another's existence. They have not caught the idea by contagion; they have arrived at it naturally, inevitably, as if impelled by some malignant power.

As this phase of primitive thought is very important in considering the evolution of the supernatural, it will be as well to produce some evidence in support of it. Those who have read Tylor's *Primitive Culture* will not require any more evidence than that work of genius contains; but we do not propose to draw upon that great work here. Many books, by travellers, anthropologists, and ethnologists, describing the beliefs of primitive peoples, have been written since *Primitive Culture* was first published, and we propose to cite a few to the point.

Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Arctic explorer, observes:—

"The Greenlanders, like all primitive races, originally conceived nature as animate throughout, every object—stone, mountain, weapon, and so forth—having its soul. We still find traces of this belief. The souls of tools, weapons, and clothes follow the dead on his wanderings to the land of shades; therefore they are laid in the grave, that there they may rot and their souls may be set free. Gradually, however, this belief has, in the confused and illogical way peculiar to primitive races, mixed itself up in a totally different one: the belief, to wit, that the souls of the dead can take up their abode in different animals, objects, mountains, and the like, which they subjugate to themselves, and from which they can issue from time to time, even

* Miss Kingsley, *West Indian Studies*, p. 125 (1889).

showing themselves to the living. There has thus arisen the belief that in every natural object there dwells a particular being, called its *inua* (that is, its owner)—a word which, characteristically enough, originally signified human being, or Eskimo. According to the Eskimos, every stone, mountain, glacier, river, lake, has its *inua*; the very air has one. It is still more remarkable to find that even abstract conceptions have their *inua*; they speak, for example, of the *inua* of particular instincts or passions. This may seem surprising in a primitive people, but it is not very difficult to explain. When, for instance, a primitive man, suffering from violent hunger, feels an inward gnawing, it is quite natural that he should conceive this to be caused by a being, whom he therefore describes as the *inua* of hunger or appetite. As a rule, these *inua* are invisible, but when they are seen, according to Rink, they take the form of a brightness or fire, and the sight of them is very dangerous.*

Speaking of the West African negro, Miss Kingsley says:—

"One of the fundamental doctrines of Fetish is that the connection of a certain spirit with a certain mass of matter, a material object, is not permanent; the African will point out to you a lightning-stricken tree and tell you that its spirit has been killed; he will tell you when the cooking-pot has gone to bits that it has lost its spirit; if his weapon fails, it is because someone has stolen or made sick its spirit by means of witchcraft. In every action of his daily life he shows you how he lives with a great, powerful spirit-world around him. You will see him, before starting out to hunt or fight, rubbing medicine into his weapons to strengthen the spirits within them, talking to them the while; telling them what care he has taken of them, reminding them of the gifts he has given them, though those gifts were hard to give, and begging them in the hour of his dire necessity not to fail him. You see him bending over the face of a river, talking to its spirit with proper incantations, asking it when it meets a man who is an enemy of his to upset his canoe or drown him, or asking it to carry down with it some curse to the village below which has angered him, and in a thousand other ways he shows you what he believes if you will only watch him patiently."†

Mr. Williamson, the anthropologist, in his book on the South Sea savages, dealing with the beliefs of the Solomon Islanders, says "they have no notion of a single Supreme Being"; but the idea underlying all his beliefs is in a power called *mana*.

"This is a power or influence, not physical, but in a way supernatural, and manifests itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses; it is *mana* that works to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary power of men, outside the common processes of nature; it is present in the atmosphere of life, attaches itself to persons and to things, and is manifested by results which can only be ascribed to its operation."‡

Mr. Williamson continues:—

"If a man has been successful in fighting, this success is not the result of his own physical powers; it is because he has got the *mana* of a spirit or of some deceased warrior to empower him..... The possession of *mana* is not, however, confined to spirits, ghosts, and human beings. It may be immanent in animals and plants, and even in inanimate objects" (p. 27).

And, he concludes, the fundamental underlying principle of their religious practices and superstitions "is the desire and effort of the people to get the power of *mana* for themselves, or secure its direction for their benefit" (p. 73).

Mr. J. H. King, in his book on *The Supernatural*, gives many instances of this belief among primitive races. He cites Hind's *Labrador* (ii., p. 103) for the fact that "Many of the North American Indians, as the Nasquapees of Labrador, believe in the future shadowy existence of every material thing," and Im Thurm's *Indians of Guiana* (p. 355) for the statement that the Indians of Guiana "hold that not only many rocks, but also waterfalls, streams, and natural objects of every sort, are supposed to consist of a body and a spirit."

Markham's *Cuzco* (p. 129) is cited for the ancient Peruvians, who "held that every created thing had its *mana* or spiritual essence," and Marina's *Tonga Islands* (ii., p. 122) is given as authority for the statement that the same belief prevailed "among the Fijians, who held not only that the souls of men, women, beasts, plants, stocks, canoes, houses, but all the broken utensils of this frail world, tumble along over one another into the regions of immortality." The same conception of the double nature of all substances was entertained, according to Captain Cook, in Tahiti.*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

The Doctor.

NATURE had fitted the doctor well for the profession his father and circumstance had opened for him. He was small, wiry, and possessed endless energy. On the dark background of human pain and suffering he flung the colored lights of a natural optimism. His sympathy was of the rich type that is crystallised in deeds. It came spontaneously; and one always felt that the surface roughness of it imparted a strength which sympathy generally lacks.

In action, in speech, in thought, he was quick. Seldom did he hesitate in his decisions. He was self-sufficient in an admirable way. You could rely upon the man's power without having experienced it, just as you were, in some strange way, convinced that you could depend upon his word without having tested it. His breezy personality, full to overflowing with brusque mannerisms, his confident smile, his incarnadined expletives, all irradiated a strength of character that seemed contagious. You felt stronger in body and brain. His visit was like a gust of heather-scented mountain air.

Morning, noon, and night the doctor's motor whirred over the country roads. All day long the doctor worshiped at the feet of the goddess of humanity. All day long he poured out ungrudgingly his accumulated stores of knowledge. All day long he expended physical and mental energy in the service of humanity.

To me, this is worship. Regardless of the many associations the mind introduces to bring that idea of mind down into religion and commercialism, I cannot help adhering to it. There are other ways of worship than by genuflections. There are other methods of doing one's duty than by preaching. Action is more wonderful than speech. Practice more worthy than prayers. The doctor worshiped humanity; for a man's service to his fellows is the real gauge of his righteousness; and a man's service is that which he does.

When the doctor renounced the horse for his country rambles, as he called them, and purchased a car, he gave it the name of his old companion; and there was not a lane in the big district that had not been covered by the wheels of Beauty. The most atrociously wicked farm-road was made more wicked by the little Beauty; and the doctor enjoyed the rush and struggle in boyish delight.

Dashing about, here, there, and everywhere, was his life. Smoking innumerable cigarettes was his luxury. Giving health and happiness, and easing the sorrows of death, was his mission. Being the friend of everyone was his privilege and pleasure. And the laurel-leaf of close fellowship was his reward. The schoolmaster said it was bound with gold; for he had no bad debts.

But there was another facet to the doctor's character, one that the country eye never saw, nor the country mind ever imagined. He kept it for his library and the hours of slippered ease, lamp-light, and pipes. The falling curtain of the library door, dropped between the eager, tireless, brisk little doctor and the sentimentalist. Beside his books he became reserved, thoughtful, philosophic, a man

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, pp. 182-3.

* Fridtjof Nansen, *Eskimo Life*, pp. 224-5 (1894).
 † Miss M. Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 129 (1899).
 ‡ R. W. Williamson, *The Ways of the South Sea Savage*, p. 71 (1914).

who liked to look upon and wonder at all the nuances of ordinary life. Here, in the quietness, in the low, friendly light, with the blue smoke-clouds curling around his grey hairs, his mind would return to the day's work; not with the joyful animation that characterised it then, but with a sensitiveness that oftener brought tears than smiles.

Pictures would arise before him, pictures such as one could imagine the mind of the artist would see in his dreams; and all were tinged with the sadness of suffering. Incident after incident of the day's experience would slowly emerge from the corridors of memory; and the doctor's mind would see in each of them a chapter of human woe. He drew near, at these times, to sorrow as a poet approaches grief. The feelings of those who toiled in physical pain, and of those who endured mental anguish, were his feelings. Experiencing them, he could understand; and the heart of him became like a tender flower, whose nature knew every degree of love and hate in sunrises, in rain, in wind.

He liked, too, to speak of the happenings of the day. He liked to paint the gold and the grey of commonplace life. The wonder of it never dimmed in his eyes. It enthralled him. He was fascinated by the marvellous intensities of the pleasures and pains of the life we all live. Rich and poor, good and bad, strong and weak, the doctor saw them all in the shadows of sorrow. Amidst the darkness and gloom of the pain that never passes us by we lose our social distinguishments, our varying potentialities, our prejudices, and our different beliefs. We become like our fellows. To the doctor we were all of the same family. There were no favorites. Sorrow left no room for choice. Across every life there drifted the darkness of tears. Every heart was but as a grain of sand in the human Sahara, whose scorching sun was an inevitable sorrow; and the tears blinded our eyes to the rays, and shut from our sight the other grains; and in our sad loneliness we forgot there were laughter and light in the world, we forgot there were other hearts enwrapped in the same dark egoism; and often we forgot we were human.

And so the doctor would speak softly, as if more communing with himself than with us who were honored by the privilege of being with him. His grey eyes would glow with a misty light as he told us of some vaguely comprehended sorrow that had fallen upon lives little able to bear it. His bronzed face would deepen in color as he described the effect of a child's suffering on the mother-heart. His voice would sink as he pictured the coming of a grief he alone saw. And into his words would fall the quiet and rich pathos that tells of a sympathy felt only by those amongst us whose minds have taken intelligence behind the dark veil of human grief. At these times the doctor seemed to become a strange weird instrument, every nerve a string vibrating to the slightest appeal of affliction, every voice-tone an echo of the music that flooded his being. He forgot his skill as a doctor; forgot his own part in the great tragedy; forgot himself and his surroundings: he was a poet-artist living in the suffering heart of humanity.

Once a friend, after listening for a time, and taking the opportunity of one of the doctor's silences, made some remark relative to the consolations of religion. Instantly the mist-enshrouded eyes of the doctor cleared. He returned with the sharp characteristic movement from the land of his thoughts to the world of his actions. A quick nervous tremor seemed to shake his body. Smartly he struck a match; and as he lit his pipe he looked steadily at our companion, with a critical observancy in his eyes. Then he laughed the long, low chuckle of a man thoroughly but quietly amused.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Sunday-school Teacher: "What is faith?"
Little Boy: "Faith is believing in the superintendent's stories."

Acid Drops

"Dagonet's" three columns in last week's *Referee*—mainly about the war—is just the usual piffle that he has fallen into in his early old age. His subjects now are all reduced to three—Mr. G. R. Sims, God, and Old England. Although his paragraphs are chiefly about the war, the name of France never occurs in them. The name of Belgium occurs because the Kaiser's troops got unexpectedly hung up there. "England Above All!" is Mr. Sims's opening sentence. The war, as he considers it, is really a war between England and Germany. All other nations are in the "bloody business" accidentally. Yet when these words were written, Belgium and France had been fighting desperately for many days against the Kaiser's army, whose loss was thousands in killed and myriads in wounded—while "Old England" had hardly struck a blow. We have got to save Europe "under God," and don't forget the "aid of our allies" from "the brutal domination of the bandit of Berlin." The bandit of Berlin, however, sees the matter differently. His "task" is to save Europe from the domination of the pirate of London. "Dagonet" cries out "England Above All!" The Potsdam patriot cries out "Germany Above All!" And both of them talk a lot about "God," who, we believe, would disclaim any acquaintance with either of them.

This reminds us of the description of "orthodoxy" given by the famous and plain-spoken Bishop Warburton. "Orthodoxy," he said, "is my doxy; heterodoxy is another man's doxy."

There are well-informed people who might remind "Dagonet" that the real thought in the minds of William, Nicholas, and Francis Joseph, is the future headship of the German and Slavonic races. Others might remind him that, after all, as a matter of fact, Germany did not declare war against England, but England declared war against Germany. As a matter of fact, we say; we are not discussing the rights and wrongs of the case.

Now and then Mr. Sims has a lucid interval. We might say, perhaps, that the old Mr. Sims turns up again and insists on being heard. There was an instance of this in the following paragraph, from last week's "Mustard and Cross":—

"Here is a pathetic incident of the war. I know an English lady who married an officer of high rank in the German army. Some years ago she divorced him, and later married an officer in the British Army. She has a daughter by her first husband, and the daughter remains in her custody. She has a daughter by her second husband, and now the fathers of the two children are both at the front. The two little girls say their prayers together every night. But while Evelyn says 'Please God, don't let Sybil's daddy kill my daddy,' Sybil says 'Please God, don't let Evelyn's daddy kill my daddy.' And the mother listens, and knows that the fathers of her children may at any moment face each other in the deadly fray."

This is modern pathos, English pathos, Christian pathos; we were tempted to say *Referee* pathos. The very essence of it is a mixed paternity and a lunatic asylum idea of "God." Here is another kind of pathos, old pathos, Greek pathos, Pagan pathos. In a battle going forward to defend Greek civilisation against the hordes of barbarism, messengers came to the General with the news that the son he loved and was proud of was slain. He looked at the messengers calmly, and said, "I knew that my son was mortal." What a grand answer! Men don't speak like that now. We must go back to antiquity to find it.

The British and Foreign Bible Society reports that it circulated "no fewer than 8,958,233 copies of the Scriptures." This year all Europe is at war. Comment is needless.

Nothing better illustrates the dense ignorance of large masses of the Emperor of Russia's Christian subjects than the following. There will be a total eclipse of the sun on August 21, visible in Western Russia, where large bodies of troops are moving, at mid-day. It is expected that Russian officers will inform the men of the nature of the phenomena, in order to prevent panic when they find themselves in darkness in the middle of the day.

The *Church Times* is naturally delighted at the Day of Intercession ordered by the heads of the English Church. It is a consolation, it thinks, at this crisis "to find how Christian at heart the country remains." It may be; but

one cannot consider as evidence the fact that a Day of Intercession is ordered. The heads of the Church could do no less. It is their business to keep religion to the front; but judging from the general run of people, religion seems to play a small part in their considerations. It is easy enough to pray for victory, and they are doing that as energetically in Germany and Austria, as in England. We may safely take it that superiority in fleet and army, and in tactics and courage will play a much larger part in deciding the issue than the prayers of the clergy. And ordinary men and women seem far more concerned about the rise in prices, the increase of unemployment, the dislocation of trade, and the general result of the conflict, than about God's opinion of the matter.

The *Times*, in its Sunday edition, has a far more pertinent observation. It says that "for a moment at least the religious reading of life seems to lack even the substance of a dream." And it adds:—

"Where in this return to chaos are we to discern the workings of any 'Power making for righteousness'? Through all the world men and women are invoking the aid of the God of battles. Priests and peoples of every nation are crying to their God that He is the Lord of Hosts, and that they alone are His Chosen People; and to-day in every temple throughout Christendom the prayer goes up that the Prince of Peace may incline the scales of war."

This is only what we have been saying all along. In the face of grim facts all the fairy tales embodied in religious phraseology become almost ghastly. There is no power, outside of human nature, that makes for righteousness; and there is still too much of the barbarian and the beast left in human nature to make the movement for righteousness certain, or to even place it beyond the possibility of disaster. Thousands repeat the religious formulæ in times of stress from mere force of habit, but their doing so is really one of the conditions that gives the barbarian its chance. Were they in the habit of reflecting more clearly and more deeply, the game of war would soon be impossible amongst civilised nations.

The divines cannot deny the active existence of evil, and their chief work has always consisted in trying to account for it without implicating the Deity. The task has been entirely beyond them, and to-day the majority of them admit that evil exists by Divine permission. Mr. R. J. Campbell has often hinted that there is a sense in which God is the cause of evil. Now, whether God causes or merely permits evil, the question remains, Why does it exist? Well, he it well observed, Professor David Smith, the all-wise theologian, answers that question in the *British Weekly* for August 13 thus:—

"God uses the powers of evil as the instruments of his judgments. He makes the wrath of man praise him, and girds upon him the residue of wrath (Ps. lxxvi. 10, R.V.).

'Tis so God governs, using wicked men,—
Nay, scheming fiends, to work his purposes."

Poor old God, how terribly he suffers at the hands of his servants!

Dr. Campbell Morgan charges us with treating life flippantly. He says that nothing could have been much more appalling than the fact that, when Europe was on the brink of war, "Goodwood was crowded." We beg to call attention to a much more appalling fact, namely, that when Europe, including our own country, is actually at war, "Claudius Clear" contributes an article to the *British Weekly* for August 13 on "Cats." Surely there is nothing more flippant in witnessing horse-racing than in writing about cats. What infinite twaddle these men of God do talk!

Mr. Harold Begbie has written a war poem, "The Man Who Keeps His Head." Most of the other banjo Byrons are singing of the man who breaks other fellows' heads.

"Feeding the Millions" is the heading of an agonised appeal on behalf of war sufferers. What has happened to the Oriental evangelist who fed 5,000 people with a few loaves and fishes?

The professional followers of the "Prince of Peace" are chanting psalms to the "God of Battles." If there were any truth in the efficacy of prayer, they would be more usefully employed in petitioning the Throne of Grace to soften the flinty hearts of the wholesale provision merchants.

Nearly half the priests of Paris have been called to the front. "For this relief, much thanks." We await, prayerfully, the exit of the remainder.

Anyone who has studied the circumstantial yarns of the war retailed in the press, will have small difficulty in understanding how the Gospel tales were disseminated among a vastly more ignorant population. Truthfulness has never been a Christian virtue.

The *Times* has been jubilant over the alleged discomforture of the Peace Party throughout Europe, forgetting that the war itself will be a formidable argument against the continuance of standing armies of enormous size.

"Church and the War" is a *Daily Telegraph* headline. This does not refer to the church of the Levy-Lawsons, but to the Government religion.

In religious art bathos has long taken the place of pathos. A recent example, seen in the picture dealers' windows, portrays a neurotic boy-scout with a shadowy figure of Christ behind him, holding a scout's pole. This masterpiece is entitled "The Pathfinder." A cynic might suggest that the path led to Earlswood.

"Bluff King Hal" will appear shortly at one of the London theatres. If he appears with his seven wives he should prove an instructive piece of Christian evidence.

It is well known that men of God never say anything that may be called original, never deliver a single new message. They are simply repeaters of things they have learned by heart from an old book. They often describe themselves as God's messengers, or the Lord's prophets, but never by any chance do they utter a fresh word. Of the history of the world at large they are afraid, and they scarcely ever appeal to it. They are cowards. Even Dr. Campbell Morgan said the other day, "Perhaps it will be safer and better for me if I draw my illustrations 'rather from Hebrew history than from any other.'" We agree. They are all Bible-men, and repeat like parrots what they find recorded there.

For example, the Rev. E. G. Thomas delivered a sermon on "The Mind of Christ" the other day, in which he reiterated again and again what Paul says in *First Corinthians*. Mr. Thomas has not the least idea what the mind of Christ is, but he appropriates the phrase from the great apostle. Of course, the absurdest things said by Paul are accepted as Gospel truths. Mr. Thomas claims that Christians are above criticism, but have a Divine right to sit in judgment upon all others. Mr. Thomas knows quite well how very silly such a claim is, but shielding himself behind Paul, he makes it without a blush. We repeat that the men of God are all cowards, because they say things in his name which they would never dare to say in their own.

Two hundred thousand copies of the following prayer has been printed, and circulated by Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain-General, for the use of soldiers:—

"Almighty and most merciful Father,
Forgive me my sins;
Grant me thy peace;
Give me thy power;
Bless me in life and death,
For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

There seems plenty of "me" about it; but egotism is always a strong feature of piety.

Rev. J. L. Rees, writing from Llanddowror Rectory, South Wales, says that "the historian of the future will not fail to note that for three years before the Armageddon the Non-conformist bodies of England and Wales had bound themselves together to rob the Church in Wales of all its ancient endowments.....and that just as hostilities were breaking out the robbery was about to be perpetrated." We expected something of the kind. Evidently Mr. Rees thinks the Deity brought about the war in order to rebuke the Non-conformists. What a pity it is that he won't leave things alone!

Ladies are very masculine nowadays. A man entered a railway carriage, mopped his brow, and remarked, "Phew, it's d—d hot." Turning, he observed a lady, and apologised. The lady, herself in a state of perspiration, rejoined, "Don't apologise; it's far worse, it's hellish."

Mr. Edward Hutton in *England of my Heart* says, "Canterbury is dead. Where once swayed the spiritual life of England one sees nowadays the familiar quiet life

of a cathedral city." Apparently as dead as Canterbury mutton.

"Family life means law, order, discipline, and a sense of a Higher Power—a belief in a God," says the theological "Vanoc" in the sporting columns of the *Referee*. This is enough to wrinkle the face of a funeral-horse with smiles. Presumably, the man who keeps two homes is more religious than a man who has only one; and Solomon would beat both hollow.

Describing an accident to a lady, a provincial paper stated that the doctor "put six inches in a wound in her nose." She must have been of the same nationality as Our Blessed Savior.

"With a sentence of five years in the federal penitentiary at McNeil's Island hanging over him, and a bond of \$6,000 posted to obtain his release pending the appeal of his case, the Rev. Albert Dahlstrom, recently convicted in the federal court at Seattle of violating the Mann White Slave Act, has disappeared. This is the admission by Federal authorities and by Charles F. Riddell, who acted as Dahlstrom's attorney. So says the *Spokane Chronicle*. Marriageable females are warned to be on their guard against this preacher of the Gospel. Through the holy bonds of matrimony he has connected up with some three dozen of them during his career as a minister."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"Music is a great civilising force," says a writer in the *Referee*. In another column in the same issue a song is printed which was the feature in the 1911 Drury Lane pantomime, entitled "The Bulldog's Bark." The chorus runs, "We mean to be the top-dog still—Bow-wow!" The composer and the critic ought to bow-wow to one another.

"The hand that pulled the trigger of the assassin's pistol in Serajero has opened the gates of hell," says "Vanoc" in the *Referee*. Surely there is some mistake. Hundreds of thousands of good, kind Christian clergymen constantly assure us that those gates have never been shut.

We have it at last in all the plenitude of its unmistakable irrationality. Writing in the *Christian World* for August 13, Mr. Albert E. Hooper says that "there is no faith possible to the soul that has proofs." This journal has always advocated the same truth. As Mr. Hooper declares, so have we declared innumerable times, "faith is belief without proof." On this point he and we are in complete agreement; but at this point also our concurrence comes to an abrupt end. Whilst Mr. Hooper regards faith's *prooflessness* as its supreme merit and glory, we are forced to the conclusion that it constitutes its entire condemnation. Faith *imagines* a whole realm of the objective existence, of which there is not a scrap of evidence, and then teaches that this purely imaginary world should dominate our conduct here from day to day. Is this reasonable? Is it common sense? We hold that it is the quintessence of unreason, the very acme of common nonsense.

With that adventuresome supernaturalism Mr. Hooper undertakes to solve all the difficult problems that confront us to-day; but he conveniently forgets that most of these problems are as old as supernaturalism itself, and still remain unsolved, and that whatever solutions have been effected in the past were invariably the outcome of the application to the problems of reason, science, knowledge. Faith has never settled a single question, or wrought anything but harm for mankind.

A daily paper, referring to the Salvation Army Congress, said "the largest halls were filled with interested audiences who listened to speakers from *five* quarters of the globe." Some journalists seem to be as weak in arithmetic as evangelists, who chortle about the Trinity in unity.

American "scientists" claim to have discovered the Tower of Babel. The subject is a "stony" one; but, doubtless, the bricks spoke for themselves.

"Wanted; a Business Religion!" is the heading in our widely read contemporary, *John Bull*. There seems to be far too much business mixed with religion already. As the humorist says, the difference between a theatre and a place of worship is that you pay to enter the one, and you pay to get out of the other.

The Bishop of London does not wish to go down to posterity merely on the strength of his "infidel slaying" exploits in Victoria Park, but aspires to be a muscular Christian. As chaplain to the London Rifle Brigade, he intends to go with the Brigade abroad "for at least six weeks." The Archbishop of Canterbury has piously sanctioned the action of the "six weeks' soldier."

"It should shock no one," says the *Church Times*, "to learn that the Bishop of London has volunteered for six weeks' service with the London Rifle Brigade wherever it may be ordered to go." *Six weeks!* And *anywhere!* The qualification is striking. It can only mean a six weeks' jaunt at home; for it is absurd to imagine that he would be allowed to go abroad with an army and return at the end of six weeks. We can imagine the grim smile on Lord Kitchener's face if he is ever informed of the offer. Altogether, the Bishop seems to be sustaining his reputation for silliness even under the present conditions.

What a man the Bishop of London is! At St. Paul's, the other day, he said that during the war there must be "real sacrifice." "No one, however rich they may be, in any household should have more than, say, two courses at each meal." That is all the Bishop's intelligence is capable of producing. After profound thinking, he discovers that "real sacrifice" will mean to have no more than two courses for dinner—many will be only too glad to get one. We wonder how on earth the Bishop thinks this is going to help? People are not told to eat less, but only to have fewer dishes—which can have no effect whatever on the general food supply. A much more sensible course would be to advise everybody to go on living their ordinary life just as far as possible. By that means panic would be avoided, and all would benefit.

"The cross," said Canon Newbolt, in a sermon the other day, "has no doubtful origin. It goes right back to an event when one Jesus of Nazareth was arraigned before a Roman magistrate on a charge of treason." It is hard to credit that Canon Newbolt believes this to be the origin of the cross as a religious symbol. It is a commonplace to-day to anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with the subject, that Egypt used the cross, in connection with religion, centuries before Christianity was heard of. It was found in South America when the Spaniards first landed there. It is an ancient symbol in India, and its pre-Christian use is admitted even in the New Testament. The expression "Take up thy cross and follow me," used before the alleged death of Jesus, could have no meaning whatever, unless it were already well recognised as a religious symbol.

Canon Newbolt deplors the fact that in some of the law courts of Europe the cross has been replaced by a figure of justice. We think the departure both desirable and healthful. There was one court that always displayed a huge cross above its deliberations. That court was the Inquisition. A sectarian symbol has no proper place in a court of justice. Surrounding legal proceedings with religious formulæ has never secured justice, and has frequently been a means of securing its frustration.

The Church of England officials have issued a form of intercession with "Almighty God on behalf of His Majesty's forces, now engaged in war." It contains no reference to the "King of kings" command, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," nor does it allude to the suggestion of loving one's enemies.

The *Guardian* points out that one consequence of the war will be an increase in the incomes of some of the clergy. Owing to the high price of wheat, there will be an appreciable increase in the tithes paid, and the *Guardian* hopes that this will be enough to cover the increased cost of living. We suggest that they should refund the difference. The clergy talk a lot about sacrifice; this seems the time for them to illustrate it.

Daughter: "What is the meeting for to-night, pa?"
Sky Pilot: "To save the young men of the country, my dear."
Daughter: "I wish you'd save a nice one for me, pa."

Parson (to crippled mendicant): "I would have liked to give you a shilling, my poor man, but I find I have nothing less than a florin." His Poor Man: "S'pose we toss up to see who keeps that."

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £182 13s. 0d. Received since:—Robert Stirton and Two (Dundee) Friends (quarterly), £1 5s. 6d.; E. Parker, 5s.
- R. STIRTON.—Thanks for your steadfast friendship in the matter of the President's Honorarium Fund.
- W. ALLEN.—We cannot possibly find room for long Obituaries reaching us on Tuesday, which we have so often said is too late for the *Freethinker* then preparing for the press. A summary shall appear in our next.
- J. H. LANGFORD.—We don't expect you'll get a reply from Bishop Welldon.
- S. BURNS (S. Africa).—We don't remember seeing it. Glad you liked our open letter to the clergy. We shall "keep on rubbing it in."
- L. H. W. MANN.—It is no use talking of publishing anything while the war-fever rages.
- A. MILLER.—Copy should be written separately from letters.
- ROCHDALE.—We cannot deal with the letters you send us without the consent of the writers.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
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- WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- 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.

Notes.

Christianity, thy name is—well, the worst word in the dictionary isn't bad enough. How many good Christian employers have joined the race for publicity in connection with the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund, and at the same time dismissed a lot of their own employees, besides putting others on short commons of work and wages. I really think that while Christianity is the most hypocritical religion in the world, Great Britain is the most hypocritical of Christian nations. * * *

Why was such an early rush made for money for the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund? From what I have seen and heard of other public funds, I have very little belief in much of this Fund ever finding its way to deserving cases. That the Prince himself has anything special to do with it is not credible *a priori*. Busybodies swarm in times of great excitement, and this is only a case in point. Rather a big one, but not so very big, after all, as will soon be recognised when the excitement has died down a bit. * * *

Whoever is right, and whoever is wrong, in this European war, they are all Christian nations that are engaged in it, and it will remain so to the end, if the Turk only has sense enough to keep out of it. This is a Christian war if ever there was one. After nearly two thousand years of Christianity the Christian nations of that part of the world where Christianity was first established, and whence it was exported to America, are almost universally engaged in wiping each other out of existence. * * *

The German Emperor is being covered with fierce denunciation. Some of it is very likely deserved.

Some of it is certainly vulgar insolence. The military system of modern Europe is not of his creation. He has played a conspicuous part in it by virtue of his high position and histrionic temperament. But he is only a small figure, after all, when it comes to an estimate of real values. This is a case in which the monarchs and "statesmen" of Europe should receive a general condemnation. "All have sinned." Paradoxical as it sounds, the time to serve peace is *during* peace. As well shout against the northern blast as cry out against a war when it has once begun. Or, to use a metaphor more congenial to the English genius, who can cry off a dog-fight? Arouse the fighting instinct, and everything else gives way to it. Yes, peace can only be served *during* peace. And during the long general peace of Europe what have the Christian nations been doing? Talking about peace, and spending their money on vast preparations for war. That policy was bound to end in Armageddon. The wielders of huge, highly trained armies will always yearn to use them seriously. And there is a significant text in the Christian Scripture, which we would bring to Christian remembrance: "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." * * *

One gets sick of hearing so much about the Kaiser being the cause of this terrible war. All who joined in the race of armaments are responsible for it. All who believe in alliances as a guarantee of peace are responsible for it. All who believe in anything but common sense and a peaceful disposition as a guarantee of peace are responsible for it. All who believe in "God" as a sort of international umpire, who sees invisibly and speaks inaudably, are responsible for it. All in whom there is any motive higher than Humanity are responsible for it. * * *

To speak of "God" as a sort of international umpire may sound "blasphemous" to orthodox ears. But it is the Christian idea expressed with the utmost truth and brevity. The Bishop of London, in the letter to the clergy of his diocese with regard to the day of intercession (August 21), after relating Great Britain's efforts for peace, bears us out in the following manner. "We can then pray with a good conscience for victory, and appeal to God, who knows everything, to decide between us and our enemies." It does not occur to this episcopal simpleton that God, if he knows everything, could play the umpire without a contest. This would save a tremendous lot of bloodshed, economic loss, destitution, and other forms of misery. But to act sensibly is never expected of Gods. Which is doubtless the fault of their worshipers. * * *

Friday, August 21, is selected as the day of intercession. It is the date of a solar eclipse. Probably this is intentional. The mental darkness of the worshipers will match the physical darkness outside them. * * *

The docility of the English people is wonderful. It has been known to all the world, including our enemies, but excluding ourselves, that General French has been in Belgium all the time with thousands of English troops. The only people through whom it *could* do no possible harm have been kept without the information. This is the brilliant notion of the censorship entertained by a flashy but stupid person like F. E. Smith, and backed up by a person who is neither flashy *nor* stupid like Lord Kitchener. It shows what imbecilities occur quite naturally under the military system. The English press, which is the most lickspittle in the world, connived at this well-sustained imposture. It really looks incredible, but it is true. Militarism spells every vice and every folly. It is the enemy of all that thinkers and humanists value. * * *

With regard to the *Freethinker*, there are no "Sugar Plums" in it this week. War upsets

many things, and this amongst them. I still make no announcement as to how I shall have to economise in the production of the paper. War, of course, hits all journalism but war journalism. The South Africa war ruined many advanced journals. The *Freethinker* survived by a great effort on the part of the Editor and his staff. This bigger war will probably be shorter. On the other hand, it is likely to be more exciting, and to divert attention more profoundly from intellectual objects. Next week, then, I shall have something to say about the paper and the financial position. Meanwhile, I venture to remind my friends that the President's Honorarium Fund exists, and needs their support more than ever it did.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and War.

The most religious nations have been the most immoral, the cruellest, and the most unjust. Italy was far worse under the Popes than under the Cæsars. Was there ever a barbarian nation more savage than the Spain of the sixteenth century? Certainly you must know that what you call religion has produced a thousand civil wars, and has severed with the sword all the natural ties that produce "the unity and married calm of States." Theology is the fruitful mother of discord; order is the child of reason. If you will candidly consider this question, if you will for a few moments forget your preconceived opinions, you will instantly see that the instinct of self-preservation holds society together. People, being ignorant, believed that the gods were jealous and revengeful.

—R. G. INGERSOLL.

The Material Basis of Life.

MANY popular misconceptions concerning the nature of "life" would soon disappear were men to study and understand the physical conditions essential to the existence of living matter. Unfortunately, the average metaphysically minded man is rather proud than otherwise of his ignorance, and derives a certain amount of indolent satisfaction from the reflection that "life" is surrounded by a dense fog of impenetrable mystery. To those that offer a natural explanation of the marvels of organic phenomena, he replies that science is dumb when confronted with the involved problems of life and mind. And he never for one moment imagines that before any real comprehension of physiological and psychical phenomena can be arrived at, some slight knowledge of the physics and chemistry of the relatively simple structures from which the higher fauna and flora have been evolved is an indispensable prerequisite.

We cannot run before we can walk. This platitude is realised, and what is more to the point, is put into practice in all rational systems of education. The pupil is led forward from simple truth to less obvious verity, so that by slow gradations he at last attains an understanding of those eternal verities which constitute the kingdoms of science.

The vulgar fallacy that an impassable chasm divides organic from inorganic nature is smiled at by the contemporary biologist. Nevertheless, it is quite commonly assumed by members of the general public, that certain characteristic chemical compounds are special to living matter, inasmuch that they are never discovered in a non-living state. Yet, as Professor Abbott states in a recently published work:—

"Thousands of exact chemical analyses have been made of every sort of living thing, and no element or compound has ever been found which is essentially

different from what may exist in the non-living world. Long ago a distinction used to be made between 'organic' and 'inorganic' substances—the former being the products of living 'organisms.' But such a distinction has broken down. It is possible to synthesise substances in the test-tube identical in composition with those formed in Nature's laboratory—the tissue of plant and animal. Indeed, the ability to artificially reproduce natural products in this way has proved of great value commercially, and artificially synthesised indigo, camphor, etc., now supplement in large measure Nature's meagre store of such things."*

There is, therefore, no chemical distinction between living and lifeless matter. Neither is there any physical characteristic special to organic structures. Organic matter is subject to the same physical processes which operate in lifeless Nature. Plants and animals grow and multiply; crystals and clouds increase in size, and even in that form of growth which is known as reproduction, parallels may be met with in organic substances.

The precise time at which life ceases varies within wide limits. Long after the spirit has departed from the body it is alleged to animate with its life-sustaining powers; it has been experimentally shown that all parts of the defunct organism do not equally share in the benumbing agencies of death. The writer has frequently noticed the twitchings of the muscles in an animal that has been "dead" for several hours. A decapitated testacean, such as a turtle, may be considered for all practical purposes dead. Yet, if the heart of a headless turtle be removed from the body of the animal and hung "on hooks in a moist chamber wet with a weak solution of common salt, such a heart will go on beating rhythmically for days." Obviously, so long as the organ functions thus it cannot be said to be dead. It is, therefore, necessary to discriminate between that mode of death which leads to the speedy dissolution of the entire organism and that local form of death which governs the lives of the tissues of living bodies. As a rule, the decease of an animal is immediately followed by the disintegration and decay of its tissue elements. But experiment demonstrates that by excluding bacterial infection from the tissues of the dead animal, such tissues may be maintained in a living state for a quite considerable period. At all events, such tissues retain the power to resume the functions of life when transferred to a living animal. As Professor Abbott puts it: "In this way sections of blood-vessels and other organs have been cut out and later replaced in the same or other animals without injury. By keeping such a tissue at a trifle above freezing point the period of vitality may be extended to weeks or months." Quite recent studies prove that it is not only possible to retain the life of excised tissues, but that they will actually "sprout and grow like so many plant cuttings." To secure these results all that is required is that the tissues be set in a nutritive medium and that they are protected from the insidious activities of bacteria.

Other instances of restoration to life after apparent death are abundant. After many years of quiescence, various seeds are capable of generation. An extraordinary instance of suspended life is afforded by the "resurrection plant" (*Selaginella*), which flourishes on the sides of the rocky cliffs of Mexico. This plant "may be pulled up and dried for years, only to uncurl and freshen up again in a few hours when placed in a saucer of water." Various lowly animals that dwell in pools will dry up as their watery medium evaporates, and float about in the air like dust. After long intervals of time a tardigrade in its shrivelled state will fall from the air into its native water, rise from the dead, and resume its active aquatic life.

In the chemistry and physics of the material basis of life—protoplasm, or bioplasm as it is now frequently termed—lie hidden the secrets of the wonderful phenomena of vitality and death. Although this life-stuff is the outcome of a combination of

* Professor J. F. Abbott, *General Biology*, p. 3; 1914.

specific lifeless elements, its variations are countless. All protoplasm contains carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen, and these elements make up by far its larger mass. Sulphur and phosphorus, again, are invariably present, but these constituents form but a fraction of the whole. Chlorine, sodium, magnesium, calcium, potassium, and iron are usually to be numbered among its chemical ingredients. Some other elements are of normal if rare occurrence in the bioplasm of certain animals and vegetables. Protoplasm varies so considerably that it cannot be viewed as a definite chemical compound like salt or starch. Its modifications are so innumerable that the terms protoplasm or bioplasm must be regarded as including a multitudinous medley of chemical combinations which are as numerous as the myriad-numbered manifestations of organic phenomena in Nature's living domain.

Protoplasm, then, is chiefly composed of a complex combination of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, of which the carbon element usually forms the foundation. But it is to be observed that water is essential to living matter. This liquid which always makes up a heavy percentage of its bulk, is one of the simplest compounds in existence. "Muscles are three-fourths water, even bones nearly one-fourth, and in jelly-fishes of the open sea, that which is not water is but one per cent. or less of the total bulk." So far, then, as this ever-present constituent of protoplasm is concerned, there is little complexity. Moreover, living structures are to be regarded rather as liquids than as solids. The high percentage of water in protoplasm is not without meaning. It furnishes the conditions demanded for the transfusion of solid matter through the body organs of plants and animals, and it in addition provides them with those plastic powers which play so important a part in adaptation to surrounding conditions.

The various combinations of the four elements O, H, N, and C, are very conveniently arranged in three groups, the proteins or albumens, the carbohydrates (starch and sugar), and the fats.

The proteins are present in all protoplasm, and are absolutely essential to the processes of life. They form a great and many-sided group. They depart widely from each other, but all share definite common qualities. O, H, N, and C, are always found in proteids, and the number of atoms forming these compounds sometimes runs into thousands. It is estimated that half their weight is carbon, with 15 to 18 per cent. of nitrogen.

The immense protein molecule, so to speak, is hardly a composite unit; the atoms that form it are so loosely held together that its equilibrium is easily upset. "The atomic groups may freely break away from the protein molecule or be added to it, and in this instability lies the great significance of the proteins in all living matter." Well-known examples of nearly pure protein are such food materials as lean meat and the white of eggs.

The carbohydrates, in company with the fats, contain carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen only; nitrogen is absent, and the oxygen and hydrogen are always combined in the same proportions as in water (H_2O). The carbohydrates are usually more abundant in vegetable than in animal life, although glycogen, which is a carbohydrate, forms a large constituent of the muscles and the liver in higher animals, and is an important factor in their metabolism.

The fats are formed of the same elements as the carbohydrates, but their elements, C, H, and O, are differently proportioned and arranged. They are the invariable result of the combination of an acid with glycerine. "The acids, with few exceptions, belong to the 'fatty acid' series. Three molecules of fatty acid, not necessarily of the same kind, combine with one of glycerine to form a fat."

From its chemistry we will now turn to the physical structure of the protoplasm. Its protein materials do not completely dissolve in water like salt or sugar. Proteins, however, absorb much liquid, and swell enormously in consequence. When

placed in large quantities of water they become highly attenuated, and may be permanently suspended in their liquid medium, but unlike true solutions "they will not diffuse through vegetable parchment or animal membranes. Such substances are usually known as 'colloids' in contrast to 'crystalloids,' or substances which do diffuse through such membranes." Another colloid property is its power to coagulate. This characteristic is easily demonstrated by comparing the semi-liquid white of an egg in its raw state with its semi-solid condition when cooked. The colloidal character of proteins meets its physical explanation in the magnitude of the protein molecules. As already stated, these molecules are aggregated in a highly unstable form, and when proteins are utilised as food, they are broken up in the course of digestion until they are reduced to a size sufficiently small to enable them to be absorbed through the lining membranes of the intestinal (alimentary) canal.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

The Radical Woman.—II.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian,
to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

(Continued from p. 525.)

It is a very difficult matter to decide which ideas or practices are proper in a woman, or in a man, to speak more generally, and which are not. It must have occurred to most of you that nothing in itself, or *per se*, as the Latins expressed it, is either proper or improper. The character of an act as well as of a word is determined by circumstances. Taking another's property is not theft if it is done to prevent its being used against the public good, or to prevent its being squandered, or to satisfy a judgment. Taking another's life is an innocent and highly proper act if it is done in self-defence, or to prevent a crime, or to defend the country. It is interesting to observe how dependent upon time, place, and circumstances is what we call morality. I am unable to think of anything which, while it may be proper or right in one place and at one time, may not be quite improper and wrong at another time and in another place. Circumstances break all rules.

Morality is no more *fixed* than is life. What we fear as radical to-day, may become dangerously conventional to-morrow. The institutions which the whole world supports to-day were at one time denounced with equal unanimity. It is highly probable that we shall cast off in the near future certain portions of the mental costume which is considered quite the fashion to-day. In the age of Washington or even Lincoln, if a woman asked to sit on a jury, or to be appointed a police detective, she would have been considered out of her mind. But to-day no one is very seriously alarmed to find woman in all the walks of life. What would have shocked the world as very radical a hundred or even fifty years ago, is in our day welcomed as signs of a world-wide awakening. Indeed, we are shocked when we meet, in the twentieth century, a woman of the times of ignorance and slavery.

However hard we may think, it will be impossible to discover anything which is not subject to this law of change. The other day certain reformers calling themselves Socialists or Anarchists went to a church in New York City, known as the "Rockefeller Church," and deliberately interrupted the proceedings by an attempt to usurp the privileges of the hour, which belonged to the officiating clergyman. That, certainly, was radical conduct. The Anarchist would call it "direct action." Now, can we imagine a state of society which would make such behavior at a public meeting, not only proper, but a duty as well? Speaking only for myself, I condemn the interruption of the church services on last Sunday (May 10, 1914) in New York. There was abso-

lutely no excuse for it. To go into a hall or a church ostensibly to be one of the listeners, and then force oneself or one's message upon an unwilling audience, is an inexcusable impertinence, under present circumstances. What would you say, if your lecturer were to go to the Cathedral of the Holy Name, on the north side, on a Sunday, during the celebration of the Mass, and, just as the priest appeared at the altar, clap his hand against his mouth and begin to speak in his place and to his audience, whether or not anybody wanted to hear him? Nothing could be more extreme and eccentric than such deportment, however honest one's motives may be.

In England the militants claimed the right of free speech in the Westminster Cathedral while Father Vaughan was reciting the Ritual of the Mass. A few Sundays before the incident in the "Rockefeller Church," a woman attempted to address the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Congregation uninvited. People who do that must have either an insatiable passion for notoriety, or an inability to wait for their turn. There are minds that leak. The thought prematurely delivered, that is to say, delivered out of time or place, is an abortion. It is also true that brooding over one's wrongs, real or fancied, unhinges the mind. The social question has cost many a thinker his sanity.

In defence of the conduct of the Rev. Mr. White, pastor of the church of the Social Revolution, and the interrupter of the services in the "Rockefeller Church," Mr. Amos Pinchot, in a letter to the Associated Press, quotes the example of Jesus who whipped the money-changers out of the temple-court. Mr. Pinchot thinks Jesus, too, would have been arrested had he gone to the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church to speak. But Mr. Pinchot is careful neither of his premises nor of his conclusions. Did Jesus do right when he used physical force against the money-changers? Without stopping to explain that these people were not in the temple, but in the court of the temple, and that they were doing nothing illegal or immoral, since their services were needed by the worshipers, it will be enough to remark that Jesus' interference cost him his life, while the Rev. Mr. White was only given six months at the Bridewell. We believe in free speech, but a priest must secure our permission before he may speak from this platform, and I must secure the Pope's consent before I may speak in St. Peter's.

And yet this criticism against the conduct of the interrupters would be lamentably unjust if, for example, we lived in a country where free speech was monopolised by the clergy, and no one was permitted to express his views anywhere or at any time without permission of the ecclesiastical authorities. Under those circumstances it would be a solemn duty and a proud privilege to break up every church meeting and to interfere with every celebration of the Eucharist. A regime which resorts to force to suppress liberty of speech, forfeits its claim to respect. It is because our liberators harassed the persecutors that men and minds are free to-day. But we are living in a country to-day where everyone is at liberty to advertise for an audience and to express his views and beliefs without any restrictions except those which the law of equal rights imposes upon all. Therefore, the circumstances being what they are, for anyone to interfere with his neighbor's meeting when he can have one of his own, is treasonable, in the sense that it is an assault upon the glorious right of freedom of speech conquered for us by the pioneers and martyrs of progress.

It will be seen, then, that it is circumstances which give quality to every act or word. During the days of tyranny, to have raised one's voice in church or synagogue against oppression and injustice, uninvited and at great personal risk, was heroic. It was the only way the truth could be spoken in public. But to disturb a Protestant or a Catholic Church meeting to-day, at the risk of bloodshed, when a hundred ways of speaking the truth in public and

peaceably have been provided, would prove, I am sorry to say, one's unworthiness of freedom.

There is, then, no getting away from the truth that circumstances are everything. A gold-mine to a starving man in a desert is worthless; a loaf of bread to a traveller dying of thirst is equally useless. Morality is the right thing in the right place—in the right place—and at the right time. Let me add one more condition—and in just measure. The immoral person is the person without sense of proportion, or of the proprieties. To be insensible to the logic of circumstances—of time, place, and balance—is to be eccentric, erratic, and a radical in the most objectionable sense of that important word.

Woman's radicalism or rebellion is largely, though not exclusively, confined to the sex question. I have already expressed myself on previous occasions on the extremists in the "Votes-for-Women" cause. If these "wild women" could have their way, they would create a tremendous prejudice against female franchise. It is the balanced women who command respect for their sex. Women have naturally great fitness for administrative positions. John Stuart Mill, who was a very careful thinker, believed that woman was the born ruler. Even in Asia, where woman has been a slave, it is often the mother or the mistress which is "the power behind the throne." There are competent critics who believe that Isabella, the Catholic, Elizabeth, the Protestant, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Catharine of Russia, were the peers of the most expert rulers. John Ruskin held that in Shakespeare's world it is the woman who invariably saves the situation. Man proposes, woman disposes. In business and financial matters, too, the women have rare qualities for efficiency and economy. One source of the extraordinary wealth of France is said to be the frugality of French women. It is equally true that the German housewife has frequently been the preserver of the family against want and destitution. Many of the cashiers in modern business houses are women. Aside from the fact that they work for less pay, I am of the opinion that even if they asked more, they would be preferred because of their greater economy, trustworthiness, and scrupulous attention to details. Woman has acquired these traits by experience. The primitive husband selected for his wife the kind of woman that could manage his household, take care of his interests, and conserve his estate. It was the woman who could make a little go a great way who pleased her husband. To make a little go a great way has been the profession, we may say, of woman. That is the one thing expected of her by everybody. Naturally enough, that type of woman survived. When we think of the many comfortable and even artistically attractive homes, and of the taste with which most women dress themselves and their children, and when we realise that all this is done, in the majority of cases, on a comparatively modest allowance, we will have no difficulty in believing that experience has endowed woman with the faculty of making a little go a great way.

It is interesting to see how evolution—that is to say, the law of natural selection—explains the mental qualities of both man and woman, as well as their physical development. A course on the philosophy of evolution would be intensely instructive. Darwin helps us to understand the institutions which have grown about us better than any other teacher. Woman's religiosity may also be explained as the result of her experience. Admiring as she did the powerful man, and preferring him for husband because he could protect her, her children, and her home against invasion, she came to have a tremendous reverence for authority. She became worshipful of the arm that saved her, and when her husband died, she built an altar to him and called him "Savior." There is no doubt that this is one of the origins of the idea of a Supreme Protector in heaven, to whom the widowed mother urged her children to look for help. The ghost of the departed husband or tribal chief became the Great

Spirit of the savage, and later the Jupiter or Jehovah of more modern times.

(To be continued.)

Joseph Priestley.

By G. W. FOOTE.

(Reprinted.)

FREETHOUGHT is not a set of definite intellectual conclusions but rather a mental attitude; or, to vary the metaphor, not the goal of the human mind in its pursuit of truth, so much as the path which it must tread to get thither. The positive beliefs of Freethinkers have in all ages necessarily varied, but their method, whether fully pursued or not, has been one and the same. They have all asserted and claimed the right to think freely, to attempt the discovery of truth in their own way, unimpeded by any restrictions, and to announce the result of their investigations without respect to the wishes of temporal or spiritual rulers. And truly this perpetual vindication of Freethought, these incessant efforts to clear the road of speculation, so that earnest men may travel therein uninterruptedly, have been productive of greater good than has resulted from any declaration of positive faith, or from any mere assertion of even unpopular truth. For freedom of thought is the indispensable preliminary to intellectual progress, and given it, the attainment of truth is but a question of time. How erroneous were the opinions of many of that noble band of warriors who did battle with the tyranny of the Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and yet how can we be sufficiently grateful to them for their gallant assault on spiritual despotism, and their unwearied ardor in the struggle for that freedom of thought and speech, without which all progress is absolutely impossible? These heroes do not recommend themselves to intoxicated system-mongers, but the great, generous heart of humanity acclaims them as worthy of all praise, justly reckoning nobility of character and invincible courage as infinitely higher than mere intellectual strength.

The hero of this sketch prided himself mainly on his persistent dissemination of that species of theological belief known as Unitarianism; and assuredly everyone must admire his devotion to his ideal, and his sacrifice of everything which interfered with its service. But besides practising a noble self-abnegation, Priestley strenuously and repeatedly maintained his right, and the right of every man, to pursue truth without dictation or interference from others. In following his chosen course of life, he lighted upon truths of the gravest import and consequence. His scientific discoveries have been celebrated in the highest language of eulogy by persons qualified to pronounce on their merits. His philosophical speculations went to the root of some of the most important questions which occupy human attention, and were presented with a force and perspicuity, deserving of all admiration and praise. In political matters, also, he was greatly, although not pre-eminently, interested, and the same freedom and independence characterised his treatment of them, as are everywhere apparent in his treatises on other subjects. He was a simple, earnest, love-able man, who honorably forwent the tempting material prizes which assuredly were within easy reach of his perseverance and facile talents, in order the more effectually to apply himself to the investigation of nature and the search after truth.

Joseph Priestley was born at Fieldhead, about six miles south-west of Leeds, on March 13, 1733. His father, also named Joseph, a worthy man but not greatly embarrassed with wealth, was twice married and blessed with a full quiver of filial arrows; having six children by his first wife and three by the second. His first wife was the only daughter of a farmer named Joseph Swift. After bearing him six pledges of love (of whom Joseph was the eldest) in almost as few years, she died, her death being accelerated by the rigorous winter of 1739. Of this mother very little is recorded, but that little is highly creditable. She was, above all, punctiliously honest, and Priestley

relates that she once made him carry back to his uncle's house a pin which he had stolen thence, and with which he was innocently playing.

After the death of his mother, young Joseph was taken in charge by an aunt on the father's side, who acted indeed as a mother to him until her decease in 1764. This worthy woman and her husband were theoretical Calvinists, but their abundant milk of human kindness led to grave inconsistencies, and made them vastly better than their creed. However, they were strict observers of religious discipline. They eschewed light literature, and rigidly kept the Sabbath as a day of fleshly mortification. On that day no cooking was permitted, nor even any recreation, however light. The boy managed to read, with fear and trembling, dear old *Robinson Crusoe*, but beyond that he never ventured. He even adds that on one occasion he became so exasperated with his brother's levity of mind that he knocked out of the lad's hands a horrible book on Knight Errantry which smacked overmuch of a pagan love of earth and disregard of heaven. Greatly exercised, too, was Priestley's youthful mind about the abstruser mysteries of theology; *new birth*, and other such fictitious torments. Yet this mental perturbation interfered but little with his progress in carnal knowledge. He successively attended various schools, and especially a large free school under the care of the Rev. Mr. Hague, where he learned Latin and Greek. Hebrew also he acquired during the vacations under the generous tuition of a dissenting minister named Kirby. His aunt intended him for the ministry, and his education was mainly directed to that end, but ill-health and an impediment of speech compelled him to turn his attention to trade. Accordingly, he set himself to acquire French, Italian, and High Dutch, all of which he mastered in a marvellously short time. His indefatigable energy impelled him to further conquests. He learned geometry, algebra, and various branches of mathematics of another dissenting minister, a Rev. Mr. Haggerstone, together with Chaldee and Syriac and a smattering of Arabic. He also read Watts' *Logic* (a fair performance in its time) and Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*. The result of this metaphysical study with Locke as a guide may be anticipated. The boy's mind took a sceptical turn, and refused continued assent to the repulsive dogmas of Calvinism. This backsliding was quickly detected by the keen inquisitors of the Church which he attended; so that when, in 1752, he desired to be admitted as a communicant, he was refused because of his disbelief in Adam's fall, and the consequent damnation of all his posterity. Fortunately for him, the secular laws permitted no extreme expression of religious disapproval.

At the Daventry Academy, Priestley remained three years with much intellectual profit. The academy was conducted on peculiar principles; not much systematic instruction was given, but the teachers discussed important questions with their pupils, each of whom was required to know the arguments for and against every position; a method of instruction, as Professor Huxley maliciously remarks, "rather calculated to make acute than what are called sound divines, a sound divine being one who never looks at any side of a question but his own." This atmosphere of mental freedom was necessarily bracing to the youthful mind of Priestley. He naïvely confesses in his autobiography that he generally found himself on the unorthodox side. One by one what he considered the irrational excrescences of Christianity were expelled from his mind; and at last, after the reading of Hartley's great work, *Observations on Man*, he gravitated finally towards the Unitarian faith, in which he ever after remained.

(To be continued.)

Salvation Army Apostle: "If you swear at those horses, my good man, you'll never go to heaven." Canal Driver (humbly): "I knows it, mum; but if I don't I'll never get to Tonawanda."

Bobby: "Maw, I read of a man to-day who was one hundred and seventy years old."

Mother: "Oh, what a lie!"

Bobby: "No, mamma, it was in the Bible."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Derby-road, Ponders End (opposite "Two Brewers"): Wednesday, August 26, at 8.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "God, Faith, and Morality"; 7.30, Mrs. Rosetti, "The Comfort of Religion."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "God, Faith, and Morality."



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the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

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