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Maximise morals, minimise religion.—BENTHAM.

Christian Civilisation.

CONSTANTINE was the first Christian emperor. Did he abolish slavery? No. He liberated the slaves owned by Jews, if they embraced Christianity, but the slaves of Christian masters enjoyed no such advantage. According to the old law, a free-woman who had intercourse with a slave was reduced to servitude; but Constantine humanely decreed that the slave should be burnt, and the free-woman executed in the ordinary way.

Stoicism branded slavery as immoral, but where is there a word against the institution in the New Testament? Christianity tolerated slavery for centuries. Even in the nineteenth century slavery was legal in our West Indian colonies. Men under sixty can remember the abolition of slavery in the United States. Some twenty years later slavery was abolished in Brazil. If Christianity abolished slavery, it took a frightful time to do the work. Might not civilisation have done it more rapidly?

Christianity "restored the position of women in society." In what respect did Christianity improve it? As a matter of fact, Christianity degraded woman by two methods; first, by adopting the Jewish story of the Fall; secondly, by preaching up virginity. Paul's view of woman's position is contemptible; she is as inferior to man as man is to God. Saint Jerome called her "the demon's door, the road of iniquity, the scorpion's sting." Saint Chrysostom called her "a sovereign pest." "When you see a woman," said Saint Anthony, "be sure you have before you, not a human being, not even a wild beast, but the devil in person." Saint Augustine's insults are nearly as extravagant. Saint John of Damascus styled her "a child of lying, the advanced sentinel of the Devil," and "a malignant she-ass." Gregory the Great denied her "any moral sense." That is how Christianity "restored the position of woman in society."

Polygamy was not proscribed by Christianity, because it did not exist in the Pagan civilisation which Christianity supplanted. Monogamy was legal in Greece and Rome, and had been so for centuries. When Christianity opposed polygamy among the barbarians it simply carried forward the morality of Pagan civilisation. The Bible never censures polygamy or enjoins monogamy. It is a big book, but it never gives a right sentence on this subject.

That Christianity "put down divorce" is undoubtedly true, but the result was of questionable value. Vagrant affection was compelled to pay an outward respect to the marriage tie, but those who could not be divorced found a compensation in adultery. Mr. Gladstone appeared to regard divorce as immoral, but in this he was out of touch with the law of every civilised State. The Church still brands divorce with anathema, but the secular law, even in the most Catholic countries, has been constrained to permit it under certain conditions.

Christianity put down divorce, yet it certainly did not put down war, nor did it make "peace, instead of war, the normal relation between human societies." The *Pax Romanus* was a reality, which Christendom

has never equalled. Rome boasted a Goddess of Peace, and a splendid temple was erected to her by Vespasian. At no time did the Roman armies number four hundred thousand men. We admit that philosophers deprecate war, but they always did so. Marcus Aurelius, though himself an emperor, and obliged to take up arms against the barbarians, detested war as "the disgrace and calamity of human nature."

Mr. Gladstone was right, however, in saying that Christianity "changed essentially the place and function of suffering." Suffering was always regarded as an evil before Christianity preached it as a blessing. Fortunately the modern world is returning to the old opinion, and the party of progress is everywhere warring against the evils of this life, without waiting for the rectifications of another world.

Charity itself has been narrowed by Christianity into mere almsgiving. Paul's great panegyric on this virtue is perhaps the finest thing in the New Testament, but the very word he uses (*caritas*) was borrowed from Pagan moralists. Cicero anticipated him before the birth of Christ in his *caritas generis humani*. This kind of charity is far superior to almsgiving, which often produces as many evils as it alleviates; and, after all, the charity of which the world stands most in need is that highest kind which is known as justice.

"Humility and forgiveness" are fine phrases, but they are seldom more. Generally they are little else than cheap devices for popular oppression. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," is a sweet text; but, as a matter of fact, the soil of England is chiefly owned by the House of Lords. The clergy, also, have taught humility by enjoining the "lower orders" to remain contented in that state of life to which Providence has called them, and to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. As for "forgiveness," we have simply to point out that, until recently, the criminal jurisprudence of Christendom was a ghastly scandal. Even in England, in the early part of last century, men and women were hung in batches for small felonies; and when Romilly tried to terminate this infamy, he was vigorously opposed by the bench of Bishops. During the eighteenth century, men were hung, drawn, and quartered wholesale, and malefactors' heads were exposed on Temple Bar. Thackeray in his *Four Georges*, gives two samples from the public journals of 1731. At Cork, on January 15. Tim Croneen, for murder and robbery, was "sentenced to be hanged two minutes, then his head to be cut off, and his body divided in four quarters." In England, "Mary Lynn was burned to ashes at the stake for being concerned in the murder of her mistress." Going further back we find torture common in ordinary trials. The Inquisition carried this practice to a devilish extreme; but, as Joseph de Maistre argued, in defending that institution, it only developed the habitual proceedings of the secular courts. Not until the Revolution (October 9, 1789) was trial-torture abolished in France. On the whole, it is safe to say, that for exquisite, deliberate, and ingenious cruelty, Christendom has eclipsed every antique State with any pretence to civilisation.

G. W. FOOTE.

"John Bull" and God.

IN times of war many people lose their heads. The conditions are so abnormal, things in general are looked at from a point of view so far removed from the customary, our interests are forced so violently into an unusual channel, that a great deal of rash and extravagant language may easily be excused. John Bright most probably had this in his mind when he said that he would as soon lecture a cage of wild animals as preach peace to a people seized with war-fever. Human nature is not really built for war, but for peace—that is in any permanent sense. The strain of warfare is too intense, the emotional tension too great for human nature to stand without being thrown, temporarily, off its normal balance. That is why it does not do to scrutinise too carefully the language of men and women during such a time. Human nature must be finally judged by what it is in its normal rather than in its abnormal phases.

This strain appears to be showing itself in unexpected quarters, and developing in unexpected directions. Some of the religious papers have informed us that with many people there has been a marked increase in the intensity of religious belief. That one may easily believe. A flood of feeling once aroused will expend itself along the line of least resistance, and with many this is most likely to take a religious form. Those of a more reflective and analytical turn of mind are much more likely to find their religious convictions disturbed. But it is inconceivable that religious belief should be created by such a catastrophe as that of the present war. If people fail to find God in times of peace, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that they will find him when the air is full of tales of battle and deeds of bloodshed. Well-balanced intellects do not veer this way or that with every passing phase of national temper.

One of these unexpected places in which religion appears to have broken out is in the pages of *John Bull*. And, strangest of all, in the person of its editor, Mr. Horatio Bottomley. I write under correction, but I have always been under the impression that Mr. Bottomley chose to call himself an Agnostic. And not an Agnostic of the "reverent" or religious type, but one who claimed to know as much about God as anyone, and to mean that he knew nothing at all. Since the war commenced I have been led seriously to reconsider this opinion. Two or three weeks ago there appeared in *John Bull*, presumably from the pen of its editor, an article on "God's Stocktaking," in which there was a plentiful scattering of pietistic terms. Now, in the issue dated September 12 there is another article, again presumably the editor's, with the title, "The Mills of God are Grinding." Alone, these titles would afford small ground for criticism, but the contents of the last named "gives one furiously to think." It is gratuitously pietistic, and, as a consequence, arguments that, by themselves, might be called reasonable, become, because of the pietistic ingredients, nonsensical.

The subject of the article is the Kaiser and the brutality of the German troops. No one in this country, no one, I imagine, in the whole civilised world, feels anything but the utmost horror for these barbarities and for the system that has produced them. As for the Kaiser himself, he deserves distinct consideration. I fancy that no mental authority in Germany—if he could safely speak—and certainly no mental pathologist outside Germany, would be at a loss to diagnose his case. He is a paranoiac of a most pronounced type. His speeches for some years past, his restlessness, his grandiose ideas concerning himself and the destiny of the German people, all point to this. Worst of all, he is a paranoiac who is further afflicted with religious mysticism. The disease with anyone in a position of influence is bad enough, when to it is allied the driving power of religion, he becomes a positive

danger to all. When the War is over it is to be hoped that the Kaiser will be placed in a position where further mischief is impossible.

Here is a dose of pietistic jingoism from Mr. Bottomley that should satisfy the most omnivorous appetite:—

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform,' and the wonder He is now performing is the riddance of Europe, and mankind, of the Teutonic menace to his Scheme of Things. That scheme, as clearly as human intelligence can comprehend anything, was and is that, for good or ill, he has placed the destiny of the earth in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race, with the Latins as their natural allies. All else is accidental or caprice; it cannot affect the final order of the world. And but for our own folly that order would never have been challenged. He has indeed been a patient God to have tolerated us.....He must have pondered whether we were worthy of the great trust; there must have been moments when He turned His eyes to the East, and hesitated whether one of the old Oriental peoples might not, after all, be better fitted for the task. *But He has decided to give us another chance*—on condition that now, at last, we do our part.....If we do that, God will do his part. He will crush the German monster. He will smash the Berlin butcher."

There it is, in all the glory of capitals and italics! And now we know exactly where we are. The Kaiser's offence is that he has interfered with God's "Scheme of Things," about which Mr. Bottomley writes with all the confidence of a Presbyterian elder of the old school. Really, a "Scheme of Things" that overlooks so large a fact as the "Teutonic menace," with its seventy millions of population, its army of four millions, with all its ambitions, is almost staggering in its criminal shortsightedness. If Mr. Bottomley's God wished to keep a character for common sense he should have prevented the "Teutonic menace" from developing. As it is, it looks as though ordinary human beings have to step in, and, as usual, make good the Deity's shortcomings. Besides, the Kaiser is quite genuinely convinced that the "Scheme of Things" involves the supremacy of the Teuton. I hesitate to give an opinion where two such theologians as the Kaiser and Mr. Bottomley differ. I believe that on this head both are equally well informed, and it would be interesting to see them engaged in a public discussion on so important a point.

We know—or, rather, Mr. Bottomley knows—as clearly as we know anything, that "He" has placed the destiny of the earth in our hands. That is "Britain's Divine Destiny." Under ordinary conditions such a statement might betoken "swelled head," or even indicate a phase of the disease from which the Kaiser himself is suffering. Observe, it is not said that we *do* hold the destiny of the earth in our hands. That *might* be a statement of fact. It is not even said that we ought, in our own interests, to do so. That might sound selfish. No, it is a burden that has been placed upon us; we must shoulder it in the name of duty; we are co-workers with the Deity, his selected instrument. (I must really congratulate Mr. Bottomley on the way in which he has assimilated the Paritan touch.) Of course, there are our Allies to consider—at least some of them. For while the Deity has selected us to rule the world, he has appointed the Latins as our Allies. The Latins, too, are in the divine "Scheme of Things," but only in a subordinate capacity. We hope they will remain contented in their allotted place, and do their duty in the sphere in which God—with Mr. Bottomley—has been pleased to place them.

It would only have been gracious under present circumstances to have found some place for Russia in the "Scheme of Things." For Russia has undoubtedly rendered valuable assistance in opposing the "Teutonic menace." Perhaps Mr. Bottomley was afraid that Russia might not readily consent to the divine "scheme" which places the destiny of the world in Britain's hands, and, not having the keen sense of humor possessed by our Latin Allies, might have seriously protested against the scheme—instead of laughing at it. Still, some place ought to have

been found for the Slavs. They are too big to be ignored. Mr. Bottomley might try again. Mohammed received many supplementary revelations; why not the editor of *John Bull*? At any rate, Russia should be cautioned that if it does not agree to Britain deciding "the destiny of the earth," *John Bull* will have to denounce the Slav "menace" to "His Scheme of Things," and write of the Pirate of Petrograd in place of the "Butcher of Berlin." There is no doubt that he would be crushed. For anything that thwarts "Britain's Divine Destiny" can only be in the nature of a momentary obstruction. It is more accident or caprice, and cannot endure.

It is not, it seems, a simple thing to work in line with the "Scheme of Things." Even Britain has been guilty of "folly," and Mr. Bottomley rightly compliments God on having "tolerated us." But, then, one might ask, What was "He" to do? Where could he have found anyone better? "He turned his eyes to the East," and wondered whether he should not select one of the Oriental races for the post of honor. Then "He" decided that, bad as we are, we were better than the others. Perhaps "He" read *John Bull*, and that helped "Him" to decide. At any rate, the fact remains, "He has decided to give us another chance." We should be thankful. And as in former ages God selected strange and not-to-be-expected vehicles to convey his message, so in these days he has passed by the hosts of the clergy to deliver his decision concerning us through Mr. Horatio Bottomley, and to acquaint us that this decision is conditional. We must "do our part." But suppose we fail? Will that seriously disturb the "Scheme of Things"? And if the destiny of the earth is placed in our hands "for good or ill," what does our failure matter? It seems that either God's decision concerning us is not conditional, or he has not placed the destiny of the earth in our hands "for good or ill." Like other revelations, that of Mr. Bottomley's needs checking.

Mr. Bottomley would seem to agree with that section of the community which—because we are at war with Germany—will not listen to the music of Wagner or Beethoven. He says, "All idea of German civilisation has gone," and "dear old Haidane need not waste any more tears over Schiller and Goethe." Perhaps Mr. Bottomley only means that our ideas concerning the nature of German civilisation needs revising, and that may be true enough. But genuine culture remains culture, whether it is in Berlin or London or Paris. The value of Goethe's philosophy and poetry, of Wagner's, or Beethoven's, or Schubert's music, the work of German scientists, is not in the smallest degree affected by the barbarities of Germans in Belgium and France, or by the inflated military ambitions of the Kaiser and his supporters. Genius is more than national; it is part of a world-wide democracy; and to reject it because it appears in Germany is only a little above destroying masterpieces of art and literature in Louvain. If the German is a Hun and a barbarian because he ignores the claims of art and culture in Belgium, what is the Briton who ignores the claims of art and culture in Germany? Will not our so doing jeopardise the good favor of the Deity who has placed "the destiny of the earth" in our hands? Might "He" not be again led to doubt our fitness for the task of leadership? Might not even the function of the Deity's mouthpiece be transferred from the editor of *John Bull* to some other and equally unexpected quarter?

C. COHEN.

A Desperate Subterfuga.

IN times of peace Christian teachers are accustomed to describe the Sermon on the Mount as an infallible compendium of the laws of the kingdom of God, obedience to which is said to be an essential condition of genuine discipleship. How often have we heard the exhortation thundered out of the pulpit, "Obey Christ at whatever cost." But when

Christian countries are at war the majority of Christian ministers give the Sermon on the Mount the go-by, while those who refuse to do so are severely reprimanded. The Rev. Leyton Richards, of Bowdon, is one of the few who advocate absolute loyalty to the Gospel Jesus, let the consequences be what they will. He says:—

"We must have the courage of our faith, and declare without qualification that since war is 'the crime of Cain multiplied a millionfold,' no conceivable exigencies can ever, from the Christian standpoint, condone or excuse it. In the abstract, we should never admit the end justifies the means, and we must never admit it here. 'War is Hell'; it means the tearing up of the Sermon on the Mount, the flouting of every Divine command."

In this protest Mr. Richards has the support of Mr. S. Hocking, who nevertheless contends that "since the first century the Church, speaking broadly, has never taught that war is 'the crime of Cain multiplied a millionfold.'" Mr. Hocking maintains further that the Church does not regard war as any crime at all. "The Church to-day," he adds, "believes in war through and through." Mr. Hocking and Mr. Richards, however, stand practically alone in the attitude they have taken. Dr. Clifford, Dr. Campbell Morgan, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, Mr. R. J. Campbell, and thousands more, boldly assert that France, Russia, and Great Britain are simply serving the Lord by taking part in the present bloody conflict. Criticising Mr. Richards the Rev. Frank J. Leggatt, of Manchester, angrily exclaims:—

"Mr. Richards makes reference to the Sermon on the Mount. Does he stand for the Sermon on the Mount against Jesus Christ, when Jesus Christ, contradicting the Sermon on the Mount, or contradicting the Tostoyan interpretation of Matt. v. 39, with a whip of small cords swept the money-changers out of the Temple courts"?

As it has been repeatedly pointed out in this journal, the Church, while always lavishing praise upon the so-called maxims of Jesus, has never even tried to put them into practice, and to be a Christian has never meant to be an imitator of the Gospel Jesus. A Christian is a person who believes in salvation by faith, not by works, and who seldom, if ever, belies his faith. Mr. Hocking is so deeply grieved and humiliated by this undeniable truth that he frankly confesses he is dumb when he attempts to pray. His words are worth quoting:—

"I blame the Tsar scarcely less than the Kaiser for this wicked and inhuman war. Yet they are both devoted members of the Christian Church. Will the Church cast them out as men who have denied the faith? I scarcely think so. If the Kaiser wins, the Protestant Church of Germany will hail him as the anointed of the Lord; and if he loses, the same Church will add his name to the long roll of Christian martyrs."

Now the curious thing is that, with the history of the Christian Church staring him in the face, Sir William Robertson Nicoll still persists in the daring assertion that the present war is not of Christian origin. We owe it, he informs us, to the fact that in Germany Christ is dethroned. It is getting to be whispered abroad now that in Germany "Corsica has conquered Galilee." In other words, "Germany as represented by its dominant thinkers is at open war with Christ," from which statement we cannot but conclude that Germany is more powerful than the God-man. Surely Sir William cannot realise the full import of what he says. In the *British Weekly* for September 10 he tells us that though "the Germans are setting themselves against the will of Christ," we must remember that "Christ must reign till all enemies are put under his feet." Christ *did* once reign in Germany, otherwise Sir William could not certify that he is now dethroned there. The Germans have reigned until they have succeeded in putting him under their feet as their supreme enemy. But the editor of the *British Weekly* is entirely mistaken. It is well known that Prussia became one of the great Powers of Europe under Frederick the Great, who was, if not an

Atheist, a Deist. Frederick's work was completed by Bismarck, who was a Protestant, on whom the Pope bestowed the Order of Christ. The war with Austria in 1866 resulted in making Prussia the dominant Power in Germany, while the war with France four years later eventuated in the establishment of the German Empire, and ever since it has been the one ambition of those in power to make Berlin the mistress of Europe, if not of the world. One of the chief champions of the greatness of Germany was Treitschke, the historian and great orator. Strangely enough, Sir William seems to put Treitschke in the same category as Nietzsche, whereas in reality the two were as wide asunder as pole and pole. Nietzsche was an Anarchist and Individualist, and so in deadly opposition to the theory of State supremacy, while Treitschke was an enthusiastic believer in the State as Force. Nietzsche was an Atheist, and a hot opponent of Christianity, while Treitschke was a zealous member of the Lutheran Church, and regularly partook of the Lord's Supper. He is often spoken of as the Macaulay of Germany. Well, what was the teaching of this disciple of the Galilean? For twenty years he lectured at the Berlin University, believing himself to be Divinely called to discourse on the greatness and glories of primitive Germany, the Prussian domination of the Germany of to-day, and the domination of Europe by the Germany of to-morrow. In his opinion the State's one business is to command, and the subject's to obey. The point is, however, that these peculiar views were held and advocated by a man who was a firm believer in the Christian religion. His sincerity cannot be doubted, and he could see no inconsistency between his religious orthodoxy and what Sir William would call his political heresies. If he regarded war as the fruitful field for magnanimity, heroism, and mercy, is it not a fact that a very similar remark occurred in the *British Weekly*, when, a few weeks ago, the editor was considering the difference Christ is making?

Someone asked the other day, with the war in mind, "Is God dead?" History's answer to that question is, "No, God cannot be dead, because he never lived." This world, from the beginning until now, has never shown the least sign of the existence of such a being. Even Canon Wilberforce admits that it is absurd to imagine that there is a great, external World-Ruler, such a conception being merely an idol of the mind. The Kaiser speaks of God with amazing familiarity, and it was very easy to lampoon his telegram to the Crown Princess, "How magnificently God supported the Crown Prince," as Barry Pain did in the *Times* :—

"Led by Wilhelm, as you tell,
God has done extremely well;
You with patronising nod
Show that you approve of God.
Kaiser, face a question new:
This—does God approve of you?"

Both the telegram and the lampoon treat the Divine Being as an idol of the mind, which he is, and nothing more. The Kaiser has enthroned an idol of the mind and called it his ally, and every Christian minister in Great Britain has done exactly the same. Germans, Russians, Belgians, Frenchmen, and Britishers claim God as their ally, and he lets them. And without heeding anybody, the Nature of Things has its way, the strong becoming stronger, and the weak weaker. Such is the order of Nature, and neither piety nor prayer can set it aside.

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

The issue of the present war is alone in Nature's hands, and she will bring it about in due time according to a law that has never yet been broken, whether it will make for the true progress of mankind or not. The one thing that is absolutely certain is that the ambition and ideals of neither Germans nor Allies will be in the least regarded. We can only hope that, as the result of the superior strength and

skill of its defenders, the cause of right and freedom shall win the day, and that of militarism receive its death-blow.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—IX.

(Concluded from p. 581.)

"My business was, and above everything is, to illumine the dark regions of religion with the torch of reason, that man at last may no longer be a sport to the hostile powers that hitherto and now avail themselves of the mystery of religion to oppose mankind. My aim has been to prove that the powers before which man crouches are creatures of his own limited, ignorant, uncultured, and timorous mind; to prove that in special the being whom man sets over against himself as a separate supernatural existence is his own being. The purpose of my writing is to make men anthropologists instead of theologians; man-lovers instead of God-lovers; students of this world instead of subservient and wily ministers of a celestial and terrestrial monarchy. My object is therefore anything but negative, destructive—it is positive; I deny in order to affirm the substantial being of man."—LUDWIG FEUERBACH, *The Essence of Religion*, p. vi.; 1890.

"The first duty of man, intelligent and free, is to instantly chase the idea of God from his mind and conscience: For God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we advance in no way by his authority. We arrive at science in spite of him; we arrive at well-being in spite of him; at society in spite of him; every progress of ours is a victory in which we crush Divinity....."

"Therefore I deny the supremacy of God over humanity; I reject his providential government, the non-existence of which is sufficiently established by the metaphysical and economic hallucinations of humanity—in a word by the martyrdom of our species; I decline the jurisdiction of the supreme being over man; I deprive him of his titles of father, king, judge, good, clement, merciful, helpful, rewarder and avenger. All these attributes of which the idea of Providence are composed, are only a caricature of humanity, irreconcilable with the autonomy of civilisation and refuted by the history of its aberrations and catastrophes."—P. J. PROUDHON. (Translated by Hinds; Green. *Freethinker*, June 15, 1890.)

MAN endows God with all the qualities which he himself would like to have, but does not possess. Man can see; therefore he makes his God all-seeing. Man is wise; therefore God is all-wise. Man is finite; God is infinite. Man has goodness; God is all-good. God is merely man magnified to the highest degree.

Ever since Xenophanes ridiculed man for making God in his own image, the intellectual upholders of the God-idea have been trying to deanthropomorphise or depersonalise God, but without success. For the multitude, God is now, as he always has been, and always will be, until they learn to do without the idea altogether, a person. "The average Christian," as Professor Leuba remarks, "whatever he may say to the contrary, is, theoretically speaking, a materialist, and, I might add, a polytheist"—that is, he is a materialist, not in the scientific meaning of the word, but in the sense that he cannot conceive of gods or spirits apart from some bodily material shape or form. For it is impossible to think of the immaterial—that is, nothing—having a form or shape of any kind.

Professor Leuba illustrates this with the answers given by two students at an American college who were beginning the study of philosophy. The first—a lady, twenty years of age—replied to the question as to her idea of God: "God, to me, is a being of flesh and blood, for without this form he would seem unnatural and unsympathetic as our leader." The second—a gentleman of twenty-one—replied: "I think of God as real, actual flesh and blood and bones, something we shall see with our eyes some day."*

This was the conception of God which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages. A "frequently recurring group" to be seen sculptured upon the cathedrals which have survived those times, says Andrew Dickson White, is a representation of God creating the universe :—

"The Almighty, in human form, sits benignly, making the sun, moon, and stars, and hanging them from the

* J. H. Leuba, *The Psychological Origin of Religion*, p. 25.

solid firmament which supports the 'heaven above' and overarches the 'earth beneath.' The furrows of thought on the Creator's brow show that in this work he is obliged to contrive; the knotted muscles upon his arms show that he is obliged to toil. Naturally, then, the sculptors and painters of the mediæval and early modern period frequently represented him as the writers whose conceptions they embodied had done—on the seventh day, weary after thought and toil, enjoying well-earned repose and the plaudits of the hosts of heaven."*

Nor have the Protestant Churches any superiority over the Catholic Church in this respect. From Luther—the founder of Protestantism—down to Spurgeon, the same ideas prevailed. They both believed in the man-like Bible God. Luther observed that Abraham must have had a bad time when God told him to kill Isaac, and roundly declared that "If he had given me such an order, I should have disputed the point with him."† Again, says Luther:—

"God has now and then a fine game at cards, all of them court cards: kings, princes, and so on. He deals them out, and plays them against one another—the Pope against Luther, for instance; and by-and-bye, as children do when they've been fighting at beggar-my-neighbor for a long time without results, gets tired, and throws the cards under the table."‡

Spurgeon held the same belief. He would hold no terms with those who would depersonalise God. He roundly declared:—

"If God does not see and hear, *we are shipwrecked upon the rock of blank atheism.* I do not care a bit what men believe in, whether it be pantheism, or agnosticism, or theism; if they have no personal God that hears and sees, they have, in fact, no God at all. 'There is a power that makes for righteousness,' said one; but if that power is insensible, and never communicates with man, and never notices him, there is nothing in the forced admission of any use to him who makes it or hears it. It is big talk, such as men call 'bosh,' and nothing more. Though it be veiled in the language of philosophy, the scientific jargon which makes God into insensible force is covert atheism. I must have a God that hears and sees, and comes into the arena of my daily life, and helps me because he loves me, or else I have no God. My God dwells with me, and works for me, or else I have no God. Fine words, pretty phrases, and magnificent definitions are so many windbags, and go for nothing: there cannot be a deaf God, or a blind God, or an insensible God. If any of you so believe, go you to Bedlam, and find your fit associates. As for us, we know that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is the living God, and his memorial is that he heareth prayer."§

This outburst was aimed at Matthew Arnold, who defined God as "a power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." But how could anyone pray to an impersonal "power"? One might as well pray to a current of electricity.

The dilemma by which religion is faced, the insoluble problem that so many philosophers have attempted to solve, but against which they have broken themselves in vain, is this attempt to square the infinite existence of God with a personality responding to the wishes and aspirations of those weak and spiritless souls who, according to their own confession, could not observe the ordinary laws of morality unless they believed that a righteous Judge was secretly watching their every action, to punish or reward.

An "Infinite Personality" is a contradiction in terms. You can place the words together in print, but you cannot amalgamate them in thought. How can something filling infinite space bear the shape of a person? It is unthinkable. Even the philosophers are beaten here. Spinoza, the greatest of them all, arrived at the idea that there

is but one existence—not two, as the pious think, a material and a spiritual—infinite, eternal, self-existent, simple and indivisible, of which all elements are but modes; this substance being God. In fact, that God did not exist apart from and over the universe—like an emperor over his dominions—but God was the universe.

Unfortunately, the pious have never been able to agree as to whether Spinoza was "a God-intoxicated man" or an out-and-out Atheist. It is significant of the thin tissue between the Pantheism of Spinoza and Atheism, that Charles Bradlaugh's philosophy was largely founded upon Spinoza's Pantheism. All that was required was to drop the word "God," use Monism in its place, and there you have your Godless, infinite, self-existing, eternal universe complete, four-square to all the winds that blow.

When the religious try to establish the existence of an impersonal God, they are sawing off the bough upon which they are sitting. It is related of an old monk named Serapion, who had been convinced of the folly of attributing a human form to God, that, upon kneeling down to pray, the image which his imagination had conceived for so many years had disappeared. The old man burst into tears, exclaiming, "You have robbed me of my God."* Yes, take away the human form and attributes from God, and you are committed to Atheism, no matter what you call your system of religion or what religious ritual and symbols you attach to it. The mass of the people will never attempt to juggle with these fancy systems of Theism, Pantheism, the Immanence of God, and so forth. Their choice will be between a human God or Atheism. As Dr. Maudsley well says:—

"There is always a fund of wisdom in the common sense and practical instincts of the common people, the instruction whereof philosophy misses when it neglects or disdains to take sufficient account of it. Having to deal with the stern realities of life, working men are compelled to have working beliefs in order to act; feeling instinctively that the best test of the value of a belief is—Will it work? they turn their backs impatiently upon empty abstractions and demand beliefs with real contents. For example, persons of culture who make for themselves the dismayful discovery that they cannot go on believing in a personal God, are happy to take refuge in more general terms and abstractions, such as Deism and Pantheism, and make mighty use of them; but the laboring classes, rejecting such barren metaphysical abstractions, either repudiate God altogether or demand that, if there be a God who ruleth the earth, He shall be a real living God, working in the events of the world as they do themselves; not an abstract absolute, emptied of contents and living only in the misty regions of speculative thought, but 'a literal, personal, and eternal God.' Thus they, by their practical instincts, escape those self-deceiving effects of abstractions by which philosophers sometimes seek and discover the explanation of a concrete fact in what is no more than the abstract statement of the very same fact."†

We have now traced the origin of the idea of the Supernatural, which had its germ in the fear of the unknown, common to animals and man. This became confirmed when primitive man—by means of dreams and similar delusions—arrived at the idea of spiritual existences, which he held responsible for the storm, the lightning and thunder, for disease and death; in fact, for everything evil.

Arriving, by way of chiefs and kings, at Polytheism, or the worship of many gods, both good and evil, as he rose in knowledge and culture he gradually began to discard his gods and spirits, which, originally all evil, gradually assumed the morals and manners of their worshipers, until they were whittled down to one Supreme Being, all-good. But as the progress of knowledge has left nothing for this Being to do, "Science," as Caro wittily puts it, "Science conducts God with honor to the frontiers, thanking him for his provisional services."

* A. D. White, *The Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. i. Professor White says that he saw at Munich a banner, dated 1727, on which Jesus "was shown turning and shaping the globe on a lathe, which he keeps in motion with his foot.....God the Father looking approvingly upon him from a cloud" (vol. i., p. 12).

† "Luther," by J. A. Froude, *Contemporary Review*, July, 1883.

‡ Michelet, *Life of Luther* (Bohm's edition), p. 341.

§ Sermon (No. 2, 118), *The Planter of the Ear Must Hear*, p. 665. Preached Oct. 31, 1889. The italics are his own.

* Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i., p. 52.

† Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, pp. 11-12 (1887).

Let us conclude with the inspiring words of Colonel Ingersoll:—

"Let the ghosts go—we will worship them no more. Man is greater than these phantoms. Humanity is grander than all the creeds, than all the books. Humanity is the great sea, and these creeds, and books, and religions, are but the waves of a day. Humanity is the sky, and these religions and dogmas and theories are but the mists and clouds, changing continually, finally to melt away. That which is founded upon slavery, and fear, and ignorance, cannot endure. In the religion of the future there will be men and women and children, all the aspirations of the soul, and all the tender humanities of the heart. Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade for ever from the imagination of men."*

W. MANN.

Acid Drops

The Russian papers, according to last week's *News of the World*, published one of the Kaiser's farewell speeches to a division of the army going off to the front, in which the following tit-bit occurs:—

"Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, as German Emperor, the spirit of God has descended. I am His weapon, His sword, and His vice-regent. Woe to the disobedient, death to cowards and unbelievers."

A poor man who talked like this would soon be in a lunatic asylum. The Kaiser should have been put under restraint many years ago. The malady he suffers from is very common amongst the insane. It begins in what the Americans christened swelled-head. The religious symptoms show that the Kaiser's case is hopeless.

The Kaiser's madness has spread downwards through his whole Army. After his abominable defence of the destruction of Louvain, with its insensibility to everybody's rights and feelings but his own, we need not be surprised at any atrocities on the part of his soldiers, who are themselves treated like dogs by their own officers. We take the following sample from a letter from Mr. E. Alexander Powell, special correspondent of the *New York World* and the *Daily Chronicle*, published in the latter journal on Monday, September 14:—

"A sentry on duty in front of General Headquarters failed to salute an officer with sufficient promptness, whereupon the officer lashed him again and again across the face with his riding whip. Though welts rose at every blow, the soldier stood rigidly at attention and never quivered."

What can be expected of men who are liable to such treatment themselves?

Perhaps we ought not to be too hard on the Kaiser, and we mustn't overcrowd the asylums. There is Mr. Bottomley, for instance, who backed up Austria in its intention to give Serbia a castigation, and now perceives that his view of the situation was totally mistaken; Serbia having refused to accept a castigation, and administered one to Austria instead. Mr. Bottomley had to "change the subject" to avoid damage to his infallibility, and the war gave him an opportunity of working "the pious lay." He and the Kaiser are running each other very close in that direction. The Kaiser says that God has chosen the Germans; Mr. Bottomley says that God has chosen the British. All these gentlemen mean is that the greatest nation on earth must be the one they belong to. We regret to say that most people's patriotism comes to that—and no more.

Britishers may fight as well as ever, but the muse of war languishes. The case is so bad that even Begbie is treated as inspired. Kipling himself seems played out, and Watson shows that in finding Christ he has lost song.

There is a pedestrian poet called Kaufman who supplies patriotic verse to *Roynolds' Newspaper*. Does the editor pay him, or does he pay the editor, for its insertion? The betting odds must, we think, be on the latter.

A laudatory notice of Mr. Robert Blatchford in the last number of the *Weekly Dispatch* refers to all his writings except those against Christianity. Is this by agreement?

* Colonel Ingersoll, *The Ghosts*, p. 32 (1881).

"Providence," says Lord Charles Beresford, "will never countenance barbarities which were far more atrocious than those of the Middle Ages." Lord Charles was referring to the reported doings of the German troops, and he seems to have quite overlooked the fact that "Providence" has countenanced them. "Providence" is quite a hardened offender in this direction. It has never interfered to prevent atrocities in past ages, and we see no reason for assuming that it will be shocked by those that are being perpetrated to-day.

Canon Wilberforce would agree with Lord Charles Beresford. He says:—

"A God who, to further the insane ambitions of one man, will shock the moral sense of the whole civilised world, turn Belgium into a shambles, and promote upon an unoffending nation an aggressive attack [What is an unaggressive attack?] which for its ferocity, its treacherous break of solemn international obligations, bids fair to outdo the wickedest and bloodiest struggles in the history of the world! such a God would, of course, cordially approve of the Kaiser."

But clearly God has not prevented the Kaiser's doing these things. He has permitted the German troops to outrage, to burn, to murder, and how can it be said that he will show his disapproval by arranging for the German forces to be beaten in the end? If he could do this at the end, why not at the beginning? Or, if these outrages occurred without his sanction, why may not their cessation be brought about without his co-operation? Good is not really triumphant because at the end a murderer is hung. Evil has triumphed already in the murder of the victim. And whoever wins the present war the triumph of evil is assured. That is certain, from the fact of the war having taken place. And if people were not blinded by theology, they would realise the absurdity of God's government of the world being justified by the signing of peace over the ruins of thousands of homes and the bodies of many thousands of innocent victims. God's rule is not justified by the cessation of brutalities; it is impeached by their occurrence.

God, says Canon Wilberforce, shares our sorrows. He knows every pang we shall feel, but he permits it. And he adds "the question of why this is so is no business of ours." Is it not? It seems to us that, if there be a God, this *is* our business. If it is not, why do Canon Wilberforce and others spend so much time trying to explain why these sorrows are "permitted"? We believe it is not our real business to bother about "God" at all. But if we do believe in a God, we are bound to frame some theory of things that fits in with his assumed existence. No doubt Canon Wilberforce means that it is not our business to blame God. A good Christian should act like a camel—take his burdens kneeling.

Rather an interesting correspondence is going on in several of the religious weeklies concerning the duties of Christians in the present crisis. Ought they to take part in the war or not? If the answer is Yes, are they not pinning their faith to force, and what then becomes of the Christian teaching of non-resistance and of conquering by love? Some of the clerical writers who are taking part in this controversy, and who plump for war, seem to be quite unaware of the fact that they are knocking the bottom clean out of Christian teaching. Rev. F. Y. Leggatt, for instance, asks whether another clerical gentleman really means that, in order for England to live up to its Christianity, it should disband its Army and sink its Fleet? If so, ought we to disband the police force and trust to overcome the predatory instincts of the burglar by our pacific zeal?

All this is no doubt considered very telling, but an uncompromising Christian ought to answer Yes to these questions without the least hesitation. The New Testament does teach non-resistance; it does command us to turn one cheek when the other is smitten; it does say "Resist not evil." Of course, these teachings are absurd, as Free-thinkers have always pointed out; and all that Mr. Leggatt and those who agree with him prove is the absurdity of the doctrines they profess to have faith in. For clearly, if evil is to be overcome by non-resistance, it must be done when evil is afoot. It becomes still more absurd to say that the teaching is only to be practised when there is no evil to the combat. Mr. Leggatt is proving that common sense and logic are too strong for Christian teaching—that and his own insincerity, or shortsightedness, in preaching one thing and practising another.

Mr. Fielding Hall, in his *Soul of a People*, tells a story of the Buddhist priests which bears on this point. When the English invaded Burma—after painting the abstemious, tolerant Buddhist Theebaw as a drunken, dissolute perse-

cutor—the Burmese Buddhist soldiers consulted their priests as to what they were to do. Buddhism says "Thou shalt not kill." It also says that no man can take life, under any circumstances, without paying the price. What, then, were the soldiers to do? If they did not fight, they were disloyal to their country. If they fought and killed, would they suffer for it? The reply of the Buddhist priests was simple and straightforward. There, they said, is the law. We did not make it, and we cannot unmake it. No man can take life without his nature suffering. It may be that duty demands that you shall kill, but the consequences of a natural law cannot be set aside by national exigencies. Each man must decide for himself. And each Buddhist soldier went to war feeling that, however necessary, he would pay a price over and above that of being wounded or even killed. On the other hand, the Christian soldier went to war encouraged by his priests, and with their blessings on the annexation of—ruby mines. Had Buddhism been as Christianity is, its priests would have found an easy excuse for sanctioning warfare. Being a philosophy and not a religion, it remained true to itself.

Mr. Silas K. Hocking differs from Mr. Leggatt in not finding any Christian sanction for the war. He says, with truth: "Since the first century, the Church—speaking broadly—has never taught that war is 'the crime of Cain multiplied a millionfold,' or, indeed, any crime at all; had it done so, the present war would be impossible.....The Church to-day believes in war through and through." And he adds:—

"I blame the Tsar scarcely less than the Kaiser for this wicked and inhuman war. Yet they are both devoted members of the Christian Church. Will the Church cast them out as men who have denied the faith? I scarcely think so. If the Kaiser wins, the Protestant Church of Germany will hail him as the anointed of the Lord; and if he loses, the same Church will add his name to the long roll of Christian martyrs."

That is putting the essence of the position in a paragraph.

Mr. Hocking asks, "What does the Church stand for in Europe to-day?" He might well ask, What does religion stand for in Europe to-day? British Christians will reply that it strengthens us in a righteous war. But did any country ever go to war without persuading itself that right was on its side? It is clear that Germany is as strongly convinced that it, also, is engaged in a righteous war. The truth is that we should have to oppose German aggrandisement in any case, and the need for that is responsible for our attitude to-day. Really, so far as religion is concerned, its direct and unmistakable influence is, as usual, in the wrong direction. Of course, the vast majority of our soldiers would call themselves Christians, but they go to battle singing, not hymns, but "It's a long, long way to Tipperary." On the other hand, the Kaiser, whom all good Britons are pursuing heartily, is a Christian of the most sincere and pronounced type. He believes he is one of the representatives of God on earth. He is convinced that God is on his side, and that he is carrying out God's will. British Christians believe him to be deluded, and we argue that he is. But that does not affect the vital fact, the ambitions and ideals of the German Emperor are vitalised by his intense religious conviction. Were he less religious, he might see himself and his aims in a more rational light.

How silly the doctrine of original sin seems in the light of the gay spirit of Tommy Atkins, whether safe and sound, or slightly or badly wounded, or—we were going to say *dead*. One of the prettiest things we have seen for a long time is Mr. Horace Grant's report in the *Daily Mirror* of September 14 of a talk he had with a Tommy who had been left behind in the hospital at Havre, had been there a fortnight, and was just going for his first limping trial. When he was asked what struck him most forcibly about the Germans, he replied laughingly, "The bullet that hit my calf." Observe the humor as well as the good humor. The Germans are reported to be bad shots with the rifle.

Here is one of those things that might have been said otherwise; it occurs in an editorial paragraph in an Essex newspaper:—

"In last week's issue I referred to the great increase in the population of Chelmsford and neighboring villages, brought about by the presence of many thousands of Territorials."

Oh! Ah! The writer should try again.

The election of the new Pope was complicated by the war, but the villainous saltpetre did not prevent the successors of St. Peter making the usual choice of an Italian ecclesiastic.

In the olden times "God" was very partial to Jewish gentlemen, nowadays he seems to favor the nation which supplies the ice-cream vendors.

The *Daily Telegraph* is more pious than its less orthodox rivals, and we are not surprised at a fulsome eulogy of the Papacy appearing in its pages. But what does this religious periodical mean by asking the new Pope to join in a "resistance to a God-defying barbarism?" Has the Kaiser sent an ultimatum to God already?

The innate snobbishness of English editors emerges in these troublous times. The heroism of a duke; the Spartan economics of a duchess, who has one lump of sugar in her tea instead of four; the wondrous bravery of august personages at the front—at Aldershot—move these penmen to ecstasies of emotion, paid for at the customary rates. Who would imagine that these journalists and their readers worship a carpenter-God?

Men who enlist are told that they will come back from the war covered with glory. Some of them will stop there, covered with something heavier. And what will be the glory worth to the women and children while their breadwinners are away? A young husband that we know of joins the Army; his young wife, totally unprovided for, seeks something to live on, when it ought to be offered to her. Something is said to her about 4s. 6d. a week. She is asked what she can earn? What did she do for a living before she married? Something at a jeweller's. Oh, it's no use looking for work in that line now. Could she do charring? The poor girl—for she is no more—muttered "Yes" in her fright. She goes up like a culprit, and is treated as such. This is what glory means, in cash terms, to the women of the "heroes" who risk their lives for "King and Country" on foreign soil.

We understand that insolence to volunteer soldiers' wives is the rule rather than the exception. When they ask for their weekly allowance they are treated as if they were beggars asking for charity. As a matter of fact they ought not to have to fetch it at all. It ought to be taken to them. They are women, to begin with,—wives, probably mothers; and as such men should regard them all as of the blood royal. Fancy telling a mother of two children, whose husband was on active service at the front, that she should go out to work! Work! What was she doing already with two children to look after? Isn't that *work* enough for any woman already. *Work!* What was her *husband* doing? It is a pity that he couldn't give his own view of it on the spot. And what hypocrites the upper and middle classes must be to let such things continue. "Tommy" out at the front is a "hero." He is told so, his wife is told so, she is proud of her man. Yet when it comes to providing her "a grant" (hateful word!) in lieu of wages to supply just the common decencies of life, there is humming and hawing and worse. The "hero" disappears when it comes to paying up. One really cannot help asking if the people whose battles "Tommy" fights, who get up public funds and "administer" them (that's the word), are *worth* protecting.

Some people, mostly belonging to the "administration" classes, will no doubt accuse us of *inventing*. But there never was any need to invent insolence on the part of the rich to the poor. Besides, such a case was reported in the *Daily Chronicle* of September 12. It was adduced by Alderman Parry at a meeting of the Newport (Mon.) Corporation. Another councillor stated that complaints in relation to the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund were general.

Mr. A. M. Thompson tells men who have their livings to get to think of their wives and children before enlisting in the Army, even for the duration of the present War. "The root of true patriotism," he says, "is in men's devotion to their families. All other kinds are swank and bluster." Ingersoll puts the same truth with greater verve and humor. Every man, he said, will handle a rifle to defend his own home, but who will shoulder a rifle to defend a boarding-house?

Mr. Thompson speaks of the "Socialist attitude" in this war. We cannot ascertain that there is *any* Socialist attitude. There are *many* Socialist attitudes,—which is a very different thing. British and French Socialists are actually fighting German Socialists on the battlefield. The other day the *Star* referred to an article by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner as expressing the Rationalist view of the war. We are not aware that there is any Rationalist view of the war, or that Mrs. Bonner has any mandate to express it, if there is. We

are not quarrelling with her view in itself; we only dispute it as officially, or in any other way, representing the Free-thought party in England. Even if "Rationalist" be narrowed down to the membership of one particular association, we should hardly think the lady is entitled to speak for all of them.

Mr. Bernard Shaw once said that Socialism would succeed if it were not for Socialists. This criticism would be true in relation to some other causes. At the last Rationalist Peace Society's annual meeting Mr. Foote was asked to "say a few words," which, much against his inclination, he consented to do. He tried to correct the Norman Angell worship which was going on inside that Society as well as outside. It was not true that nations would refrain from war by finding out that it didn't pay. No nation, in modern times, ever thought it did pay. Peace parties were getting too optimistic. The main cause of war lay in human nature itself, and these were nearly as active in Pacifists as in Militarists. War and Peace were not only a question of intelligence—they were also a question of character. A peaceable disposition, aided by a sense of justice, and even a vein of humor, was a great preventive of all sorts of quarrels. Europe was growing worse instead of better. War might break out almost any day—even before the Society's next annual meeting. Let them not chortle too loudly. For his part, he hoped for the best, but feared the worst. Mr. Foote was followed and rebuked by one of those unwise "friends" of advanced causes who take their own wishes to be the measure of future reality. She (it was a lady) was sorry to see Mr. Foote, of all men, going back on the Peace causes in this way. Surely the world had made too much progress to start fighting again. And so forth—and so forth; stuff which cannot be answered as there is nothing in it. Well, what has happened? Mr. Foote hasn't gone back an inch, and—*war is here*—the war of wars, enveloping most of Europe, and involving also Asia, Africa, America, and Australia.

Mr. Foote doesn't "go back," for all his views are convictions founded on principle and carefully thought out. He never opens his mouth, or wields his pen, on any subject without doing this to the best of his ability. His old friend Mr. F. J. Gould, favoring him with a new photograph lately, wrote upon it as presented to one who "never swerved." We have already said that Mr. Foote appreciates the compliment, coming from one who knows and understands.

"Daniel was an admirable scholar, yet in the crisis he needed more than learning." Thus said the Rev. Bryan Marshall, a Southend parson. If Brother Marshall is referring to Daniel's interview with the lions, we agree that a fist like a leg of mutton would be more useful than a knowledge of Hebrew.

In the old adage, after the mountain had been in labor it produced a mouse. Following the fulsome press adulation of the Bishop of London's bravery in going to "the front," we read that he is remaining with the London Rifle Brigade in camp. Evidently his lordship does not wish to go to heaven in a hurry.

A misprint in a parish magazine reads, "Give *pence* in our time, O Lord!" instead of *peace*. Probably the readers, already inured to the rattle of the collection-boxes, brace-buttons and all, did not notice the mistake.

"The Germans are never tired of appealing to God," says the *Evening News*. The canting appeal has been heard also in Carmelite House, so the Teuton is not alone in his theological prejudices.

"God help them when we get to Berlin" is Russian comment on account of German atrocities. Religion is such a civilising influence.

According to the *Evening News*, the crypt of Brixton Parish Church is to be converted into a rifle range. A fitting place for the funeral of the religion of the "Prince of Peace."

It was a humorous coincidence which caused a bold announcement of a "military pickle" to appear immediately above the latest war news in an evening contemporary. Let us hope that hasty readers were not misled.

A few months ago we were assured that the Brotherhood movement was going to reform the world. It claimed millions of followers, and alleged that it was backed up by

Omnipotence. The present exhibition of brotherly love in Europe is scarcely a testimonial to the influence of the movement.

Mr. R. M. Jones, speaking at a Sunday-school Demonstration at Southend-on-Sea, said that "There is a divine spark in all of us, but we simply poured water on it and quenched it." That's the worst of living at the seaside. Water is so cheap.

Some religious people have objected that "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," the song warbled by our soldiers, is a music-hall melody. Did they think that the boys would march to battle singing, "When my eyeballs crack in death," or some other lugubrious ditty?

"The predominant forces are not the intellectual," says the Rev. J. Bryan Marshall, a Baptist minister of Southend-on-Sea. Probably there are more tradesmen in his church than "intellectuals," and cutting cheese with a wire is not the best expression of "god-like reason."

Last week's *Reynolds'* reported the magnificent news that the Archbishop of Canterbury had visited the Folkestone Technical Schools, now the headquarters of the Belgium Relief Fund Committee. "He conversed with some of the refugees," it is added, "in their own language." Our contemporary appears to think there is a Belgian language. There is not—any more than there is an Austrian language or a Swiss language. French is the State language in Belgium, and Flemish is spoken side by side with it. Many languages are spoken in Austro-Hungary, but the State language is German. French is the State language in Switzerland, but German and Italian are also spoken. What the Archbishop spoke was probably French, and there is nothing miraculous in an educated Englishman (or Scotsman) speaking that.

"Sex After Death" is the interesting title of an article in the *Nineteenth Century and After*. Dear, dear! This implies dressmakers after death, for such modest Christian gentlemen as the late Rev. Price Hughes and W. T. Stead would never be happy in the midst of unclothed angels.

Toy Noah's arks, which are such favorites with children, appear to have been a speciality of German manufacturers, and there is now a dearth of these juvenile delights. Unless British manufacturers oblige, small Christians will soon cease to see the animals go in "two by two."

Rev. Matthys Vandeweg, minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, took to calling Miss Anna C. Brink, a school-teacher at Lindley, "Atheist" and other names, not calculated to gain her the love and respect of her fellow-citizens. He also threw out the gravest hints as to her immorality, and expressed horror as to her low-cut blouse, which gave him such a shock that his eyesight went wrong, and he could hardly look at her. But on this point clergymen are not the best of witnesses; they are so inflammable. The other charges, however, were more important, and the reverend gentleman seems to have pressed them both in his sermons and in his prayers. When an official inquiry was instituted, the man of God tried Lord Hugh Cecil's trick, which filled the House of Commons with derisive disgust in the Lloyd George "Marconi" case. The reverend gentleman had documents too filthy to produce, but "everybody was at liberty to come and read them at the Parsonage." Miss Brink was at length obliged to bring an action against him for defamation of character, obtaining a verdict with £500 damages and costs. The Chief Justice at Bloemfontein, before whom the action was tried, said "the Court found that the defendant was not actuated by a proper sense of duty, but by express malice." "I may state here," the judge added, "for the benefit of ministers of religion, if they imagine that in the twentieth century the general public is going to endure their attacks on individuals from the pulpit, they are very much mistaken." This declaration was greeted with loud applause by the public in court. It ought not to have been, of course, but we are glad the applause was on the side it was.

To meet the common Christian objection to any report to the discredit of a man of God, we may state that the information in the foregoing paragraph is derived from long reports in the *Transvaal Leader* of August 18 and August 20.

"The outbreak of war sent us all to our knees," says the Rev. D. Ewart James, a prominent Essex Congregationalist minister. It is reassuring to know that the weaker brethren were not under the table.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £206 3s. 6d. Received since:—Mr. and Mrs. Capon, 2s.; P. W. Smart, 2s.; W. Bean, 5s.; P. C. H., 2s. 6d.; F. G. Margetson, 5s.

J. LATHAM.—There seems to be a slump in the Freethought movement in South Africa: we mean as a movement. Our correspondence and our subscribers' book show there are many individual Freethinkers. Great things were to happen when our friends the Rationalists came along, but new names don't always mean new life.

W. H. MORRISH.—It is good to see a veteran "saint" so constantly cheerful. But you know where the clergy say you are going. Pause, Pause, as the curate cried, hanging his leg of mutton hands out over the pulpit. But, seriously, our hand, old friend!

W. H. HUNT.—Much upset this week; room perhaps in next issue.

JAMES NEATE, 385 Bethnal Green-road, desires the address of Mr. James Rowney, the lecturer.

F. CAFFEY.—We read Taylor's *Devil's Pulpit* ever so many years ago. We cannot attempt to criticise it in this column.

A. H. SMITH.—Apportioned as desired. Glad you find this journal so interesting.

A. T. GILLMAN.—We cannot tell for certain yet. The weekly drop on a paper like ours during war-time is cumulative—something like the fall of a stone under gravitation in the atmosphere. We have not suffered much yet, but we have fears of the future. A few weeks will decide. Meanwhile we make no alteration whatever. Perhaps our readers will do their very best to push our circulation just now, by introducing the paper to friends and acquaintances.

W. P. BALL.—Cuttings welcome.

T. LONSDALE.—Sorry, but not surprised, to hear the Glasgow Branch has decided to drop its Winter Lectures for once. Our own impression is that this war is not going to be a long one.

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.

Sugar Plums.

We are always glad to see the handwriting of our old friend and veteran "saint," Mr. W. Morrish, of Bristol, whose memory goes back to the Southwell and Holyoake prosecutions for "blasphemy." In his latest letter to us he says:—

"I greatly admired Mr. Cohen's article on the blasphemous utterances of 'the Christian Kaiser.' It would make an excellent leaflet, and I hope it will be reprinted. It was just splendid."

The suggestion shall be considered,—on the financial side; it needs none on any other. Unfortunately there is very little money available at present even for the worthiest investments. But it is "now or never" with a tract about the Kaiser.

For many reasons it is to be hoped that this horrible war will soon reach its finish. Freethought propaganda will have a bad time until peace is restored. Audiences will be difficult to obtain. The "saints" alone do not make a meeting to pay its way; some of the general public must be present to constitute a success—and it is really the general public that the lecturers want to get at. We note that the Glasgow N. S. S. Branch has resolved to drop this Winter Lecture Session altogether. Mr. Foote was to have lectured there on October 18. The Birmingham Town Hall is not now available for his visit on November 1. He is not yet sure about Queen's (Minor) Hall on the first two Sundays in October, but a definite announcement will appear in next week's *Freethinker*. It is fortunate that this journal is blessed with a strong constitution. There is something, even in

the days of Armageddon, to concentrate upon; and we trust the "saints" will make every effort to maintain and even promote our circulation during this distressful period.

Both N. S. S. Demonstrations held last Sunday at Finsbury and Regent's Parks were highly successful, the audience at Regent's Park being particularly good. Inspiring speeches were delivered by Messrs. Cohen, Davidson, Hope, Howell-Smith, and Miss Kough, the all-absorbing topic of the war being dealt with from a Freethought standpoint. Mr. E. C. Ratcliffe kept the meeting in the best of humor by his skilful and efficient chairmanship. The Society's thanks are again due to Mr. Edwin Wilson for personally superintending the arrangement for the platform, consisting of a brake drawn by two magnificent horses kindly provided by him.

This is not exactly a "Sugar Plum," but we don't know where else to put it. There is sweetness, of course in being able to report that Mr. W. Heaford is on the way to recovery, but we are very sorry that there is any occasion for this to be good news. We have only just heard (from himself) that he has had a very bad nervous breakdown, which he cannot hope to get the better of in a brief space of time. But hundreds of friends will hope, as we do, that the time will be shorter than it threatens.

We hope our Brussels contemporary, *La Pensée*, bravely and ably conducted by M. Eugène Hins, will soon see the end of its "suspension." When the city is once more free from invaders and assassins it should be possible to resume the publication of that gallant journal. It has had an uphill fight at all times, but all Freethought journals have that. What an heroic chronicle the history of Freethought journalism would be!

A Christian Apologist.

Was ever such a queer Apologist?
 He invents a faith no mortal could conceive
 Except himself,—and only *he* believe;
 And gaily ropes of sand proceeds to twist:
 His "arguments" are but midsummer madness,
 And seem intended for ironic jests,—
 Or show that maggots in his brain are guests
 If he advances them in sober sadness.

Yet wherefore censure his ingenious folly?
 A foolish faith makes fools of its confessors:
 The deadly dullness of his predecessors
 He shuns, and strives to make his quips seem jolly:
 With sophistries and paradoxes glib
 His faith becomes a Chestertonian squib!

B. D.

WHITMAN AND INGERSOLL.

Whitman said: "I had a visitor one day last week, a preacher fellow: he wore black clothes, clerical: was quite courteous, almost gracious.....Just before he left he said (here Whitman paused and chuckled): 'I hope it is not true, Mr. Whitman, that you are a great admirer of Bob Ingersoll.' It was lugged in in such a way that I felt as if that was really the purpose of his visit—to satisfy himself on that point. I blurted out at once, so that he should remain in no uncertainty: 'I'm afraid, my friend, that I hope it is true and always may be true.' You should have seen his crest-fallen face. He said at once: 'I confess I am disappointed.' I only smiled. He seemed to take it to heart. I asked him: 'I suppose your religion has a place for Ingersoll?' He answered evasively: 'That opens up a large field,' which meant that he had his doubts. So I hurried to add: 'Well, I am afraid mine does, anyhow. *Leaves of Grass* would be a poor sort of pretender if it flourished a whip over people.' He bowed as if to say, Have it as you will. The fellow riled me a bit, too; it was all so unnecessary. I did not wish him to go supposing my love for the Colonel was only a half-hearted sort of thing—an apology: so I said quite vehemently: 'You must make no mistake about it: I am Bob's friend: I admire him: I stand by him in his war on the Church. He was as solemn as a judge by this time. 'And in his war against religion, Mr. Whitman—do you stand by him in that?' I answered: 'He makes no war on religion.'"

Whitman laughed. "It's astonishing to me how these preacher people thin themselves down—lose their blood: they have no more guts than a dead weasel: they nose about with their little hells and heavens, like a corner grocer with something toothsome to sell."—*Horace Traubel, "With Walt Whitman in Camden."*

Heredity and Progress.—II.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Concluded from p. 588.)

Is heredity, with its constant ancestral pull, a bar to progress? Not entirely. The average type to which the tendency is to revert is not a stationary one. The aptitude for progress, the habit of adaptability to new conditions, and the faculty of invention, are themselves heritable, and with each generation the liability to reversion is slightly diminished. It still remains true that the civilised races supplant savages, and that feebler nations are overcome by stronger ones. The children of a gifted pair are far more likely to be gifted than the children of an average pair. I say pair, for any exceptional quality will be diminished in the first generation unless both parents partake of it. In the case of music we observe stronger evidence of inherited faculty than in other arts, for musicians usually select a partner with at least a love of music. In the Jews we can see that all their art has run in this direction, the plastic arts having been forbidden to them. That many eminent musicians have had Jewish blood in their veins is well known. Great musicians, indeed, almost invariably come of a musical family. It was so with Beethoven, Hadyn, and Mozart. Still more striking is the case of the family which boasted Sebastian Bach as the culminating illustration of its musical genius. Through eight generations it produced multitudes of musicians of high rank, of whom twenty-nine were reckoned eminent. If, in our gardening, we desire to produce larger seeds, a considerable selection will have to be made through successive generations, and, if we wish to improve any valuable human quality, a careful selection of partners might be made and continued for several generations. Of two persons apparently equal, one may be an excellent specimen of a poor stock, the other an average specimen of a better one. Marriage with the latter is preferable, since there is a diminished liability to reversion to a lower type. And the latter case is the more unlikely. The tendency to mediocrity, as we have seen, makes it more frequently the case that an exceptional man is the somewhat exceptional son of mediocre parents than the average son of exceptional parents. The breeder considers "pedigree" even more than form.

Plato long since advocated breeding from the best men only, and in our own times Schopenhauer has hinted that great men should breed from as many as they please. "The life is impossible," said Aristotle of Plato's stud farm, and if the same is said now of the schemes of eugenics, stirpiculture, or man-breeding, it will arise from the same reason. Marriageable persons and their parents will look rather at their own immediate wants than at any ideal improvement of the race. Yet just as selfish trade benefits the world, so does sexual selection, looking only at its own interest on the whole, bring into existence the lives fittest for the environment. Each party usually has some eye to assistance, comfort, and happiness, which are supports in the struggle for existence; and the attraction of "beauty," after all, mainly consists in the requisites for the continuance of the race, including health, intelligence, energy, and amiability. The type before referred to in the composite picture representing health, in the frontispiece of Galton's book, is that of what ninety-nine women out of a hundred would, other things being equal, consider an "eligible" young man. Moreover, nature's blinder method does act, despite the artificial hindrances of civilisation. It is true weakly lives are preserved that would have perished in barbarous lands, and that both wealth and sentiment interpose shields between the action of natural selection and many of its rightful victims. But, though humanitarianism and medical science may preserve the unfit for a generation, it cannot do so in the end. Galton carefully analysed the census returns of a thousand factory operatives of Coventry, and of the same number of agriculturalists from the

surrounding small rural parishes, and found that the former had but little more than half as many adult grandchildren as the latter. They had fewer offspring, and of these a smaller proportion reached adult life. The offspring of the constitutionally diseased are stamped out in the long run. For the consumptive, scrofulous, epileptic, or otherwise hopelessly disordered, to have children is as absurd, not to say immoral, as to propagate a race of *cretins*. I say to have children, for, if they would avail themselves of the methods which Neo-Malthusianism places within their reach, I see little objection to their marrying among themselves, but strong objections against their marrying with those who might take better partners. They should be content to let the race be continued by those best fitted to meet its requirements. And here I take occasion to remark how the doctrine of Evolution, first suggested to Darwin in connection with Malthus's law of population, tells strongly against the conclusion of Malthus that the prudent should refrain from early marriage. On the contrary, it is the prudent who should marry early. As fecundity diminishes with age, the wisest policy is that which retards the average age of marriage among the feeble and hastens it among the vigorous classes. Ruskin, in eloquent words, has urged that marriage should be in the nature of a reward to be earned before permitted. If this is somewhat Utopian, at any rate a public sentiment is growing adverse to the placid reproduction of themselves by the criminal and diseased. The type of character which leads to criminality is shown by statistics to be strongly inherited. Dr. R. L. Dagdale, of New York, followed the lines of descent from one Margaret Jukes, whose progeny for six generations, including in all seven hundred and nine persons, turned out thieves, prostitutes, murderers, and idiots.

"Whate'er Ezekiel may allege,
When fathers eat of sour grapes
The children's teeth are set on edge."

The main characteristics demanded in modern man are obvious enough. "Brains, sir," said Opie, when asked what he mixed his colors with. While the civilised man is but a fraction taller than the savage, his cranial capacity is larger by nearly thirty per cent. His brain, too, presents increased diversity in its convolutions. With brains are required larger powers of vitality to direct them, and of self-regulation to use them in conformity with the needs of social life.

Galton says: "In any scheme of eugenics energy is the most important quality to favor." Of its importance there can be no doubt; yet I venture the proviso that the energy must be of an enduring kind. The stress of civilisation is calculated to develop precocious energy, and to use it up speedily. It is still a question whether a long-lived phlegmatic race may not hold its own against one with a more glowing, but more easily diminished, vitality. Intellect is essential, but it must be backed up by physical vigor. Fineness of nerve is apt to end in fragility. Overbred animals have little stamina, and the race of German professors, which, it is said, has been vastly improved by the custom of marrying daughters of professors, might be bettered by an occasional variation with the daughter of an intelligent farm laborer of good descent. The Greeks were intellectually the superiors of the Romans, yet the latter had the stronger wills and the more vigorous vitality.

Modern progress also depends largely upon adaptability to new conditions. Those races and persons who insist upon retaining the ideas and institutions of the past can no more hope to hold their position against those of greater adaptability than can a person expect to protect himself from modern cannon with mediæval armor. We may rest assured that those who are most open to new ideas, and readiest in adopting new inventions and in setting aside faiths and formulæ no longer adapted to progressive humanity, have the future for their own, and their species will, like a dominant organism, supplant and supersede inferior forms.

The Proof-Reader at Large.

"Mind your p's and q's."—OLD SAYING.

"It is human to err."—ANOTHER OLD WHEEZE.

IN these troublous days it is well sometimes to turn from wars and rumors of wars to something that will bring a sense of relief, and, as the 'bus-driver was said to have taken his scant holidays riding on other mens' 'buses, so a journalist may be pardoned for turning for a few minutes to the amusing experiences of his profession, especially with regard to proof-readers and their unconscious lapses into humor.

The proof-reader is the watch-dog of literature, and he is the author's best friend. Perhaps the haste with which modern books and periodicals are produced is responsible for the greater prevalence of the printer's error than formerly. Of the proof-reader it may be remarked that his strokes of humor owe much of their success to their surroundings. The flashes of fun are spread over pages of dullness, which enhance them, just as a dark night suits fireworks, or the atmosphere of the House of Commons, or of a court of law, is propitious to a joke. Here are a few examples which show that unconscious humor is not the least laughable:—

A clergyman was made to say, in describing the burial of a friend, that "disconsolate fiends stood riveted to the sport!" instead of "disconsolate friends stood riveted to the spot."

Another clergyman once preached a sermon from the words, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." The discourse was printed, but the printer had put *wife* for life, to which the unhappy parson made a marginal note, "That depends upon circumstances."

The omission of the letter *n* in an hotel advertisement in a local paper, made the alluring announcement that *mice* pies would be furnished for the delight of the guests.

The substitution of *s* for *a* once made havoc with the feelings of quite a number of people; it being stated that a marriage took place under *suspicious*, instead of auspicious, circumstances.

A minor poet who used to chirp through the columns of a popular magazine, was made to sing about *lead-booted* hours instead of lazy-footed hours.

A philosophical journalist wrote "there is truth in the converse" of a certain proposition; but he had the pleasure of reading in print that "there is truth in the universe," but for that, he adds, he "would not like to vouch without further investigation."

A temperance orator lectured on "Fables: Ancient and Modern," and referred frequently in his oration to *Æsop*. His joy may be imagined when he found that in the newspaper report the word was rendered "Allsopp" throughout.

Perhaps a proof-reader corrected in a geographical work, "a plain covered with erratic blocks" into "a plain covered with *erotic blacks*." Blocks are not erratic, he probably argued, but niggers are amorous.

A delightful result of carelessness was the insertion of an advertisement in a provincial paper relating to a dog: "Pomeranian female, nearly white, quiet for home, carriage paid, thirty shillings."

An author of repute quoted, in a daily paper, Browning's "Just for a handful of silver he left us." This appeared in public as "Just for a *handle* of silver he left us." The author complained to the editor and explained that everybody knew the quotation, and that "handle" was not sense. The answer was that the line was not known and that sense was never expected from Browning.

A proof-reader should know stock quotations. He should never have passed the following improvement upon Milton:—

"that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark,
That junk that drowned that sacred head of thine."

In the following issue of the paper the justly enraged editor said that when he saw it "we wished him a junk diet for a fortnight."

A country editor altered Shakespeare's "He smote the sledged Polack on the ice" into "He smote his *leaded poleaxe* on the ice."

This was a better emendation than a Teutonic professor's correction of "Christy Minstrels" to "Minstrels of Jesus."

In a printseller's catalogue we have seen Benjamin Franklin described as the "President of the United States." Nell Gwynn, in the same publication, was pictured as "a friend of Charles the Second," although this does not accurately describe the lady who was "less than kin and more than kind." But this error is at least excusable. Even Scott called Joan of Arc "an unfortunate female."

Some "malaprops" must surely be ascribed to the author as well as to the proof-reader. Anthony Trollope makes one of his heroes come "whistling up the street with a cigar in his mouth."

Even so magnificent an artist as Keats could, on occasion, perpetrate a good-sized "bull":—

"So the two brothers and their *murdered man*
Rode towards fair Florence."

But the blame must rest on the unfortunate proof-reader when he informed the readers of a suburban paper of the coming performance of Shakespeare's *Turning of the Screw*.

In a report of the Colley-Maskelyne libel case, Bishop Colenso, of Natal, appeared as the Bishop of Colenso, an accidental reversal of true relations between the Bishop's name and the place called after him, which recalls the enthusiastic Imperialist who thought it splendid that Lord Melbourne should have taken his title from an Australian city.

Nobody but a good, professional proof-reader can read proof-sheets properly. An educated and accurate man, he notices the misprints, corrects the grammar, and verifies the quotations. Without a good proof-reader a book or paper goes forth in slovenly condition. The author, knowing what he intended to say, and reading in proof-sheets his own work, found there, sometimes, a printer's error. This is especially the case with dates. We know very well that Bradlaugh died in 1891, but the printer does not know, and prints 1391. The error of a single figure escapes our eyes until the statement is published, and then our language is Shavian, and proportionate to our distress. In extenuation, it may be urged, since even Homer sometimes nodded, that the proof-reader may be excused if he occasionally takes a nap. But, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that, of all mistakes, a misprint is the most indelible. Other mishaps may possibly be retrieved, but the printer's error proudly remains. Owing to publications being produced in as much haste as soap or sausages, the proof-reader is hustled nowadays, and there is a greater prevalence of printer's errors than formerly. To miss, however, the vagaries of the proof-reader is to miss one of the good things of the literary life.

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Libels Christian.

THE leading article in the *British Weekly* for September 10, written presumably by the editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, is entitled "Has Corsica Conquered Galilee"? By "Corsica" is meant physical force, and by "Galilee" Christianity. The article pretends to present the readers with the gist of the contents of two books, namely, *Germany and the Next War*, by General Bernhardt, and *Germany and England*, by the late Professor Cramb. In both Germany is described as under the dominion of the Will to Power; but Professor Cramb's little work is of a much more comprehensive character than that by the General. From the former we learn that there is a rapidly growing school in Germany which is positively hostile to Christianity; but this school is by no means confined to Germany. The Professor states that "you meet with it in England and in America, as in Austria and Spain." It is beginning

to flourish even in Italy, while in France and Russia it has been a powerful factor for many years. This school is anti-Christian, and largely anti-Theistic. In Germany it is composed almost wholly of enthusiastic disciples of Nietzsche, who, it must be borne in mind, was at once anti-Christian and anti-German. He violently attacked German culture and German "flagrant and compromising lack of taste." In his pamphlet against Strauss he coined a phrase, "Culture philistine," which, as he told Dr. Georg Brandes, "survived the thrusts of violent controversy, and has taken root in the language." He was angry with the Germans because they were "unanimous in admiration of Strauss's *Old and New Faith*, pronouncing it a masterpiece of acuteness and freedom of thought, and even of style." Writing to Brandes in 1888 he says:—

"Do you imagine that I am known at all in the dear Fatherland? It is there, above all places, that I am regarded as something absurd and eccentric, something that is not wanted and need not be taken seriously. Presumably, they scent that I do not take them seriously, and how could I in these days when German *Geist* has become a contradiction in terms?"

He wrote a book called *Ecce Homo*, which, he informs us, is an onslaught on the Crucified, without the ghost of a scruple; it ends with thunder-claps and lightning flashes, that deafen and blind, against everything that is Christian or tainted with Christianity." Writing to Brandes about this volume, again in 1888, he observes:—

"Guess who comes off the worst in *Ecce Homo*. Messieurs the Germans. I have told them awful things."

Now, the present followers of Nietzsche in Germany are not necessarily, and *as such*, active members of the German imperial party. Their great aim is to destroy Christianity, root and branch, to get rid of superstition in all its forms, and to treat the present life as the only reality known to us. They are not of necessity politicians at all; nor are they as yet, alas, Germany's "dominant thinkers." Sir William is, therefore, fundamentally wrong when he asserts that "Germany as represented by its dominant thinkers is at open war with Christ," and if he has really read the second chapter in *Germany and the Next War*, he knows it. *All the important and influential advocates of the German imperial policy have been and are Christians.* General Bernhardt boldly justifies the pursuit of that policy in the name of Christianity. On page 29 he says:—

"There never was a religion which was more combative than Christianity. Combat, moral combat, is its very essence. If we transfer the ideas of Christianity to the sphere of politics, we can claim to raise the power of the State—power in the widest sense, not merely from the material aspect—to the highest degree, with the object of the moral advancement of humanity, and under certain conditions the sacrifice may be made which a war demands. Thus, according to Christianity, we cannot disapprove of war itself, but must admit that it is justified morally and historically."

Nothing could be plainer and more indisputable than the fact that Germany is now at war as a *Christian nation, not as a nation in opposition to Christ.* To maintain the contrary is to be guilty of lying to the glory of God. Why do clergymen persist in trying to circulate such a glaring falsehood? There was no better Christian in all Europe than Treitschke, the distinguished historian; and this is what Professor Cramb says of him as a politician:—

"His answer to all our talk about the limitation of armaments is: Germany shall increase to the utmost of her power, irrespective of any proposals made to her by England or by Russia, or by any other State upon this earth. And I confess it is a magnificent and a manly answer, an answer of a man whose spirit of sincerity, of regard for the reality of things, is as great as Carlyle's.....To him the army is simply the natural expression of the vital forces of the nation; and just as those vital forces of the nation increase so shall the German army and the German navy increase. A nation's military efficiency is the exact coefficient of a nation's idealism. That is Treitschke's solution of the matter" (*Germany and England*, pp. 64, 65).

Such were the ideals fondly cherished by a passionate lover of Christ and a devout member of the Lutheran Church, and Professor Cramb assures us that he, the Christian, not Nietzsche, the Atheist, is the "man whose spirit still controls German youth, German patriotism, a man who has a power in Germany, as a thinker and as a writer, that you might compare to the power exercised by Carlyle and Macaulay put together in this country."

Sir William, will you still continue, in company with Dr. Clifford and Dr. Campbell Morgan, to repeat such an obvious lie about the attitude to Christianity of the originators of the present war, or will you repent and be converted? Unfortunately, however, one lie generally leads to another. This has happened in Sir William's case. Having misrepresented the Christian attitude of the Kaiser and those associated with him in this sad business, he proceeds thus:—

"As for morality, public or private, it is at an end. The policy advocated is one of virulent attack on all those who have held out their hands in friendship. Plain-dealing, generosity, and regard for human right are antiquated superstitions."

We challenge the reverend knight to cite his authority for so wild a statement. It is a crime to bring such a foul charge against a party or a movement unless it can be fully substantiated. General Von Bernhardt holds that the idea of universal peace is absurd and immoral, that there arise circumstances in which war becomes a moral duty, and in which to postpone a war may be a crime against humanity; but while advocating this view, he professes belief in Christian morality. He states his position thus:—

"Christian morality is based, indeed, on the law of love. 'Love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself.' This law can claim no significance for the relations of one country to another, since its application to politics would lead to a conflict of duties. The love which a man showed to another country as such would imply a want of love for his own countrymen. Such a system of politics must inevitably lead men astray. Christian morality is personal and social, and in its nature cannot be political. Its object is to promote morality of the individual, in order to strengthen him to work unselfishly in the interests of the community. It tells us to love our individual enemies, but does not remove the conception of enmity. Christ himself said: 'I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword.' His teaching can never be adduced as an argument against the universal law of struggle" (*Germany and the Next War*, p. 29).

That reasoning may be ingenious and plausible, but so are most interpretations of the alleged sayings of Jesus. Sir William knows perfectly well that the morality enjoined by the Gospel Jesus has never been exemplified by either nations or individuals in any age of the world. But to assert that with a man like General Bernhardt "morality, public or private, is at an end," is to transgress the law of decency, as well as that of veracity.

The lies stand exposed. May those who utter them be shamed into uttering them no more. This is a war waged by two Christian countries against five other Christian countries, all of whom implore the help of the same Christian God, who will leave them severely alone, to settle their quarrels as best they can.

CELTICUS.

Mrs. Barber noticed that her daughter, Edith, did not say her prayers in the morning, and questioned her as to the cause. "Don't you want God to take care of you during the day as well as at night?" she asked Edie. "I think if God takes care of me at night, you might take care of me daytimes," was the quick response.

In a village church, a few Sundays back, the clergyman, having published the bans of marriage, was promptly followed by the clerk reading the hymn, "Mistaken souls, who dream of heaven." The friends of the parties interested left the church *en masse*.

Fragments that Remain.

These are days in which we hear and read much about courage, bravery, intrepidity, and we all ardently admire it whenever instances of its operation are brought to our notice. But there are two kinds of courage, the courage of knowledge and the courage of ignorance. The latter kind is possessed by most religious teachers, and by some in a superlative degree. To the latter class belongs the Rev. Peter Green, Canon of Manchester, who contributes an article to the *Church Times* for September 11 on "The Providence of God." The courage of a man who, in these dark times, believes in God and Providence is absurdly audacious. Yet Canon Green has the temerity to "declare unhesitatingly that it is perfectly possible to reconcile the existence of sin and suffering with the omnipotence and goodness of God." Very probably the reverend gentleman believes in the truth of that dogmatic declaration; but all we know is that his article entirely fails to demonstrate its truth. He doesn't even touch the real problem at all, but simply walks round it, winks at it, pretends to simplify it several times, and then turns away from it, having thus filled his believing readers' eyes with dust.

The Canon's position is this: "If I am to believe in God at all, he must be one whose never-failing providence ordaineth all things in heaven and earth; he must be one without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground. If he is not, then prayer becomes an absurdity." Excellently well said, reverend sir, and we fully agree with you; but a rather awkward question confronts both you and us, which you have never faced, namely, Is there such a God? You say there is, and we say there isn't. That's all the difference between us.

A more utterly irrational article than this by Canon Green it has never been our misfortune to read. It contains the rankest Calvinism ever heard of. God is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, and, as such, he is said to order everything that ever happens, and to be responsible therefor. You resolve to murder an enemy at noon to-morrow, but you will not be able to touch him unless God has ordained that his life shall end at that hour. Thousands of men are killed in the war almost every day; but God has ordered the death of every one of them at the very moment it occurs. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, disasters at sea, resulting in the loss of countless lives, they are all fulfilments of his holy will. "No man dies," the Canon asserts, "till the moment when, in the eternal Providence of God, it was willed that he should die."

One would think that the teaching has already touched the highest pitch of absurdity; but it hasn't. The Canon succeeds in climbing to a greater, giddier height still. There is one exception to God's responsibility, namely, "the individual act of sinful will." If you murder a man you commit a wicked act for which you alone are responsible, although in the commission of the act you are the instrument of God's will concerning him. You are a free agent, the Canon tells you; you can make whatever choice you like, but you cannot do a single thing that has not been ordered. The Kaiser and the Tsar are responsible for the war, because the declaration of it was an act of sinful will; and yet all that has happened and all that shall happen during the struggle has been ordered by heaven from all eternity. Well, well; and yet there are some who can still swallow such sheer nonsense, and think the writer the astutest of men.

Our contemporary, the *Church Times*, is, of course, theologically, extremely orthodox, though, nominally, a friend of criticism; but, according to its own admission, orthodoxy has already become a rarity under the sun. In a recent issue there is a review of a book entitled *The Religious Instinct*, in which it is stated that "the present age is highly humanitarian, but sets little store by holiness." We rejoice exceedingly at the amazing admissions in the following extract:—

"Both Christ and his Apostles are said now by reputable divines to have reflected too much the ideas of their age and country. The old-fashioned Liberalism, wishing to put moral advance in place of a supernatural creed, thought that the standard of morality was agreed. But a revolt against Christian ethic is at the heels of the attack on Christian doctrine. In any case the idea of sin is being discarded as morbid, evil-doing being only reprobated as detrimental to the community.....Also an influential school is popularising the idea of the New Theology that Adam and Eve 'fell upwards,' and that sin is a necessary stage of spiritual progress, a mere relic in us of the tiger and the ape."

All this is gall and wormwood to the *Church Times*, but to

us it is merely evidential of the fact that Christianity is not only dying a natural death, but is actually being slain by its own professed defenders.

"What your children's children will permanently treasure" is the modest announcement concerning a history of the war, of which several parts have already been published. This is history while you wait. But it may still be as true as the Gospels.

The remarkably Christian *Daily Telegraph* has been trying to explain the lack of public enthusiasm for Russia on the part of the general public. Whereas French and Belgian flags are everywhere displayed, that of Russia is conspicuous by its absence. Why is this, asks the *Telegraph*? Maybe our Christian contemporary has never heard of Jews and pogroms.

Christians are astute business men. At York Minster recently Lord Kitchener's Chaplain was billed as the preacher. We doubt if he referred to the divine commands "Thou shalt not kill," and "Forgive your enemies."

Mr. Rudyard Kipling's poems, "Recessional" and "Hymn Before Action" are now sold in leaflet form for church use. Mr. Kensit's stalwarts will note with pleasure that the latter poem contains an invocation to the Madonna.

In the olden times Biblical names were customary, and some of the street titles were redolent of the Bible. In an old book, *New Remarks on London*, published in 1732, the following quaint names of streets are mentioned: Adam-a-digging Yard; Damnation Alley; Labour in Vain Alley; Shall I go Naked Street. Some are still in existence, such as Ave Maria Lane and Godliman Street.

A story is going the rounds that a boy was asked by his teacher what was the most wicked letter in the alphabet. He replied, "K, sir; but L used to be."

A curious charge was brought before the magistrates at Thames Police Court the other day. A man was charged with stealing eleven hundred weight of timber, valued at £20. Some of the stolen timber had been used to make a praying-desk, elaborately carved, bearing the initials I. H. S. "Jesus, Saviour of men," is quite a touching inscription to carve on stolen timber. It bears eloquent testimony to the strength of religious conviction, and its tremendous strength as a moral force.

FLIM-FLAMS.

If you say to me, Master, it would seem that you were not very wise in writing to us these flim-flam stories, and pleasant fooleries: I answer you, that you are not much wiser to spend your time in reading them: nevertheless if you read them to make yourselves merry, as in a manner of pastime I wrote them, you and I both are far more worthy of pardon, than a great rabble of squint-minded fellows, dissembling and counterfeit Saints, demure lookers, hypocrites, pretended zealots, tough Fryars, buskin-monks, and other such sects of men, who disguise themselves like maskers to deceive the world, for, whilst they give the common people to understand, that they are busied about nothing but contemplation and devotion in fastings, and maceration of their sensuality; and that only to sustain and aliment the small frailty of their humanity: it is so far otherwise, that on the contrary what cheer they make, *Et Curios simulant, sed bacchanalia vivunt*. You may read it in great letters, in the coloring of their red snows, and gulching bellies as big as a tun, unless it be when they perfume themselves with sulphur; as for their study, it is wholly taken up in reading of Pantagruelin books, not so much to passe the time merrily, as to hurt some one or other mischievously, to wit, in articling, and diabolicating, that is calumniating, wherein they are like unto the poor rogues of a village. Fly from these men, abhorre and hate them as much as I do, and upon my faith you will find yourselves the better for it.

And if you desire to be good Pantagruelists (that is to say, to live in peace, joy, health, make yourselves always merry) never trust those men that always peep out at one hole.—*Rabelais*.

Little Ephraim: "Daddy, whar did de fust tukkey come from?" Daddy: "Nebber yo' mine askin' irreligious questions. An' w'en Pahson Thompson come fer dinner, Sunday, doan yo' fink yo' hab ter ask whar dat tukkey come fum eider."

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, E. Burke, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, James Rowney, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Davidson, "Iconoclast" (Charles Bradlaugh).

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

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



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