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Virtue is the health of the soul.—Joubert.

Nietzsche Again.

WITH the best of goodwill we approach the task of a further survey of Nietzsche in relation to Christianity. As the journalists representing nobody's views, not even their own, have failed to do anything but send up the sales of Nietzschean literature, we must recognise the truth of good coming out of evil. In their anxiety to find any stick to beat the dog, they have been the cause of bringing this philosopher before many who were ignorant of his place in the world of philosophy. We have already mentioned this fact, but it is so delightful, that it will stand the wear of repetition. Believing, as we do, that no Freethinker is so intellectually feeble as to allow newspapers to influence him, it is with joy that we begin our examination of *Beyond Good and Evil*, assured that the ramshackle picture of Nietzsche's teachings has got no further than the kerbstone, and perilously near the gutter, where most of the Press ought to be. The decline and fall of the Press should cheer the heart of the most abysmal pessimist; let us hope—but perhaps we expect too much.

In the cloistered seclusion of our fondest hopes we have pictured Truth as something beautiful—some delightful temple where grief, pain, or hate had no place; yet here comes one with a whirling of Dionysian cymbals, bent on destroying the false, and says, "Supposing that Truth is a woman—what then?" Truly we may say, this man is no armchair philosopher, and we must not expect to fathom him in a single, hurried reading. By his interrogation he places himself above the heads of those sublime Christian philosophers who gave woman no better status than the Devil. Would any man with decent feelings care to read in public extracts from the works of some famous divines on woman? St. Paul, with many things on his mind, such as hatred, murder, sorcery, idolatry, debauchery, drunkenness, and orgiastic revelry, would be refused admission to society at this time of day, and rightly so.

It will come as something of a shock to Idealists when they are laughed at by Nietzsche, who agreed that for "free spirits" a mask, or many masks, should be used to baffle enemies. To this we say Amen, with all the fervor of our anti-Christian nature. "The 'neighbor' praises unselfishness because he profits by it." Let us think over the waste of energy by the female devotees of a grovelling materialistic church; or, as Strindberg called them, "the sock-knitting tea-swillers." Bamboozled by piety, befogged by superstition—a good action, the making of clothing, cannot have value unless—unless what? Unless it has the sanction of Divine service. His creatures are so naked that love for him by the priest's easiest prey can find no outlet except through his house. And so we arrive at the Christian value of the virtue, unselfishness. With the memory of Robert Buchanan's *Fra Giacomo*, we cheerfully assist in slaying this Christian virtue and replacing it by love for man, not socks for the Church. And when you have finished laughing, my readers, I have some-

thing to whisper to you; an inquirer in a daily paper wants to know if tithe-rent will be increased, as the price of corn will be increased, owing to the War? Oh, this Christian virtue, "unselfishness"; one cannot touch it without cracking one's sides. A mask for Freethinkers in the matter! Let us start a League for the Creation of Parsons, who live only on—air! And, whilst speaking of masks, let us not forget good Master Rabelais. Of such men, Nietzsche says, "I could imagine that a man with something costly and fragile to conceal would roll through life clumsily and rotundly like an old, green, heavily-hooped wine-cask; the refinement of his shame requiring it to be so." Verily, a true picture of the creator of Pantagruel, who delivered powerful blows to his enemies whilst wearing a mask; and his enemies were also the enemies of mankind. What inimitable twists and turns have been made by the supermen of mankind! In the degree of disguise, so must we estimate the power of the evil to be abolished. Aristophanes, Juvenal, Petronius, and Swift; if we could only get behind the masks they wore, what store of treasure should we find? The great god Pan complained of his ugliness, but none could withstand the melodious strains of the hoofed satyr.

In writing of "The Religious Mood," Nietzsche has many arresting opinions which demand attention. With an eye on the history of Christianity, he says, "Perhaps the most solemn conceptions that have caused the most fighting and suffering, the conceptions 'God' and 'Sin,' will one day seem to us of no more importance than a child's plaything, or a child's pain seems to an old man." Here, my masters, is no serious treatment of religion; one can see Hercules snapping in twain the holy rod of reverence—and piety hates laughter and healthy disrespect. Yea, brother, draw thy face as long as a fiddle, go on an excursion for the soul, and we will bear with thee; but, if thou comest with smiles, or with cap and bells, we will have none of thee. Sarah behind the door is the eternal symbol of human impropriety, and solemnity demands that laughter shall be whipped from the temples of Christianity. They order things better in the court of Jove—and the new philosophy, which is the old in a new dress. No man who can appreciate Aristophanes or Petronius will deny the dynamic power of laughter; we are not surprised to find that it has no place but a bad one in Scripture. How our hearts would have warmed towards many Biblical characters if only they had infused a little humor in their various productions.

In the final chapter, entitled "What is Noble?" there is a striking paragraph which recalls a certain description by Roosevelt of Thomas Paine. "He who does not wish to see the height of a man, looks all the more sharply at what is low in him, and in the foreground—and thereby betrays himself." The term of "filthy little Atheist," from the land of dollars and pastors, and that pestilent rubbish of a novel called *The Scarlet Letter*, betrays the author of it; and we will undertake to eat this article if we hear that Roosevelt is an admirer of the author of *Beyond Good and Evil*. The shilling edition by Foulis is splendid, if the purchaser treats with contempt the two extracts on the front cover; after all, one does not need two farthing candles to look at the sun!

CHRISTOPHER GAY.

The Lesson of China.

"BETWEEN whiles," the other day, I read a biography of a most remarkable man, with a sketch of his country and of the people on whose lives he had so great an influence. The biography was that of Sun Yat Sen, who was first heard of in England in 1896. His introduction to the English public was of a very sensational character. Through the papers the world was informed that a Chinaman had been kidnapped in London and was confined in the Chinese Embassy. An ambassadorial residence is technically foreign territory, and the man's life was said to be in danger. Of that fact there appears to be little doubt, although the intention was to ship Sun Yat Sen out of the country, transport him to China, and, once there, decapitation would have been certain—unless he had added one more to his long list of remarkable escapes. Fortunately, the British authorities intervened, and Sun Yat Sen was set at liberty. Fifteen years later this one time prisoner was elected first President of the first Chinese Republic.

The life of this man is written by Dr. Cantlie and Mr. C. S. Jones, the former of whom was a close friend of the subject of the book. His praise of Sun Yat Sen is unstinted, and on looking at the man's career, any exaggeration there may be seems excusable. Sun Yat Sen was born 1867, the son of a convert to the London Missionary Society. Without any particular social influence, he received a good education, and finally qualified as a doctor. In 1894, he formed a society of which the object was either the mending or ending of the Manchu governing power. In this society there were eighteen leading men. Of these eighteen no less than seventeen were beheaded within a very brief period. Sun Yat Sen was the only prominent survivor left. Small thanks to the authorities for this. For years a price was upon his head. The Government promised substantial rewards for either his capture or death. In spite of this, Sun Yat Sen traversed practically the whole of China, in various disguises, he visited America, England, the Malay Settlements—wherever Chinese were settled. And always with the one object of bringing about a much-needed revolution. But it was to be literally a revolution of the people, not that of a few leading the people. He had all a Chinaman's profound trust in the power of education, and on the whole, that trust was justified by events.

Interested as I have been in reading this life of Sun Yat Sen, the book has been even more interesting from the light it throws on the Chinese character and also for the way in which it shows how the West has influenced the East. This last part is hardly what the authors intended, but it is there, and some facts drawn from sources other than this work of Messrs. Cantlie and Jones still further illustrate this.

To commence with, one must always draw a sharp line between the Chinese people and the Chinese Government—at least, the Government as it was until yesterday. In other countries it is often the case that the Government but poorly represent the people, but in China there has been a radical distinction between them. For about two hundred years the Chinese have been under the control of the Manchu dynasty. Their conquest of China was a purely military one, and it remained the domination of a superior people by an inferior one. The Chinese had been a highly educated people for centuries. They were civilised when Europe was still overrun by painted savages. They were naturally, as Dr. Cantlie points out, "large minded, broad viewed, high principled, unprejudiced men." Their liberality in matters of religion has been noted by all writers of repute. China, says Mr. Parker in his authoritative work, *China and Religion*, at no period of her history has "ever for one instant refused hospitality and consideration to any religion." Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, Buddhists, have all been received and made welcome. Whatever trouble

there has been has originated from political and other causes.

Under Manchu rule the virtues of the Chinese were utilised to their enslavement. Their strong domestic discipline and respect for authority made it the more difficult for the Chinese to rebel once a Government had established itself. Yet there were rebellions, and on one occasion at least the Manchu dynasty was saved by the intervention of the European powers. Partly, the Manchu rule was made possible, as the authors point out, because the Chinese needed little government. They ruled themselves. The authors say:—

"The parental system so keenly upheld and rigidly taught by Confucius is the keynote of organisation through the length and breadth of China. For thousands of years the Chinese, as distinct from others of the Mongol race, have been a peaceful people; well bred in the sense of being capable of restraint; loving learning for learning's sake, and withal possessing a well ordered civilisation. Etiquette, ceremonial, and politeness have been looked upon as the essences of behavior. Respect for seniors, mindful of what is due to authority, and rendering due honor to parents has been instilled into the very fibre of their being ever since Confucius taught. A people thus trained and educated are easily governed; the government commences in the family, and all else follows. Neither the change of dynasties nor the inroads of barbaric neighbors have altered the character of the Chinese by one jot or tittle, and it will be a bad day for China should these excellent traditions of their race be disturbed."

Let me point out, in passing, that Dr. Cantlie quite agrees with all that has been said by others as to the commercial probity of the Chinese. That has, indeed, become proverbial. The Chinese merchant keeps his word in the absence of any written agreement. Could as much be said of merchants in Christian countries?

"Should the market have gone against the Chinese merchant, he would actually supply the goods at a loss to himself, but the bargain would be faithfully kept. Did the merchant who undertook the contract die in the meantime, his relatives would be instructed to carry out the transaction, even if the family lost thereby. Even with the 'foreign devil' the bargain was a consecration to be kept to the letter. Nor have the Chinese Government ever gone back upon their international financial undertakings with Europeans."

The Manchus adopted a very simple plan to conserve their rule—simple, but effective. Outwardly, all respect was paid to Chinese institutions. In reality all that was vital to their beneficent working was destroyed. Inventions and discoveries were discouraged, under pretence of respect to antiquity. Finding it impossible to stamp out education,—

"some clever men amongst them set to work to evolve a system of teaching which would count for nothing whilst at the same time they humored the people by allowing them to prosecute study of a kind. The writings of Confucius and other sages were curtailed, all parts relating to the criticism of their superiors were carefully eliminated, and only those parts were published for public reading in schools which taught complete obedience to authority. To keep the masses in ignorance was the deliberate purpose of the Manchus: the books they allowed to be published contained mere idioms.....Of instruction these books afforded none: their reading conveyed no knowledge—proverbs in poetic language, devoid of information, reasoning in a circle which led to nothing."

Europe is not unacquainted with the same method. It was the policy of the Christian Church for many generations. During the whole of the Middle Ages those who would study were kept busy on an eternal round that led nowhere. Their minds were kept employed, but it was on material that was utterly valueless. The Manchus of China and the Manchus of the Christian Church belong to the same family. The whole strength of the Manchu dynasty rested upon its avowed hostility to change—which Europeans have come to regard as characteristic of the Chinese—upon an avowed determination to preserve intact the institutions of the country. But this cannot be done. Paradoxical though it may sound

institutions can only be kept intact by constantly modifying them. An institution, to do tomorrow what it does to-day, must become modified to meet the necessities of changed condition. Then the institution really remains intact—that is, it continues to perform its original function. But to refuse modification in one direction is to ensure modification in another. If it does not change forward, it changes backward. There is no such thing as absolute inertia in human institutions. And the Manchus, by reason of their opposition to change, succeeded in making the institutions of China oppressive instead of helpful.

China became wrapped in a deadly torpor. It became a byword for stupid conservatism. At least, that is true so far as the ruling classes are concerned; although it is clear that the original Chinese character, though balked of free expression, was still there. What was needed was a shock from without. That, in fact, is the way in which every country gains the impetus to progress. And in the case of China the shock came from the aggressiveness of Europe. European nations became impressed with the value and importance of the Chinese markets. Envoys were sent in order to establish trading relations. The desired understanding did not follow, and the result was, on pretexts more or less genuine, "British artillery crashed into the consciousness of the sleeping Chinaman." Followed upon that the famous Taiping Rebellion, which lasted some fourteen years. Over and over again the Imperial troops were defeated, and the Manchus, who might have suffered complete defeat, were saved by Britain and France declaring war on China, beating back both Chinese and Manchu, and dictating their own terms of peace. Territorial concessions followed, and China was brought into close contact with European life and thought. Messrs. Cantlie and Jones apparently see little but good in that contact. And from one point of view they may be right in their view. But there are other aspects of the matter, and with these I will deal in a concluding article.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

The Alleged Higher Knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE, as everybody knows, is one of the most difficult subjects in philosophy. Numerous definitions of it there are, but of not one of them can it be said that it is self-evidently accurate. What is it to know? The philosophers are not agreed. Some argue that we know chiefly by intuition, without any exercise of the mental faculties. Others are equally convinced that all knowledge is empirical, gained alone by means of the senses and observation. Now, of all natural knowledge, however acquired, Mr. R. J. Campbell speaks disdainfully, virtually calling it ignorance, foolishness. To a remarkable explanation of that proposition Mr. Campbell devotes a whole sermon, which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for January 27, and which is from every point of view a most puzzling discourse. Take the following passage as a sample of the reasoning throughout:—

"What we ordinarily call knowledge is conditioned by our acquaintance with the phenomenal world; we can never get beyond that; our minds must work within it, and are only constituted for working within it."

That is precisely the position occupied by Free-thought. All knowledge is of what comes within the scope of our senses and observation, our minds not being constituted for obtaining knowledge in any other way. But having delivered himself of that undoubted truth, the reverend gentleman proceeds thus:—

"Transcendental truth is only revealed to goodness, not to secular wisdom. Suppose you possessed a mind of the encyclopaedic order, a mind that could embrace the whole domain of human knowledge, you would still

be helpless to do more than range within the limits of the phenomenal."

Here again all is true except the first sentence, which is fundamentally false. "Transcendental truth" is a totally meaningless expression, and the man who claims that he possesses it pretends to be wise beyond the limits of all human wisdom. We confidently ask, Where is such superhuman wisdom to be found? Has it ever been exhibited by a single human being from the beginning of the world till now? We have never observed the least sign of it among the Christians we have known.

Mr. Campbell admits that our knowledge of the phenomenal world is increasing every day, and already so vast is it that it is impossible for any man to grasp the whole of it. Then he adds:—

"But I beg of you to note that the most learned man in the world, whoever he may be, even if it were possible for him to know everything that is to be known and everything about everything, would still be groping about among phenomena; he knows nothing outside. His intellect is an instrument fashioned and adapted for this purpose, and works accordingly. As long as the world is what it is his mind can go on collecting facts and drawing inferences therefrom; but in a totally different kind of world he would be perfectly helpless; his painfully acquired knowledge would go for nothing."

That is to say, so far as this world is concerned natural knowledge is sufficient. There is among us to-day a vast host of good and noble people, who serve their day and generation with the utmost loyalty and efficiency, though they know absolutely nothing of any other world. To their transparent goodness no transcendental truth has ever been revealed. It is quite possible that "in a totally different kind of world" the knowledge so useful in this would go for nothing; but the existence of such a world is nothing but a metaphysical hypothesis. Though Mr. Campbell speaks of it with serene confidence, we venture to affirm that his ignorance of it is complete.

The reverend gentleman's statement of Idealism shows its utter absurdity. He tells us that science has enabled us to measure and weigh the planets, to estimate their distances from the earth and from each other, to ascertain that the sun is ninety-five million miles away, to discover how long it takes light to reach us from Sirius, the dog-star, and so forth. "But," exclaims the oracle of the City Temple, "all this is true only if space is real and time is real, not to speak of matter itself; and by the very constitution of our minds we are compelled to doubt all three." We maintain, on the contrary, that by the very constitution of our minds we are compelled to regard all three as real. Even if the Universe is infinite, it does not follow that it is on this account any less real, though "infinity" in Mr. Campbell's sense is merely a metaphysical assumption, incapable of verification. In any case, we fail to appreciate its bearing upon the argument. But among all the inane utterances we have ever come across, the following easily holds the first place:—

"What about the human body? Medical and surgical science has done some wonderful things in relation thereto, and is doing more and more every day. But suppose physical consciousness could function in a world where physical bodies were not needed; what then? Where would our medical knowledge and surgical skill be then? Suppose we did not need to eat and drink, or to have feet to walk with, eyes to see with, and hands to grasp and hold with, what would be the use of these organs, and what sort of body should we have without them?"

All we know is that consciousness, whatever it may be, is invariably associated with a physical organism, and that when that organism dies, consciousness ceases to function. All living beings known to us have bodies, and must use their feet and eyes and hands in order to preserve and nourish their life. On what ground then does Mr. Campbell imagine that a time is coming when we shall be independent of the body and its organs?

We take the world as it is, and make the most of it. We strive to know it better and better, some know-

ledge of it being essential to a harmonious life. It never occurs to us to wonder whether or not there is another world wherein the knowledge gathered in this will have no value. But Mr. Campbell seems to take delight in assuming the reality of all sorts of unthinkable things, such as "a world where there were no longer successive dynasties and nationalities to consider, where, indeed, there were no successions at all, no new generations being born, playing their little part for a while and then passing away, no killing or hurting anybody—and how could there be but for the flesh"—a world in which the treasures of literature and art would be nothing but vapor that would vanish away. We declare that such an impossible and incongruous world exists only in the preacher's own brain. The reason knows nothing of it. And yet Mr. Campbell assures us that unaided human reason can of itself infer the existence and the goodness of God. We are equally convinced that "unaided" human reason leads those who consult it without bias to the conviction that the belief in God and his goodness is a relic of ancient superstition. We know of many who were ardent believers until they saw their way to listen dispassionately to the voice of reason within them. To-day they are avowed Atheists. They have passed from darkness into light, from faith into knowledge. Mr. Campbell's eulogy of faith is in his usual style. He allows himself to be borne away on the crest of a big wave of emotionalism. The wisdom of this world is foolishness in his sight, all real knowledge being the offspring of faith.

Now comes the end of the whole matter. At first we wondered why such an angry tirade against worldly wisdom was indulged in; but now we understand. Listen:—

"See what culture has brought us to to-day, especially the great nation with which we are engaged in bloody strife. German doctrinaires have preached, in season and out of season, the gospel of salvation by culture. They have shown cleverness conjoined to a hard heart and cold sympathies."

Culture, however, is not an exclusively German commodity, and every civilised country believes that its own culture is superior to that of every other country; and it was only natural that Germany should have been anxious to impose its own culture upon the rest of Europe. But the awful atrocities perpetrated in Belgium, the North of France, and Britain's coast, are not the outcome of German culture, but of a strain in the blood, to which the Duke of Wellington referred a hundred years ago, when culture was conspicuous only by its absence. Besides, we know now that the deeds of frightfulness were committed, not by followers of Nietzsche, but by members of evangelical churches, who carried prayer-books on their breasts. We are not champions of Germany, while we positively loathe German militarism; but our sense of justice compels us to say that there is, on the whole, as much faith in Germany as in Great Britain. In any case, cruelty is not an attribute of culture, though cultured people often fall into it; and if we survey history we shall learn that the Christian faith and cruelty have frequently gone hand in hand. In short, if you read the history of all the religious wars on record, you will discover that not one of them was free from deeds of barbarism. The so-called "higher knowledge" has never made for peace, but must be held responsible for many of the most brutal conflicts in the history of the world.

J. T. LLOYD.

What An Infidel Did.

"O comrade, lustrous with silver face in the night,"

—WALT WHITMAN.

FEW men have ever done so much for their suffering fellows as Walt Whitman, the great American poet, who made his home for four years in a garret in Washington during the storm and stress of the great American Civil War, 1861 to 1865. Here he lived on

the simplest fare, earning what he could as a journalist, and spending every spare moment in the soldiers' hospitals. Day after day, week after week, month after month, he entered those wards with cheerful face and hands full of flowers or fruit, laying them on the beds as he passed with a smile or a kind word. Every sad, wearied face brightened as he passed. He sat for hours by the wounded, writing letters, and receiving farewell messages. Dying men passed away in his arms, soothed and comforted by his presence, when their need was sorest. Four long years of this incessant battle with death and disease broke his magnificent health, and the icy touch of paralysis chilled his blood. This grandly moulded man, who, in his prime, was an ideal of manly beauty, became a lifelong invalid in the service of his suffering fellows.

Truly his life was his most beautiful poem. In the world's great antiphon there are many sweeter but few nobler singers than this great American Freethinker, for those who have caught the undertone of his free and fearless verse recognise within it the deepest message known to the sons of men. Few men had such an acquaintance with death, and in his poems he has treated this eternal theme with a new power and significance. The awful dreams that may come in that sleep of death have no terror for "the tan-faced poet of the West." To him the dead are made one with Nature, and throughout his verse death is presented as a friend, is "lovely and soothing," and the body, weary of life, turns like a tired child "gratefully nestling close" in the bosom of his soothing mother.

Never has the loveliness of death been sung in a more sane song than the solemn death-carol in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," that magnificent dirge on the greatest of the American Presidents:—

"Dark mother, always gliding near with soft feet;
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song, that when thou must indeed come,
come unfalteringly.
Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields
and the prairies wide,
Over the dense packed cities all and the teeming wharves
and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death."

Truly, Whitman was a pioneer. He left the priests and their superstitions far behind. Beyond the fabled hells, the tiresome purgatories, and the tawdry paradises, the resplendent vision of the great poet floods the sky, like "the noiseless splash of sunshine," and pours its serene splendor over the world.

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Apologetics.

LORD A. C. HERVEY (No. 2).

IT may be remembered that Lord A. C. Hervey, Bishop of Bath and Wells, in endeavoring to prove the authenticity of the Gospel of Luke, elected to do so by demonstrating (1) that the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were written by the same hand, and (2) that the writer of the Acts was Luke, a fellow-laborer of Paul. The first of these alleged facts is admitted by all critics; for the Gospel of Luke and the Acts, besides being written for the use of the same Theophilus, contain a large number of peculiar forms of expression (in the Greek) which are found in no other books of the New Testament save those two—and for several other reasons. But that the compiler of the Third Gospel and the Acts was Luke, a colleague of Paul, is a matter which no Biblical critic has yet been able to prove.

Following in the footsteps of Dr. Henry Wace, our orthodox apologist says (p. 68):—

"The writer of the Acts, during a portion of the events which he relates, was himself present..... We learn this *with absolute certainty* from what are called the 'we' passages. In those the writer, instead of saying, *They* did so and so, says *We* did so and so."

After further commenting upon the "we" narratives, and noting the companions of Paul who did not write the book, our worthy Bishop says (p. 71):—

"Who, then, was the writer? The writer, whoever he was, came with St. Paul to Rome, and stayed there during two years. Now during those two years St. Paul wrote epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and to Philemon."

In the last two of these epistles the name of Luke is mentioned, which fact our Bishop notices. He says (p. 72):—

"Here we learn for certain that Luke was at Rome with St. Paul.....and was specially loved by St. Paul. He had endeared himself to the Apostle by long and tried service, by faithful, devoted attachment, by companionship in labor and peril."

Perhaps. But there are three circumstances which must first be considered. In the first place, we do not know that these two epistles were written by Paul; in the next, that they were written at Rome; and lastly, that the "we" writer remained with Paul in Rome. Only the first four of the so-called Pauline Epistles—Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians—are generally considered authentic, and in these Luke's name is not once mentioned. Next, the subscription at the end of each Epistle, in the oldest MSS., names only the person or church addressed; as—"To Philemon"—"To the Colossians." The words "Written from Rome," etc., were added several centuries later. In the next place, the "we" narrative does not go farther than the arrival at Rome. Thus, those two epistles which should have proved so much, prove nothing. We do not learn for certain that Luke was at Rome with St. Paul.

Again, is it a fact that Luke was so "specially loved" by Paul as our Bishop has just stated? Let us see:—

Col. iv. 10—14.—"Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas, and Jesus who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision: these only are my fellow workers, who have been a comfort unto me. Epaphras, who is one of you, saluteth you.....Luke the beloved physician, and Demas saluteth you."

Here, notwithstanding the term "beloved," it is clear that Luke was not one of those "specially loved" by the writer, even if we assume that the writer was Paul. Returning to the "we" narratives in the Acts, our apologetic Bishop appears never to have noticed that the writer, when he said "we" and "us," did not refer to himself and Paul, and could not therefore have been a colleague of the latter. This question I have already dealt with, so I will pass on.

Turning next to what he deems a new line of proof, Bishop Hervey says:—

"We are told by St. Paul that Luke was a physician. Now that necessarily implies a man of liberal education. Accordingly we find the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles written in very good classical Greek, and in an excellent style.....If the writer of the Acts was a physician, we should expect to find some traces of it in his writing.....There are in the Acts alone 233 words which are distinctly medical terms, not all of them of course exclusively so, but all of them words specially used by medical writers.....The number of such words in Luke's Gospel is 252."

There can be no doubt that the writer of the Third Gospel and the Acts was "a man of liberal education"—for the age in which he lived—but this was not because he was a physician; for we have no contemporary evidence on the latter subject at all. Irenæus (A.D. 185) having stated in his book on Heresies that the Third Gospel was written by Luke, a companion of Paul, all later writers accepted the statement, and quite naturally identified this colleague with the Luke mentioned in the Colossians.

I come now to that abnormal amount of medical language—233 words—in the Book of the Acts, which our learned Bishop tells us "are distinctly medical terms," and also to the 252 words of the same character in Luke's Gospel. And I would first like to ask if there are any English readers who, having read

these two books right through, have noticed even a dozen "distinctly medical terms"? I venture to say there is not one. Lord Hervey, however, explains that his statement refers to the words in the Greek, and he gives some selected examples from the Acts which, he says, were "habitually employed by such writers as Hippocrates, Aretæus, Galen, and Dioscorides." The best of these wonderful examples are the following passages, in which the "distinctly medical terms" are given in italics.

Acts i. 3.—"by many infallible proofs."

"i. 4.—"to wait for the promise of the Father."

"i. 18.—"and falling headlong he burst asunder."

"ii. 13.—"They are full of new wine."

"iv. 17.—"that it spread no further."

"viii. 1.—"they were all scattered abroad."

"x. 11.—"a sheet knit at the four corners."

"xix. 29.—"the city was filled with confusion."

"xxi. 30.—"the people ran together."

"xxiii. 33.—"and delivered the epistle."

The foregoing represent nearly the whole of Lord Hervey's selected examples of "distinctly medical terms"—the words in the Greek being omitted—from which it will be perceived that the so-called medical language in Luke's Gospel and the Acts is purely imaginary. That these examples (in the Greek) are found in no other New Testament writings save the Acts, and that the last-named book contains over two hundred more—these facts simply prove that Luke was a better Greek scholar than the other New Testament writers, and that he had a more extensive vocabulary at his command. The examples here given, even though they may have been employed by Greek medical writers, are all ordinary words in the Greek, and were used by every educated person, medical or otherwise. It will be understood, of course, that many of the foregoing italicised words are found in English in other books of the New Testament; but those words in the Greek, though having the same meaning, are not the words employed by Luke.

Further on in his book (p. 134), when trying to impress upon his readers the weight that ought to be accorded to accounts written by a physician, our Bishop says:—

"The profession of a physician is one which pre-eminently requires learning, knowledge, sagacity, and judgment. The habits of close observation, nice discrimination, accurate diagnosis, and careful statement, are the essential features of a physician.....He is led, too, to receive with caution statements made to him by his patients, and carefully to test the symptoms of disease.....And this professional habit naturally induces a similar habit of caution in matters which are not professional. We have then, in Luke's calling as a physician, a guarantee that we have not to deal with a credulous, thoughtless, careless retailer of mere gossip and ignorant tales, but with a sensible and discriminating observer, used to test things reported as facts, and to make a difference between random assertions and trustworthy evidence of competent witnesses."

Thus our great orthodox Bishop, after assuming that the writer of the Third Gospel and the Acts was the "Luke the beloved physician" of the Colossians, next attributes to that evangelist all the qualities that go to make up an ideal modern physician—but which are very seldom found in any one individual. It would be useless to ask our episcopal apologist for his authority for so doing; he has none whatever. It may, perhaps, be more to the point to ask how Luke "tested" the sayings and doings of the angel Gabriel which he has related in his Gospel (Luke i. 13—20; 26—38), or how he tested the story of Satan showing Jesus "all the inhabited earth"—that is what he states in the Greek—from the top of a mountain, or of the same arch-fiend placing his antagonist on "the pinnacle of the temple"? How did Luke test these "ignorant tales"? Needless to say, he did not test them; he had no means of doing so. He simply took the accounts from some crude apocryphal writings in existence in his time, and, after re-writing them in better language, he placed them in his Gospel as historical matters of fact. Moreover, we learn from Luke's Gospel that its compiler—whatever his profession may have been—firmly

believed in the existence of the demons which he has represented Jesus as casting out. He even reports a case of which Matthew and Mark had apparently never heard (Luke xiii. 11—16), and makes Jesus say:—

"Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?"

There are several other matters in Lord Hervey's book that might be proved to be apologetic nonsense; but this is scarcely necessary, for all his main positions are shown to be unwarrantable assumptions.

ABRACADABRA.

Acid Drops.

The new volume of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* has several comments on Thomas Paine, among others the following:—

"He combined a rough historical criticism of the Bible with the argument that the Jewish and Christian conceptions of the Deity were incompatible with the Deism revealed to man by external nature and by his own conscience. In this way, the truculent pamphleteer seems to stand near one of the sources of modern theology."

"Truculent" is sadly out of place, for Paine was not really a truculent man. He was a fighter, and always ready to take up arms in defence of any cause he believed to be just. He proved this in England, in America, and in France. But there is no evidence that Paine ever went out of his way to seek a quarrel, that he pursued one with vindictiveness, or mistook attacks on persons for an advocacy of principles. But we suppose that writers in "respectable" histories feel themselves under a sort of compulsion to qualify their criticism of Paine with some such epithet as the one noted.

A *Church Times* reviewer, in citing this passage, observes, "We confess that the meaning of this dark saying is beyond us." We fail to see anything "dark" about it. It expresses no more than the bare truth. It summarises Paine's attitude towards Biblical Christianity very fairly, and indicates how much modern theology is indebted to him. For it is exactly on the grounds of the testimony of conscience and the God revealed by a study of nature that modern "liberal religion" rests. There is, in fact, very little of the substance of Paine's religious criticism that modern advanced Christians would take exception to. We should; but then we live a long while after Paine. So do the clergy; but they have only just reached Paine's position. They are a hundred years late, but that is "advanced" for a Christian clergyman. Some of them are still several centuries behind Paine. In another century or so they may be where we are.

The writer of the chapter that deals with Paine is Mr. C. W. Previt6-Orton, and there is enough in what he says to lead one to believe that in his comments he is more or less following a fashion, or it may be he felt that praise of Paine must be accompanied by some disparaging epithets. For example, while it is admitted that "his public spirit led him to disregard all profit from political works which had a large sale," and that all he had ever asked from the American Governments "were the barest payments on account of admitted services to the United States" (payments that were not always received, by the way), and that "his shrewdness made him a formidable critic even of Burke," he is referred to as "coarse-grained." In what is intended to be an authoritative history of English literature, issued under the patronage of Cambridge University, such an experience makes one despair of English fair play. Coarse-grained, Paine certainly was not. There is hardly a writer of his time that displayed more of what his contemporaries would have called "sensibility." And so far as the political and theological pamphleteers of his time are concerned, he is head and shoulders above them all in restraint of language and chastity of style. Over and over again he refrains from "coarseness" or "vulgarity" where his text invites it, and where the taste of his time would have quite excused it. Paine's style was not only remarkably simple and direct, it was strikingly free from expressions that could offend anyone who reads him with a remembrance that he wrote at the close of the eighteenth century, and can forget that he attacked the twin fetishes of English Christianity—the Bible and the Monarchy.

It is, says Mr. Moncure Conway, "the fate of all genius potent enough to survive a century that its language will here and there seem coarse.....Only the instructed minds can set their classic nudities in the historic perspective that reveals their innocency and value. Paine's book has done as much to modify human belief as any ever written. It is one of the very few religious works of the last century which survives in unsectarian circulation. It requires a scholarly perception to recognise in its occasional expressions, by some called 'coarse,' the simple Saxon of Norfolk-shire." This well summarises the position. The unquestionable vulgarity and coarseness of many of Paine's opponents is forgotten, first because they wrote in defence of Christianity, and second because no one reads them nowadays. They are buried beneath their own impotence. But their charges against Paine have survived because it has suited defenders of Christianity to repeat them. Mr. Previt6-Orton says that "A thick crop of slanders grew up around him, without, apparently, any foundation save the fact that he was occasionally drunk." In an age when everybody drank, and drunkenness was habitual with the majority of its famous men, an "occasional" fit of drunkenness calls for no very severe censure. It is a pity that Mr. Previt6-Orton did not reflect that his description of Paine as "coarse-grained," etc., rests ultimately on this "thick crop of slanders" which he repudiates.

A good story has been told by the *Star* of a church parade at a training camp. Noticing that the company was under strength, a new captain asked the reason: "Well, sir," explained the sergeant, "we've sixteen Catholics, twelve Wesleyans, six Methodists, two Jews, and four peeling potatoes."

A Toronto parson, Mr. Byron Stauffer, has reproached Mr. William J. Bryan, the American politician, on his silence whilst the Germans are violating every principle of the Hague Convention. "Continued silence," Mr. Stauffer adds, "gives the lie to your lectures and sermons." A palpable hit!

"Britain's contributions to civilisation is bounded on the East by Magna Charta and on the West by the week-end," says the *New York Evening Post*. The week-end is a growing habit, and so desolate is the City after three o'clock on Saturday afternoon that if our Blessed Savior came there on that day there would be only a few belated stragglers to welcome him.

M. Thiebaud, a Swiss clergyman, who has arrived from Belgium, says, "Short of a miracle, old men, women, and children will die of hunger this winter in Belgium." Unhappily, miracles no longer happen.

Christians do not know the Bible nearly so well as Freethinkers. Recently a London newspaper quoted the words, "Like the shadow of a rock in a thirsty land." Of course, this should be "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Journalists think, evidently, that other places are as thirsty as Fleet-street.

Dr. William Barry, the Roman Catholic theologian, has been writing on "Rationalism Losing Heart," in the *Tablet*. Other theologians pretend that Freethought is dead; but this looks as if the corpse was still lively.

The "Come to church campaign" does not appear to have produced very remarkable results—on the first Sunday of the two, at any rate. In London the congregations averaged rather less than usual, although Rev. F. B. Meyer thinks the outlook extremely promising. In Warrington there were 18,000 invitations, and the results are said to have been "very noticeable"—which may mean anything or nothing. In Birmingham 172,000 special invitations were issued, and the promoters say they were satisfied. Elsewhere increased attendances are reported, "without placing a severe tax on the accommodation provided." We think we will stop there. An expression of that kind almost achieves genius. We haven't the least doubt that if a "Get your hair cut campaign" were started, in order to get people to have their hair trimmed on a particular date, that the barbers would be a little busier than usual. Advertising will do almost anything; but at present the only people who appear to have clearly gained by the campaign are the printers.

"Artifex" deals with this "Come to Church Campaign" in the *Manchester Guardian*, and quotes with approval the remark of another writer that the real question is, "Why do

people ever go to Church?" We quite agree that this is the question, at least its determination will help to settle the other. Hazlitt said that if the middle-class Englishman were asked the question in confidence, he would reply that he went because his wife took him. With most people it is certainly a matter of habit or convenience. Plenty go because they were taught to go early in life, and have still some vague kind of notion that it is the "proper" thing to do. Others go because their neighbors go, and it becomes part of a social performance. Yet others find it a not very inconsiderable aid to business. The truth of this is seen in the general complaint of the clergy that when their members move into a new district they are frequently lost altogether to that particular church. This would hardly happen if church-going rested on any genuine conviction.

In the end, "Artifex" falls back upon the well-worn but stupid explanation that some people have never cultivated the spiritual side of their nature, or else they have allowed it to atrophy. "Artifex" might set himself the task of explaining how it happens that the "spiritual" part of man's nature atrophies so easily if religion is so insistent and so imperative a need. The whole truth is, that in a civilised society religious worship is not a "natural" expression at all. It is a carefully cultivated habit, and is so far artificial, that at the slightest opportunity it falls into disuse. "Artifex," being a clergyman, is naturally disturbed, not alone that people stay away from church, but that they do it so easily and so comfortably. A fashion naturally loses caste when the number of its votaries diminish.

Sunday evening services at Yarmouth have been suspended since the Zeppelin raid. Evidently the authorities feel that the prayers of the faithful count for very little by way of protection while Zeppelins are hovering round.

The Russian troops have been stopped by mud on the slopes of Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark is supposed to have rested. Christian Evidence lecturers will quote this as a proof of the truth of the deluge.

An enthusiastic leader-writer recently described the natives of the Carpathian Mountains as "born liars." In this they resembled the writers of the Bible.

A Young Men's Christian Association hut, which has been erected recently at Southend-on-Sea, has already had two outbreaks of fire. Christians say that they can guarantee against fire in the next world; they do not appear to be so successful in this one.

President Fitch, of Andover Seminary, has expressed his astonishment at "the apparent failure of organised Christianity to speak any guiding and authoritative word" on the European War. "The Churches," he adds, "seem to be gently perpetuating with diminishing momentum the force of an inherited habit." What is to be expected when Christians pretend to worship the God of Battles and the Prince of Peace at one and the same time?

On Sunday, January 21—the day of the naval battle in the North Sea—it seems that the pious folk of Edinburgh were thrown into something resembling a state of panic. A telephonic message was received by the Lord Provost from a high Government official, suggesting that prayers should be said in all the churches on behalf of the officers and men in the Navy. Police messengers were sent round to all the churches; hence the state of fear into which the people were thrown. Probably they thought that if prayers were urgently required things must be getting in a bad way. After all, the urgency of prayer always results from things being in a more or less desperate condition.

"Strangely enough, many have been talking as if this European War was a proof of the bankruptcy of Christianity," writes the Rev. W. Quibell in the Hednesford Parish Magazine. It is not so strange to the layman, for the Christian God is supposed to have given the commands, "Thou shalt not kill," and "Forgive your enemies," yet 21,000,000 Christians are trying to murder each other.

What a democratic country this is! An official advertisement appeared recently in the halfpenny press asking those who employed butlers, grooms, chauffeurs, gardeners, and gamekeepers to endeavor to make these men enlist. Surely

England is no longer a nation of shopkeepers, which worships a carpenter-god? —

Mr. Bottomley advertises himself as "the man who foretold the War," and does a music-hall turn on the strength of it. Poor Mr. Blatchford! According to his own reporter, in his own journal (and if *John Bull* says it, it is so), the object of the great man's speech in the Albert Hall was to "assist true Religion." And what is true Religion? We suppose it is something like this, which is the peroration of his speech from the pen of his own reporter:—

"At the end he drew us a picture of what the final victory might win; a world purged of the peril of party, cleansed of the curse of warring sects and creeds, and freed for ever from the hideous menace of militarism. He showed us, and we could see with him, a brighter and clearer road for humanity to tread, with the Prince of Peace at the end, pointing to the Star of Bethlehem, which leads us up to God!"

Don't, Mr. Bottomley, don't. You'll never equal Billy Sunday in that line.

No less than thirty tents erected by the Y. M. C. A. were completely wrecked in the recent gales. Providence is quite as impartial with regard to these "Protestant" tents as to the Catholic cathedrals and churches.

At the Stratford Police Court recently, a man who had taken deacon's orders, was sued by his wife for maintenance. It was stated that the defendant had eight illegitimate children. The record does not say much for the restraining power of religion.

The conspiracy of silence on the part of the Christian press concerning Freethinkers and Freethought has latterly taken a more sinister turn, for the offences of the clergy are now slurred over, or ignored. In a recent police-court case, at Bow-street, in which a parson was summoned for owning a disorderly house, some of the newspapers omitted to mention that the defendant was a minister.

Canon Carnegie, rector of St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, has been lamenting the fact of the great preponderance of women over men in most Christian congregations. Yet he thinks that the country is at the beginning of a profound religious revival. It looks as if this will prove a case of feminine hysteria.

An American citizen writes to the *Christian World* warning English people of the dangers England will run by opening up diplomatic relations with the Vatican. He points out that in America, Roman Catholics are gaining political power and using it in the interests of their Church. This we can quite believe; only we do not know that any Christian body that gains political power would fail to use it to a similar end. This gentleman wishes the Catholics to act as "loyal and tolerant Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and other Protestants" do. From what we hear of America, this strikes us as not being a very lofty ideal. There has been of late quite a number of petty police prosecutions against freedom of speech in the United States, and we have not observed any anxiety on the part of American Protestants to stop them; rather the contrary. Of course, these prosecutions would probably be more numerous and more savage if Catholicism had greater power; but that is because the Roman Catholic Church is one, while the divisions amongst Protestants prevent sustained unity of action.

Complaint is made that "Rome has come to our shores with the avowed intention 'to make America Catholic.'" Quite so; and as a Freethinker, we are of opinion that Rome is quite within its rights, so long as it works on legitimate lines. After all, it is only what other sects are aiming at, here as well as in America. The way to stop the Roman Church making America Catholic is by educating Americans so that their conversion to Rome becomes a practical impossibility. That is the only real security, and that is why Freethinkers do not ask for the kind of protection after which the American Protestant is hankering. But, of course, educating people against Roman Catholicism is a dangerous game—for Protestants. It may easily be—nay, it probably will be—that in the end you have educated them against Protestantism as well. The policy of ostracism and the appeal to the police for protection is much safer—and much more in accord with religious traditions.

The Young Men's Christian Association has a periodical of its own, which is modestly announced as the *British Empire Y.M.C.A. Weekly*. The first two numbers are

crowded with warlike matter; but very little is said about the divine command, "Thou shalt not kill."

Through a delightful misprint, a daily newspaper stated recently that a well-known clergyman was "confined to his house with a child." Happily, the age of miracles is past.

At the Tooting Home for the Aged and Infirm, Captain Jackson, an ancient mariner, died recently at the age of 107. The journalists never mention that still more ancient mariner, Captain Noah, who is said to have lived 950 years.

"Eye-Witness," the facetious gentleman who writes the official records of the fighting for the British public, has been poking fun at the German prayers "against cannon, or blows from behind." There is as much cause for criticism in the supplications for fine and wet weather in the Government religion Prayer Book.

Parish magazines are a perpetual source of humorous delight. The Hednesford Parish Magazine for January contains the following example of clerical wisdom concerning the European War: "It seems as if nearly every fine and noble thing were in eclipse—but No!—self-sacrifice is the finest and noblest of things—and that is Christian." As there are tens of thousands of Freethinkers in the armies of the Allies, who are sacrificing themselves, the writer had better try again.

The *Challenge*, a Church of England paper, has great hopes of America because it possesses a strong groundwork of religious sentiment. Up to the present this religious sentiment seems to have expressed itself chiefly in relation to British interference with the profits of some of its financial magnates. It is quite certain that far more noise has been made over this than over those atrocities and ignoring of the rules of "civilised" warfare against which the United States would have been quite justified in raising a very strong protest. The *Challenge* points out that American religious sentiment has shown itself in its efforts to feed the starving poor of Belgium. We do not see its connection with religion, but it is necessary to point out that "charity" is the most easily practised of virtues. You will find a thousand people ready to be charitable for one who is ready to be just. And it is justice the world needs most. A strong sense of justice would render unnecessary a very large part of the charity that people pride themselves in dispensing.

The same paper observes that there are "two great types of modern democracy—the continental and the Anglo-Saxon. The continental type was tainted in its origin by the Atheism of the French Revolution.....The Anglo-Saxon type rose from Puritan origins, and has never lost its relation to religion." This is, of course, a division conveniently created for propagandist purposes, but it is without foundation in fact. Democracy was a fact in the world long before Puritanism was heard of. Puritanism never aimed at a democracy at all; its ideal was theocracy—which is a very different affair. Moreover, although it is true that English influences played their part in creating the French Revolution, it remains true that in relation to modern democracy the most vitalising of forces were those developed during this same French Revolution. In a very real sense it marked the birth of the modern democratic world. Its influence extended all over Europe, and despots everywhere paid it the compliment of their unstinted hatred. Of course, it practically left God out of account, and that was its unforgivable offence.

Dean Inge has been drawing attention to the tributes of admiration paid by Freethinkers to the "Christian Saint." He says:—

"It is one of the characteristics of the writings of our time that even those who have no definite Christian faith themselves are able to a large extent to sympathise with and admire the Christian Saint. The best Life of St. Bernard was written by James Cotter Morison, who, in *The Service of Men*, made a bitter attack upon nearly all that we mean by Christianity. The best Life of St. Francis of Assisi is by Sabatier, who, if he were in this country, would probably be a Unitarian. One of the best Lives of St. Teresa is by Mrs. Cunninghame Graham, who does not write as a believer. It is something to be thankful for that the beauty of holiness should be recognised by those who stand outside the Christian pale, and ungrudgingly admitted."

This is quite true, but Dean Inge quite mistakes the ground of these appreciations. It is not the "beauty of holiness" that these writers recognise, but the essence of human character, whether manifested in a religious or a secular form. And it is a striking tribute to the Catholicity of

mind encouraged by Freethought. The qualities which a man like Cotter Morison admired in St. Bernard he would be the first to point out were not a product of Christianity. They were, broadly, human qualities which expressed themselves in a Christian form as the result of a mere accident of environment.

Those who have wondered why the advance of the Allies has not been more rapid will have had an explanation offered them by the Rev. Gooding May, of Broadway Rectory, Dorset. This gentleman affirms that the beginning of all the trouble was the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. Without that there could have been no Home Rule, and the Home Rule Bill led to disturbances in Ireland, which led the Kaiser to assume that there would be revolution in Ireland, and would thus prevent England taking part in the War. Then the Allies were progressing, the Germans were retreating from their advance on Paris, the Russians were advancing, and no disaster had occurred to the Fleet. But the Government unwisely refused to defer the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and since the passing of that Act "everything had failed the Allies." Nor can we hope for improvement unless Parliament decides, when it meets, to withdraw the Act. So there is the plain issue. If the Government sticks to the Disestablishment Bill no progress will be made with the War. If the Government will throw over the Disestablishment Bill, the Germans will wither away like snow before the sun. God is simply withholding victory from the Allies, because on the day that peace is declared, "the Welsh Church will be robbed of her ancient endowments."

There is one thing at least that is truly international. That is Christian cant. The other day the Kaiser declared that he agreed with John Knox, "The man with God on his side is always in a majority." From the tone of some of the papers here they seem to regard that as quite unjustifiable. "God" is a sort of monopoly of England and Russia. Now, Herr J. G. Lehmann, Vice-President of the Baptist World Alliance, is discovering a new use for religion in this War. As Germans, says Herr Lehmann:—

"We believe that after our victory over Russia that empire will be obliged to give greater liberties to our Baptist brethren. We imagine that God's purpose in the Mohammedan alliance with Germany might be to make Germany the instrument of evangelising Mohammedan countries."

One ought to feel quite grateful to France for *not* seeing any purpose of God in bringing about the War.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who does odd jobs for the Catholics in the intervals of more serious writing, has been criticising adversely Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought*. His criticism takes the form of a pamphlet, *Anti-Catholic History: How it is Written*, and Mr. Belloc makes great play with a number of minor errors, such as the date of St. Augustine's death, and the exact year of the publication of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry*. Christian apologists have to be thankful for small mercies nowadays, and even a proof-reader's blunders cause them to burst into print.

WOMAN AND WAR.

Another thing that we must look to with some hope for the future is the influence of women. Profoundly shocked as they are by the senseless folly and monstrous bloodshed of the present conflict, it is certain that when this phase is over they will insist on having a voice in the politics of the future. The time has gone by when the mothers and wives and daughters of the race will consent to sit by meek and silent, while the men in their madness are blowing each other's brains out and making mountains out of corpses. It is hardly to be expected that war will cease from the earth this side of the millennium; but women will surely only condone it when urged by some tremendous need or enthusiasm; they will not rejoice—as men sometimes do—in the mere lust of domination and violence. With their keen perception of the little things of life, and the way in which the big things are related to these, they will see too clearly the cost of war in broken hearts and ruined homes to allow their men to embark in it short of the direst necessity.—Edward Carpenter, "English Review."

WHOM DO WE BELIEVE?

"The new philosophy of Germany is to destroy Christianity. It will be a diet of blood and iron."—Lloyd George.
General von Moltke: "Trust in God."
General von Heeringen: "May the trust in God....."
Field-Marshal von Hindenburg: ".....of the fear of God."
Kaiser: "God.....God.....God." In any paper, any day.
—Extracts from Messages of German Commanders.

To Correspondents.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We cannot say now to whom the reading was due, but we have corrected the date in this week's "Sugar Plums."

H. G.—Under consideration.

J. F. CRICK.—We have instructed our shop manager to act as you desire. At the same time we thank you for the implied compliment to our work.

H. MARTIN.—You seem to be suffering from depression, which is probably due to the generally unhealthy social atmosphere prevailing. Naturally, advanced movements have suffered during the past six months. In times of stress people retrench on luxuries, and opinions come under that head with most folk. Still, Freethought will not be killed by what journalists have got into the habit of calling the "greatest"—when they mean the "largest"—war in history. After the War there should be plenty of opportunities for a very vigorous propaganda. Meanwhile, we must keep on pegging away.

H. G. FARMER.—Shall appear. The rest shall be looked into and reprinted or not, as seems desirable.

A. MILLAR.—Not at all bad, but you must write in ink on one side of the paper, and are you not rather too ambitious in playing the part of Burns to the Devil, or the Devil to Burns?

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The generous Freethinker who has made up the last penny of the full amount of the President's Honorarium Fund for 1914 is Mr. Philip G. Peabody, of Boston, U.S.A.; a gentleman who has long been a liberal supporter of many "advanced" causes in various parts of the world,—for he is a great traveller. Mr. Peabody had to draw a considerable cheque to cover the deficit in this Fund. It is the second time he has done this, and we beg to tender him our warmest thanks. Altogether the party has "shelled out" particularly well in 1914,—considering that during five months of the year war has been raging all over Europe, and even in other parts of the world.

The President's Honorarium Circular will appear in our next issue, with a list of the subscriptions received up to date, and a selection of remarks from subscribers' letters, with some further remarks by the President himself.

Mr. Foote attended the Law Courts on Monday morning and was highly pleased with his experience there. The case of Bowman Deceased and the Secular Society, Ltd., and Others, came on for a partial hearing before Mr. Justice Joyce sitting as Master, the specific matter being the affidavits of the various parties in the action. Mr. Justice Joyce was astonishingly clear-minded and free-spoken. One of the other parties', for instance, in an affidavit, referred to Mr. Foote as a well-known Freethinker, the leader of a body of people called Secularists, and one who had been imprisoned by the offence of blasphemy; and argued that a Society led by such a gentleman would, of course, be contrary to the public welfare. Now, the Secular Society, Ltd., was not established until fifteen years after Mr. Foote's imprisonment, and Mr. Justice Joyce called this an "infamous" reference. You might as well, he remarked, state that a man had been imprisoned fifteen years ago for poaching. His Lordship said that, for his part, he did not understand so many actions in the case before him, except there was a conspiracy to run up a big bill of costs. The only advice he would give was that the executors should proceed with the administration of the testator's will as he made it and left it, and not as other people fancy he ought to have made and left it. His Lordship had very carefully read the

Memorandum and Articles of the Secular Society, Ltd., and what was there in them to justify its being called "unlawful"? In his opinion, for what it was worth in his then position, the Society was perfectly lawful. It had been registered as such. And if its friends chose to give or leave it money, why shouldn't they? Money is given or left to the Jesuits in England, and why draw the line anywhere else? As to the publication of books, this was a free country, and people must put up with free speech, especially when printed in books or pamphlets, which they were not bound to read or even to look at. He could not hold out a hope that they would ever succeed in upsetting the Secular Society, Ltd., in connection with the Bowman Will, even if it could be upset in any other way. As for the litigants who had no status under the will, he quite understood that kind of thing, and if they took his advice, they would "get out and get under." His Lordship did not use those very words, but, as lawyers say, "words to that effect."

Mr. Justice Joyce is no bigot. That's evident. Neither does he look sour or forbidding in the smallest degree. He is a rosy-cheeked little gentleman, like a country squire, who rides to the hounds, enjoys himself right well in a lawful and reasonable way, and interferes as little as possible with his neighbors. He says what he means, and means what he says; and if you want to get round him, you would have to do more than get up early, you would have to sit up all night.

It looks as though the Bowman Trust would soon go through satisfactorily to all who have a legitimate concern in it.

We are happy to say that Mr. Lloyd's recent severe illness has much abated. A severe chill brought on bronchitis and threatened pneumonia. Happily the worst is over, and we entertain hopes of seeing Mr. Lloyd himself again very shortly.

The Annual Dinner of the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. is fixed for *Saturday*, February 6, not Sunday, as announced in our last issue. The date was right, but the day was wrong. We repeat our wishes for a successful gathering.

We are glad to see that the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. is recommencing work after the interregnum caused by the War. A meeting is to be held to-day (Feb. 7) in the Good Templars' Hall at 12 o'clock, when Mr. Nixon will deliver an address on "Freethought and the Woman Movement." We do not know the situation of the hall, but the name will doubtless suffice for local purposes.

THE LAST FAITH.

Now, when the heavens are empty and no sign
Comes from the eternal silence, loudly still
The blind priest raves, and all the slaves of God
Shriek their approval! "Man," they cry, "is evil."

Lie of lies!

Yet how the hordes of madmen echo it,
Not knowing that they curse themselves and God,
Cursing the only thing that death and time
Spare and preserve divine.

Despite the hate

And anarchy of Nature echoed on
In his own heart beats, man can love so much;
He stumbles, being blind, he eateth dust,
Being fashioned out of dust; flesh he pursues
The instincts of the flesh; but evermore
He, struggling upward from the slough of shame,
Comforts the Power which made him miserable,
And stands erect in love. —Robert Buchanan.

"HOW USE DOTH BREED A HABIT IN A MAN!"

The daughter of a country rector taught the choirboys a new tune at a Monday evening's practice, to be sung on the following Sunday. Sunday morning came. "Well, Sammy," said Miss B—, "I hope you haven't forgotten the new tune, for we depend very much on you." "Naw, miss, not a bit. Why, I've been a-skeerin' the crows with it all the week."—*Weekly Scotsman*.

How Many More Religions?

A FEW months ago, Mr. Horatio Bottomley, editor of *John Bull*, political reformer, patriot, champion of the right of the working man to drink beer or put a shilling on the Derby favorite, and religious reformer, wrote a spirited article in his journal entitled, "Wanted: a New Religion." In the first half of his article he lashed out effectively against the parsons, and showed pretty conclusively that the Churches had proved a complete failure; that the clergy failed to attract thoughtful men and women to listen to their dreary sermons; in short, that the masses did not look to the Churches for guidance or inspiration, but sought them in other directions.

Secularists, at all events, will find no fault with this general contention; but some of Mr. Bottomley's remarks in setting out this statement are certainly open to serious objection. For instance, he says, "We have never scoffed at religion, we have never doubted the need, in the present stage of our evolution, for it. The world is not yet quite old enough to run alone, and deprived of Faith and Hope, it would be a sorry place to live in." Now, Mr. Bottomley not only likes to pose as a reformer on every mortal subject in heaven above and earth beneath, but he considers himself a very reliable philosopher also. Well, what does he mean when he uses the word *religion* in this connection? Does he mean that he does not scoff at the poor, ignorant savage who, when he sees the lightning flash from the clouds, and hears the thunder rolling in the heavens, goes down on his knees and appeals to the unknown spirits or gods behind phenomena to shield him from danger? If so, has he equal respect for the civilised and cultivated man who knows the scientific explanation of these phenomena, but who, nevertheless, blindly worships the unknown forces of nature as God, and makes the ignorance of these unknown forces the basis of his religion? And what does he mean when he says that "the world is not yet old enough to run alone, and deprived of Faith and Hope it would be a sorry place to live in"? If he means that the masses of the people are still ignorant, I quite agree with him; but if he thinks that their ignorance is a good ground for them being exploited by the priest and parson, I respectfully decline to follow him. And what does he mean by the world being deprived of faith and hope? Faith in what? Faith in anything the priest thinks it prudent to tell the people? Or faith in what Mr. Bottomley thinks they ought to be told? And hope in what? Hope that they will live again in some other world, when all that went to make up their individuality here had ceased to exist? Or hope that they will go to heaven if they believe in the right religion, or run the risk of going to hell if their belief turns out to be unfounded? Then Mr. Bottomley goes on to say, "We have never scoffed at prayer—prayer of reverential, unselfish effort to establish communion with God, and all that God stands for in the mind and soul of man." But whether he has ever scoffed at prayer or not, the question is, does he believe in the efficacy of it? He knows perfectly well that thousands of good Catholics prayed that the Germans would not damage the cathedral at Rheims; but that did not prevent a well-directed shell from crashing through the window of that ancient building and destroying a part of that noble edifice.

Of course it is folly to scoff at the prayer of the believer—whether reverentially uttered or otherwise. It is much better to demonstrate that what are called the laws of nature are uniform in their mode of operation, that they have neither regard for the rich nor the poor, the prince nor the pauper. Mr. Bottomley will understand me when I say that prayer has no commercial value. If there were any efficacy in prayer the Government would assuredly establish a praying department at Scotland Yard, and all the young detectives would go down on their knees, at all hours of the day, and pray that they might be led to find the perpetrators of all the

undiscovered crimes. If there were any efficacy in prayer, a cargo of religious tracts and a vessel-load of priests and parsons, would be safer on the high seas than a vessel of jolly, good-hearted, swearing Jack Tars. Mr. Bottomley knows that they are not. So whether he smiles or frowns on the man that prays, he knows that prayers for rain or fine weather have no effect on the atmospheric conditions. Mr. Bottomley, however, has a healthy contempt for the canting humbugs who profess to be religious—which Freethinkers heartily share with him—and he shows no mercy for the silly Christians who "attribute this great War to God's vengeance for passing the Home Rule Act; or those who see in it nothing else than our punishment for Sunday boating and Sunday cinemas, or our football and racing sins." When he has finished whipping the hypocrites to his heart's content he then comes to the solution of the whole question.

Nothing will satisfy him but a new religion; not a modification of the old one—or, as I should say, any of the old ones—but a brand new religion with just the right ingredients in it to suit Mr. Bottomley.

And what is this brand new religion that the world is waiting for and Mr. Bottomley finds himself specially inspired to produce? "The world wants a new religion," he says, "a human religion, free from intellectual dishonesty and moral Pharisaism. Put plainly, the parson must learn to speak the truth—and to mind his own business." But how on earth is Mr. Bottomley going to get the parson to do that? Why, if the parson were to learn to speak the truth about the Bible and Christianity, his occupation, like Othello's, would be gone, and then who would give him employment, and what occupation would he be fitted for?

The first requirement of Mr. Bottomley's religion will be difficult of accomplishment. What then? "There must be an end for ever to the stupid and impertinent heresy that the *Great Architect of the Universe* is mortally offended when a man drinks a pint of beer or puts a shilling on the Derby favorite."

In Mr. Bottomley's new religion there is a God, who, if he did not manufacture the universe, at least drew up the plans upon which the universe was ultimately constructed. But what does Mr. Bottomley mean by the universe? Does he mean the totality of all phenomena, or the infinite space, in which the hundreds of millions of stars and suns revolve, or does he only mean the stars and suns and all the heavenly bodies known to astronomers? What evidence is there that the matter of which these bodies are composed ever began to be? After all, is not this Great Architect of the Universe only our old friend, the *Great Designer*, over again? And what is the answer to this Great Design argument in any, or all, of its forms? Let Mr. Bottomley's illustrious uncle, George Jacob Holyoake, reply:—

"Whoever says a person may exist without organisation, contrary to experience, is saying at the same time that Design may exist without a Designer, contrary to experience. And this is conceding the whole question to the sceptic.

The world exhibits marks of Design. That Design must have had a Designer. That Designer must have been a Person. That Person must have had an organisation. That organisation must have exhibited marks of contrivance. That contrivance must have had a contriver. Therefore, the God of the Design Argument was contrived by a higher God, and so on, and so on, for ever; and to us who waited to catch the image of the Infinite Deity is shown a tumultuous series of huge Beings, definite and material, disporting in gradual gradations one above another, and this ponderous vision is the sole reward of our attention, our patience, and our teachableness. And this exquisite mockery is called demonstrating the footprints of Deity in the fields of Creation" (*The Trial of Theism*, p. 15).

And to this complexion all the gods, including Mr. Bottomley's "Great Architect of the Universe," must come at last.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Distribution of Animal Life.

In the light of Evolution, the areas occupied by living creatures on the various continents and islands of our earth have assumed considerable importance. While the world was wedded to the belief that all forms of life were derived from some special centre of supernatural creation of comparatively recent date, little or no interest was attached to the very remarkable phenomena which modern inquiries have done so much to elucidate. It is now a truism that all parts of the earth's surface—the streams and seas, and even the air itself—support some kind of life. And although the more frigid areas of our globe are less thickly populated than the temperate, and, above all, than the tropical zones, differences of temperature in themselves are quite insufficient to explain the striking anomalies of animal distribution as they now exist.

In the range of animal species we encounter every condition, from world-wide distribution to the most restricted habitat. With a certain truth it has been claimed that man is the most widespread of all animals, and in his wanderings he has invariably carried the various parasites that are special to his species. But there are other animals which have almost as successfully adapted themselves to the earth's many climates and conditions as the proudest product of the tree of life. Some of those flying mammals, the bats, also enjoy a far-flung settlement, and, unlike those cosmopolitan creatures, rats and mice, whose ubiquity is due to man's unintentional assistance, the bats have secured their universal dissemination through their own unaided efforts. And though one might be inclined to suppose that such organisms as birds—endowed as most of them are with such wondrous powers of flight—would easily surmount all the barriers presented to their distribution by wastes of water and by mountain chains, yet even these are, in many cases, singularly restricted in their geographical range. One genus of birds, the barn owl, forms a marked exception to this, as it is fairly numerous throughout the land surfaces of both hemispheres. This bird admittedly presents many variations, but several eminent ornithologists consider that these varieties are mere local races which scarcely merit the distinction of separate species.

Among the insects, also, the painted lady (*Vanessa cardui*) has a wide distribution. This butterfly ranges throughout the Old World from Europe to New Zealand, but it is absent in the West Indies and in some districts in South America. The red river-worm appears to be at home everywhere, and another species extends from Europe to Australasia.

From organisms so generally distributed, we may turn to others of such limited range that they appear on the verge of immediate extinction. "The now extinct large copper butterfly," writes Mr. F. E. Beddard, in his lucidly written text-book, *Zoogeography*,—

"was formerly found in abundance in the Cambridge-shire fens, but found nowhere else in the world. The limitation of particular species of humming birds to particular peaks in the Andes, and of snails to particular valleys are other examples.....The Vendace (*Coregonus vandesius*) restricted to Loch Maben in Dumfriesshire is an animal with a still more limited range, and several other examples might be given, particularly from the faunas of islands."

Organisms of widely extended range are comparatively rare. Sixteen families of birds have been enumerated by the late Dr. A. R. Wallace, one of the very greatest authorities on zoogeography, as truly cosmopolitan, and his list embraces such well-known birds as pigeons, hawks, ducks, geese, gulls, petrels, grebes, swallows, and crows. Several families of moths and butterflies, and most of the beetles are also included in this cosmopolitan group. With the exception of man, the only other mammal universally distributed is the bat. And it is important to notice that the great majority of these world-ranging

animals are winged organisms which more readily overcome obstacles which prevent the migration of strictly terrestrial creatures. And it is also to be observed that one-half of the birds mentioned by Wallace are semi-aquatic in habit, and that the conditions of life in different parts of the world vary very much less for aquatic than for land birds. And what perhaps is of even greater moment is the fact that all these sixteen avian families are extremely rich both in genera and species. Moreover, while these sixteen bird families are cosmopolitan, their more specialised genera are far less so; the most notable example of a widely spread genus is the barn owl already referred to. And when we descend to species, there are relatively few that range throughout the globe. Among these, the most cosmopolitan species is that of the osprey, a sea-bird of powerful flight.

It is extremely probable that the presence of insects, such as certain flies and butterflies, at remote stations is due to their conveyance thither by man. In any case, Northern America has been overrun by European weeds, which were unknown to that continent until it was opened up by the Eastern world. Nor need anyone dispute that the pupæ of insects, the seeds of weeds, and rats and mice, are easily, if accidentally, conveyed in ships sailing from one country to another. Once transported, hardy weeds and vigorous animals are certain to thrive in any reasonable environment. It is therefore essential to distinguish between indigenous organisms and those of alien origin when we seek, in the distributional phenomena of animals, for the evidences they furnish of the genesis and development of living things.

Families of animals, then, may be of general occurrence, while their more localised offshoots, genera and species, are far more restricted in habitat. The range of some of the latter is so limited that it amounts to isolation. The Lough Killin charr is a fish quite unknown outside its single lake. Three species of monkeys which comprise the genus *Brachyurus* are confined to a small forest area in South America. Again, many specialised animals are never found beyond the oceanic islands they inhabit. Our cousins, the tailless apes, are confined to an insignificant part of the earth's surface. The gorilla is never met with save in the West African forests, while the chimpanzees are now restricted to the woodlands of Central Africa. Moreover, the gibbon and the orang, the two other man-like apes, are special to the Oriental region. Furthermore, the monotremes and the marsupials, those quaint relics of the globe's earlier fauna, are now limited to the Australian and Central American areas.

With few exceptions, a restricted continental habitat is highly indicative of lessened range. For instance, the now sadly circumscribed chimpanzee is proved by its fossil remains to have at one time extended to India. Within historical times the lion lived in Greece, but it has since retreated to Africa and Hindostan. The hippopotamus, now strictly African, once dwelt in Madagascar as well as in Europe. Animal range is also conditioned by facilities for migration, as the following considerations prove:—

"Widely distributed animals are either flying animals independent of barriers which impede the purely terrestrial species, or possess some special facilities for voluntary or involuntary translation from country to country. An entirely arboreal creature cannot pass a level tract of country with no trees; nor can an Amphibian, whose skin requires to be kept moist, cross an arid desert."

If we cross the Channel to France or Belgium, we at once notice the marked resemblance of the fauna of these countries to that of our own Isles, and although a detailed study of Continental animals would reveal the presence of a few species not indigenous to Britain, the main fauna would still remain the same. And were our journey continued across Europe, our native animals would constantly confront us. Nor is this all. Were our travels

extended to far Eastern Japan, the fauna of that progressive country would appear either like ours or so closely akin to it as to at once suggest the nearest relationship. Nevertheless, the fact remains that there exist wider differences between the animals of Japan and Britain, than between those of our Islands and those of North-Western Europe.

Broadly speaking, the more widely separated one country from another, the more their faunas differ. But remoteness is not the only factor involved. Africa, a continent which almost touches Europe, contains a world of life which is to us entirely novel. The apes, elephants, and other animals of its tropical zone, as sharply distinguish the fauna of Africa from that of Europe as from that of remote Japan, and this, despite the comparative nearness of the Dark Continent. Once more, in the Malay Archipelago there stand two islands, Bali and Lombok, separated by a few miles of sea. Yet, in traversing this narrow water, we encounter a complete transformation in their zoological life. The sudden change is more striking than that met with in passing from Europe to Central Africa. Marsupials, those strange pouched mammals, now appear, while the hooped quadrupeds, beasts of prey, and the apes of the Western provinces of the Indian Archipelago are either entirely absent or astonishingly rare.

Such remarkable phenomena as these led Dr. P. L. Sclater to map out the earth into several zoological regions. The scheme of this able scientist was the outcome of his observations upon the distribution of the Passerine and a few Piscarian birds. Subsequent studies of general animal distribution strengthened Sclater's conclusions, and Wallace's earnest advocacy rendered them powerful support. A vast volume of scientific discussion concerning the validity of Sclater's system has since arisen. Various modifications have been proposed, and many minor criticisms have been made by Newton, Lydekker, Heilprin, Huxley, Beddard, and other authorities, but for all practical purposes, the plan formulated by Sclater, which was amended and adopted by Wallace, is, on the whole, the most convenient we possess. And whatever the system ultimately adopted, the zoological regions of these famous naturalists are certain to shape the issue.

The conditions that govern animal life are too complex to admit the creation of any distributional scheme fitted to meet every requirement. The main difficulty to decide relates to the particular animal order most suitable for the purpose proposed. A weighty objection to any zoogeographical arrangement in terms of avian distribution lies in the circumstance that their powers of flight render birds independent of most natural barriers to animal migration, and, as Beddard reminds us, by far the greater number of cosmopolitan organisms belong to the avian order. Again, the class Aves are of recent evolution, as their earliest fossil remains are no older than the Jurassic Epoch, while many members of this family were developed during the Tertiary period. For this reason alone their present range can throw but little light on the past distribution of land and water.

The claims of terrestrial molluscs have been urged as furnishing important evidence of former Continental areas. The molluscs are extremely ancient, some contemporary genera date back to Carboniferous times; but their structural affinities are incompletely ascertained, and their means of ocean transit may prove to be more efficient than is usually allowed. In these circumstances, Wallace was well advised in putting forward mammals as the organisms best fitted to supply those phenomena which "exhibit, by their existing distribution, the past changes and the present physical condition of the earth's surface."

Dr. Wallace based his argument on the following facts: Mammals are, with insignificant exceptions, confined to the soil on which they dwell; they are largely independent of other organisms; their anatomy has been sufficiently worked out to establish their relationships one to another; and that

science possesses a wider acquaintance with extinct forms than with those of any other group. Powerful as these claims appear, they have not escaped criticism. Even by those who willingly concede their validity, it is complained that mammals fail to furnish every demanded condition. Beddard points out that they are a comparatively modern order which, from a distributional standpoint, is one of the chief shortcomings of birds. Still, Beddard is constrained to allow that:—

"On the whole, however, it is impossible to avoid agreeing with Mr. Wallace that the Mammalia are the most satisfactory group. And, moreover, the adoption of the regions necessitated by the distribution of this group is in harmony with the distribution of some other groups, and does no great violence to distributional fact anywhere."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

From Florida.

I AM writing this from a little town in beautiful Florida. The census gives its population as one thousand and sixty. Of this number about three or four hundred are colored. But there are in this southern town of a little over a thousand people, nine churches, and a tenth, a Christian Science Church, is threatened. When it also arrives, there will be ten places of worship; that is to say, a church for each one hundred of the inhabitants of the town.

Of course, not all the members of the little community go to church. I discovered, as the result of my inquiries, that the average attendance at the various places of worship is about twenty-one persons to a church. Multiplying this by ten, we get the number of church-goers in the community, namely, two hundred and ten. There is, then, a church equipped with a building, pews, pulpit, pastor, etc., for every twenty believers in this orange-growing village.

And one church and pastor would have been quite sufficient! Why, then, is there ten times more preaching than the town needs? Because—

The churches have come to the town, not to unite, but to divide the people. This they have succeeded in doing to perfection.

But the sects have accomplished another purpose. If the town supported only one preacher, it could have commanded the services of a tolerably competent and scholarly man by paying him a respectable salary, giving him at the same time a fair sized audience. But ten small salaries, and ten small audiences of about twenty to each audience could interest only such preachers as have failed in larger fields. Thus it will be seen that sectarianism has not only split the small religious community into ten contending camps, but has also greatly lowered the character of the preaching.

"Listen to my ding-dong!" ring the nine or ten church bells every Sunday morning. And it is veritably a ding-dong and no more that each denominative pulpit offers to its handful of worshippers. But think also of how much this struggling settlement pays for the rewards of sectarianism, which are—division and mediocrity!

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

Facers for "Bible Punchers."

FREETHOUGHT V. CHRISTIANITY.

It is said of Freethinkers that their views on the origin of man and his position and purpose in the universe are of a debasing nature.

They are accused of regarding man as more or less a brute—a sort of glorified monkey. It is Christians of all people who have the colossal impudence to bring such a charge against Freethought.

Let it be most clearly understood that it is not Freethought but Christianity which seeks to degrade the human

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Christianity teaches that man has *fallen* from a high estate, whilst Freethought teaches us that he has *risen* from a low position. Christianity tells us to grovel in the dust before a fetish to which we are all "miserable offenders." Freethought tells us that it becomes a man to keep on his feet and hold up his head. Christianity insults our intelligence by asking us to believe that the earth is only 5,918 years old. Christianity tells us that we are a "bad lot," and that on our merits we deserve only fire and torment. This superstition exhorts us to be miserable, servile wretches, submitting weekly to the tyranny of tyrants whom, it says, are sent by "God" to punish us for our sins.

Christianity is a monstrous creed of blood and iron, a veritable "mailed fist" amongst religions. It threatens the man, insults the woman, and damns the child. From the cradle to the grave it alternately menaces and execrates us.

Now, what does Freethought teach? Does it tell us we are sinners? Does it threaten, insult, or condemn us? Does it teach us bad ethics which, as D'Holbach says, perplex our minds without correcting our hearts? Does it instruct us in *Comic Cuts* cosmogony? Do its heroes murder and torture the helpless as did David? Was Darwin or Bradlaugh ever guilty of obscenity and incest as was Noah? No! Freethought is the creed of reason, humanity, and decency. It teaches that man, the consummation of life, has, alone and unaided, moulded crude nature to his needs. It does not make us unappreciative of our own able efforts by the preaching of the pernicious doctrine that for nothing we do can we assume any credit, because we are only the playthings of a supernatural monster. Freethought exhorts us to keep our eyes from the incomprehensible skies, lest we overlook that which is at our feet. It urges us to make the most of this life, and also to help others to make the most of it. It tells us to render, if possible, material assistance to those in want, not to mock their misery by promising them a good time when they are dead.

It does not bribe us into good, nor threaten us from evil; it expects us to do good and avoid ill from pure and philanthropic motives, not from hope of reward and fear of punishment. Moreover, Freethought teaches us to be rational, broad-minded, and self-reliant. It warns us not to be misguided by impostors, swayed by thoughtless bias and prejudice, or soured by bigotry. It urges us to choose our heroes and ideals from amongst the giants of intellect, art, and philanthropy, not from an ancient tribe of bloodthirsty savages; to love reality, truth, and reason; not humbug, lies, and dogma. It urges us to right wrongs, reverse injustice, and depose tyrants. It fortifies our weak bodies against the onslaughts of fear, fanaticism, and other weaknesses which are nurtured and aggravated by the machinations of mercenary and presumptuous priests whose great ambition is to gain despotic authority over the masses whose minds they have enslaved by the agency of empty thunderings and delusive promises.

A PRESUMPTUOUS PARSON.

Thus saith the Rev. Lloyd Thomas of Brum: For a religion to possess reality "it must be true; it must be good; it must be beautiful." Thus is the Christian religion condemned as unreal by the Rev. Lloyd Thomas, who is paid to preach it—unless, of course, the reverend gentleman thinks that Christianity actually does possess the three virtues which he mentions. In that case, I ask him in all seriousness: Does he publicly belittle his own mental capabilities by openly pronouncing his belief that the Bible, in substance and in fact, is true?—a Bible which contains a multitude of glaring fallacies, of which the following are a selected few.

The universe is only 5,918 years old. The world is without shape. Daylight is independent of the sun. Lions, tigers, etc., feed on green herbs. The Almighty Infinite have. Cattle are killed, then afflicted with boils, then killed again. Amalekites killed four times over. Edomites revolt many years after they are all dead. Recognition of witchcraft. Affirmation of the existence of dragons, unicorns, cockatrices, satyrs, seven-headed leopards, and other fabulous monsters. Four beasts say "Amen."

Does the Rev. Lloyd Thomas avow that Christianity is "good" in the face of the fact that, according to the Bible, its Joss is such an unjust monster that it has condemned and punished all mankind of past and present generations for the "sin" of one man? And seeing that it at one time cruelly drowned almost all living things, commanded human sacrifices, and indicted terrible sufferings on helpless animals; assassinated innumerable men, women, and children, and sanctioned slavery and seduction—

to mention only a few of the amiable traits of the Rev. Thomas' great good God. Does the reverend gentleman also believe that his creed is "beautiful," when he knows that, according to the Bible, the world is populated by incest, that "God" instituted the

obscure right of circumcision, and expressed "himself" of many filthy ideas, and that the Bible heroes were continually guilty of rape, incest, and obscenity? Does this preposterous parson believe that women who give birth to new life are sinful and unclean? Does he assert that his mother was unclean because she gave birth to *him*?

If this defamatory divine answers these questions in the affirmative, he has branded himself as a creature without reason, honor, or decency, fit only for Broadmoor. If, on the other hand, he negates all or any one of them, he cannot be a true believer, for he has renounced the Word of God as expressed by "his" prophets, and by Christ and "his" apostles, and he should at once divest himself of his (un)holy orders and cease to preach that which is false and improper.

DESPICABLE PROFESSIONS.

It is said that lawyers are contemptible creatures because they trade on the combative and envious proclivities in their fellow-men. But the calling of the Church is even more contemptible and execrable, for parsons make their "dough" by the exploitation of human ignorance, cowardice, and weakness.

THE SINNER THAT REPENTETH.

It is claimed for Christianity, by those who make a fat living by its exploitation, that no life is complete or satisfactory unless freely inoculated with the virus of this superstition. But then we must remember that a parson's praise of Christianity is of no more value as a guide than a tradesman's recommendation of his own wares. As it is, Atheists go through life firm and unshaken in their rational disbelief, and Agnostics go their way, paying no attention to the cacklings and squabbings of theologians. I do not think that Bradlaugh or Huxley ever experienced any desire to re-embrace Christianity in the role of the sinner that repenteth.

The plain truth is, that once a man pulls himself together, and with a great effort shakes off that weighty, depressing load of incomprehensible fear and dogma which theologians had tied around his neck in his compulsory Sunday-school days, and once he has nerved himself to tear off the black bandage of supernatural mystery which hoodwinks his eyes, never again does he wander back down the labyrinthical paths of unreason to the lachrymal abyss of superstition.

H. C. W.

IS THERE A FUTURE LIFE?

The mere existence of a desire in man to prolong his being, even if it were universal, can afford little assurance that the desire will be fulfilled. Of desires which will never be fulfilled man's whole estate is lamentably full. If to each of us his own little being is inexpressibly dear, so is its own little being to the insect, which nevertheless is crushed without remorse and without hope of a future existence.

It is sad that man should perish—and perish just when he has reached his prime. This seems like cruel wastefulness in nature. But is not nature full of waste? Butler rather philosophically finds an analogy to the waste of souls in the waste of seeds. He might have found one in the destruction of geological races, in the redundancy of animal life, which involves elimination by wholesale slaughter, in the multitude of children brought into the world only to die. The deaths of children, of which a large number appear inevitable, seem to present an insurmountable stumbling-block to any optimism which holds that nature can never be guilty of waste even in regard to the highest of her works. Waste there evidently is in nature, both animate and inanimate, and to an enormous extent, if our intelligence tells us true. The earth is full of waste places, as well as of blind agencies of destruction, such as earthquakes and floods; while her satellites appear to be nothing but waste.—*Professor Goldwin Smith.*

THE ARMY SURGEON.

Over that breathing waste of friends and foes,
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour,
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,
He labors through the red and groaning day.
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay
Moves as a moving field of mangled worms;
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray
Above them, but when the bare branch performs
No secret paternal office, sink away
With helpless chirps of woe—so, as he goes,
Around his feet in clamorous agony
They rise and fall; and all the seething plain
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-colored pain.
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