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The profoundest, the most essential and paramount theme of human interest is the eternal conflict between atheism and superstition.—GOETHE

Religion and the State.

SIR JOSEPH COMPTON-RICKETT, the new President of the Free Church Council, has the reputation—amongst Free Churchmen—of a philosopher, and his presidential address at Manchester has been welcomed as a philosophical contribution to the question of the relations of State and Church. Presumably, it takes little to satisfy the religious mind in this direction; and a reputation for philosophical thinking may be easily gained, provided one is careful to be very general and maintain an air of solemnity where other men of a nimbler and more penetrating wit would be inclined to smile or to perpetrate a jest. And it is traditional amongst religionists to regard a laugh with suspicion. All the religions of the world have been marked by solemnity, and none of them would have endured so long had laughter been given greater encouragement. Laughter is one of the symptoms of health, mental as well as physical. That, perhaps, is the reason why religion has never encouraged it.

The title of Sir Joseph's address was "The Church and the State in Time of War," and, of necessity, it raised the whole question of the place of religion in the modern State. As a Nonconformist, the new President was debarred from advocating the establishment of a State religion. Equally, as a Nonconformist, he was debarred from advocating their separation. He is the president of a body of people who are at one moment denouncing as unjust a principle which at the next they are doing their best to perpetuate. While they protest against the principle of an established religion, they are claiming for themselves all the privileges of an establishment. When they shriek against an established Church, all that they really object to is the Church that is established. They do not object to State patronage; they ask for it, and they get it. They do not object to State endowment; they ask for that, and get it. Every Nonconformist chapel in the country that seeks relief from payment of rates because it is a building devoted to religious purposes is, to the extent of that relief, State endowed. And not a single chapel in the country has ever objected to this arrangement.

From one point of view this question of the place of religion in the State is a very modern one. In its deepest aspect it is a product of that secularisation of life which has been proceeding all over Europe for at least three centuries, while in its more acute phase it is hardly more than a hundred years old. Two hundred years ago the question of whether the State might not or ought not to stand aloof from all religions, giving equal protection to all and favoring none, had hardly emerged. The only question at issue was whether this or that form of religion should receive the sanction and support of the State. That the State should provide a corporate expression of religious belief was a point upon which both Catholic and Protestant were in complete agreement. They might butcher each other in their endeavor to

settle which religion should be established, but their disagreement ended there. Nevertheless, just as the broad schism of Catholic and Protestant gave rise to the question of which church, so the multiplication of sects, and the growth of more thorough-going heresy, brought the question of the absolute separation of Church and State to the front.

But the complete separation of religious belief from the State is what Nonconformity never contemplated originally, and it is what only one Nonconformist here and there believes in to-day. None are more ardent upholders of the establishment of religion in the State schools than are Nonconformists. Ever since 1870, all appeals to their avowed principle of State neutrality in matters of religion have failed to make them realise that in opposing the policy of Secular Education they were false to every principle they professed. In all State functions they demand a representation as Nonconformists. In municipal life they uphold its identification with religious functions wherever possible. Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett says, "We are abolishing religious tests." If by "we" is meant the general community, the statement may pass, for the natural growth of society is doing that. But if by "we" is meant Nonconformists, then the statement is true in only a very qualified sense. Certainly they object to some religious tests—such as bar them to places and privileges enjoyed by Episcopalians. Beyond that they are doing very little, and that little only under pressure of external forces.

But the abolition of legally established religious tests is only one aspect of the matter. There are other tests of a still more drastic and a more searching nature. These are not legal, but social. They are not enforced by statute, but by the bigotry and tyranny of private opinion. And it is far easier to evade the former than the latter. In the political world the man who is known as a Freethinker is still heavily handicapped. In the schools there are hundreds of teachers who are aware that their Freethought acts as a bar to their promotion. And in the case of many local Councils avowed Freethought would be an almost fatal obstacle to appointment. In a dozen different directions a man still finds it to his material interest to at least hide his dissent from current religious belief. And so long as that is the case, what is the use of talking about legal tests being abolished? There is only one way of abolishing religious tests, and that is by abolishing the spirit that makes a profession of religion the essential condition of freedom of movement and intercourse.

Sir Joseph thinks that the function of the Church is to stand outside the State—presumably he means outside the Government—and to exert moral pressure upon it. This, by the way, is not at all a bad ideal; but it is not a Christian one. It properly belongs to Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism. And there is room for a body of men and women who would hold themselves clear of all political parties or movements, and would only aim at bringing to bear upon all questions the fructifying power of enlightened intelligence and a healthy moral sense. But this function can never be discharged by a Christian Church. Sir Joseph himself is proof of this. He says that while the Church is not to identify itself with the State, "we may not lower the Church to a human institution." Naturally;

but that is precisely the consideration that robs the Church of all genuine social utility. An institution that is to meet human needs must be subject to the test of human necessities. You cannot build a progressive social life on either a supernatural idea or a supernatural institution. That way has been tried over and over again, and has universally meant retrogression and disaster.

And underlying Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett's plea for the Church is the monstrous assumption that the Church, as a Church, possesses some information, some source of moral information, that is not possessed by other and secular institutions. Such an assumption is ridiculously false. What kind of inspiration or guidance have the Churches given in any of the great movements of modern times? It is notorious that in the struggle for the abolition of slavery the slave-owners found their greatest champions in the Churches of England and America. True, individual Christians worked hard for abolition; but it would be idle to claim that the inspiration of their conduct was found in either the Churches or the Bible. So also with the temperance movement, with the agitation for general education, for a free press, the co-operative movement, the Trades Union movement, and, at a later date, with the Socialist or Labor movement. In all these cases the impulse to reform came from outside the Churches. They only began to take an interest in any of them when they had become more or less firmly established in the public mind.

There are only three possible ways in which Church and State may co-exist. In the one case the Church rules the State. That has been the aim of Christianity almost from the outset, and if Christianity be true, there is much to be said in its behalf. If the immortal welfare of man depends upon the acceptance of certain religious doctrines, then one can hardly conceive any consideration that should not be subordinated to this one. The State, on this theory, becomes no more than the Church visible. The second condition is that the State shall rule the Church; and, as a matter of historic fact, many rulers have been driven to adopt this course in self-defence. From the days of Ancient Rome some of the wisest of the world's rulers have recognised that Christian belief is a socially disruptive force. Its supernaturalism and sectarianism made for social disintegration, and as a means of protecting society against this, some arrangement which placed the Church as a department of the State had to be made. The third condition is that the State shall stand absolutely apart from religion, treating it as something with which it has no concern. This is the more modern attitude, and it is one that expresses the tendency of enlightened opinion in every civilised country in the world. But it is one with which Christians cannot agree, because it implies the unimportance of religious belief. A State which insists upon each of its members being taught to read and write, which lays down a host of things that they may or may not do, but which, as regards religion, says "I do not care whether you believe in it or not," is asserting in an oblique manner all for which the Freethinker has contended. It is saying religion is ultimately a matter of no social consequence whatever. It is a mere speculation; a piece of mental dissipation that a man may not be worse for, but which fails to enrich either himself or his fellows.

C. COHEN.

"Do We Believe in Education?"

WRITING in the year 1884, Mark Rutherford rightly observed that "with the departure of a belief in the supernatural departs once and for ever the chance of regenerating the race except by the school and by science." To his friend McKay, who was about to inaugurate a sort of mission in the slums about Drury-lane, the celebrated writer said that he had

been into St. Paul's Cathedral, and pictured to himself the cathedral full, with himself in the pulpit. He was excited as he imagined the opportunity offered him of delivering some message to three or four thousand persons in such a building, but he soon discovered that his sermon would be very nearly as follows: "Dear friends, I know no more than you know; we had better go home." At the same time, he admitted that if McKay could verily believe in hell-fire, or if he could proclaim the Second Advent, as Paul did to the Thessalonians, and get people to believe, he might effect a change in their manners, but that otherwise he could do nothing but resort to a much slower process. It is well known that Mark Rutherford was by no means an orthodox believer. Indeed, his heterodoxy was so pronounced as to prevent him from continuing a Congregational minister. It is highly probable that he did not really believe in the supernatural at all, though he employed the terms "God," "Christ," and "heaven," attaching to them his own meanings. In the neighborhood of Drury-lane, where the people had sunk into a state of the most deplorable degradation and misery, supernaturalism was powerless. The squalor was terrible to behold, and there was no break in its uniformity. Summing up his description of the hopelessly bad conditions of life there, the novelist says:—

"Here was nothing but sullen subjugation, the most grovelling slavery, mitigated only by a tendency to mutiny. Here was a strength of circumstance to quell and dominate which neither Jesus nor Paul could have overcome—worse a thousandfold than Scribes or Pharisees, or any form of persecution. The preaching of Jesus would have been powerless here; in fact no known stimulus, nothing ever held up before men, to stir the soul to activity, can do anything in the back streets of great cities so long as they are the cesspools which they are now" (*Mark Rutherford's Deliverance*, p. 35).

The point to be pressed is that such was the state of things after many millenniums of supernaturalism. The powers of the world to come had completely failed to regenerate the inhabitants of the Seven Dials, and it followed that their only chance of physical and mental regeneration lay in the school and in science, both of which were then sorely lacking in the wretched district under consideration. Under a scientific system of education the back streets of large cities would not be "cesspools." Sanitation would be properly attended to, the houses would be roomy and clean, with a plentiful supply of fresh air, and an abundance of open spaces would be provided, thus making the physical conditions of life conducive to the development of a rational, harmonious, and happy state of society, which ought to be the supreme and final end of education. It has never yet been sufficiently realised what vital importance attaches to physical education, or how essential bodily health is in the formation of character. To the *British Weekly* for March 4 "Claudius Clear" contributed an article, entitled "Do We Believe in Education?" at the beginning of which he quoted Mr. Stephen Graham's opinion "that the education of the Russian peasant, if not undesirable, was at least not a matter of pressing concern." Mr. Graham rightly thinks that education would perhaps take as much from the peasant as it would give to him. For example, education would unsettle him and sow the seeds of Scepticism in his mind. As long as you keep him ignorant, he will believe as much as you like and never complain of his servile position. It has always been the policy of the rich and powerful to retain their proud prerogatives by doing their utmost to prevent the peasants from rising in the world. "Claudius Clear" hints that some members of the British Parliament share that prejudice against education, and have recently given expression to it. It is indeed only too true that the privileged classes still oppose the idea of granting a high degree of education to the masses of the people on the ground that it would be "likely to promote scepticism, discontent, and rebellion." Knowledge would be a dangerous thing if acquired by the

called lower orders. Their conventional "betters" would in consequence be robbed of several degrees of their self-claimed superiority. "Stores of Divine learning," the knowledge that hereafter there shall be a thousand thrills of rapture for every pang of pain here, the conviction that in heaven earth's humble and sorrow-laden pilgrims shall be crowned with an infinite wealth of glory, the certainty that those who are poor and mourn now shall by-and-bye inherit the kingdom of heaven and be for ever comforted—these "stores of Divine learning" are inexpressibly precious, and may be bestowed unstintingly on all the poor and needy in the land, on the one condition that they believe in their reality; but "carnal knowledge" may be a snare, and its results upon character are often pernicious. It is true that this prejudice against secular knowledge is slowly dying out, but it is by no means dead. Even "Claudius Clear" himself is not free from it, for he seems to approve of "Cowper's cottager who knew her Bible true—a truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew." Of the people who condemned "carnal knowledge" in the 'thirties and 'forties he says:—

"They had something to say for themselves. It is easy to say that Voltaire knew the Bible as no cottager ever could. In reality, however, the cottager knew far more, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Now, we contend that, in reality, Cowper's cottager did not know her Bible true. She may have believed it to be true, and her belief may have been perfectly sincere, and given rise to a certain emotional excitement; but Voltaire *knew* that the Bible's claim to be a God-inspired revelation was wholly false. There are many true and beautiful things in the Bible, but in the character of Holy Writ, or God's Word, criticism condemns it as a fraud; and this is a view advocated by not a few Christian scholars to-day. There are ministers of the Gospel in "Claudius Clear's" own country who go so far as to deny the historicity of the Four Gospels, which is equivalent to pronouncing the Four Gospels untrue. We go further still, and maintain that the Divine knowledge so zealously eulogised by the late Mr. Gladstone is entirely non-existent. It never did and never can exist. It is a delusion and a snare. The people who declare that they possess it are mere dreamers; and some of those who used to dream are now awake, and their wonder is how they could ever have mistaken dreams for realities.

"Claudius Clear" harbors a one-sided and wholly inadequate conception of education. He says that "learning is no guarantee for character"; but who ever said that it was? Surely a thoroughly educated person has obtained something more and better than mere learning, valuable as learning undoubtedly is. To educate a child is not simply to cram its head with knowledge, but also to train it in the art of living. "Claudius Clear" also asserts that "the bookman as a bookman is not a better man than the man who does his work and hardly reads anything"; but who has been fool enough to hold that he was? A bookman is not of necessity an educated man, any more than a ploughman is of necessity an uneducated person. Education means training in social life as well as the impartation of knowledge. Hugging his false idea of education, "Claudius Clear" proceeds thus:—

"Education may enforce the lesson of consequences, but it also provides in many cases the means of escaping from external punishments. Great frauds can hardly be carried out successfully by men of no training, and, in fact, supreme ability has been shown in this direction by men who appear to have no conscience and no scruple at all. I agree, then, that the popular notion that an educated world will be a moral world is vain. Education without religion will not diminish sensual offences, nor will it lessen the tendency to gamble or cheat."

So writes a fanatic who deliberately closes his eyes to the undeniable fact that hitherto we have always had education *with*, not *without*, religion. "Great frauds can hardly be carried out by men of no training," it is true; but they have often been

carried out successfully by men of the most distinctly religious training. "Claudius Clear," being no other than the Rev. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, must remember the famous Glasgow bank fraud, and that several of those guilty of it were office-bearers in the Christian Church, and being also a Presbyterian, he cannot have forgotten that eminently pious and universally respected man, who, in his capacity of treasurer of the Presbyterian Church of the Northern States of America, "carried out successfully" for many years a systematic robbery of the very Church of which he had been an honored member and official for so long, or the awful shock which the detection of his crime caused everywhere. The truth is that "Claudius Clear" condemns a system of education that has not yet been tried, except in one or two countries; and the outcome of the experiment in those countries do not in the least justify his allegations, the latest official statistics clearly proving them to be without any foundation in fact. Our claim is that education *with* religion has utterly failed to make the world moral.

"Claudius Clear" seems to take it for granted that in Germany education—and he blames that fact for the atrocities in Belgium, France, and on the sea—is *without* religion, but he is entirely mistaken; German education being positively *with* religion. As a matter of fact, religion occupies the first place in the school curriculum, and the number of hours allotted to it per week compares very favorably with the time allowed to it in British schools. In Germany, as well as in Great Britain, education is decidedly *with* religion, and we all know now with what disastrous results. Secular education, or education without religion, is, so far, in both countries a policy that has never been put to the test of experiment. When it will be so put, in a thoroughly scientific and practical manner, we are confident that the results will be its complete vindication.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and Commercialism.

"Uplift Thy cross and go. Thy doom is said."
—ROBERT BUCHANAN, *The Wandering Jew*.

THE warlike advertisements of such bodies as the Young Men's Christian Association, stating that coffee-stalls and recreation huts for the use of soldiers are being equipped, besides the numerous appeals of other religious bodies for cash for purely secular purposes, reminds us that Christianity is now a business, and is worked on commercial lines. Missions and meetings are advertised in the same way as patent medicines or theatrical ventures. Revivalists and preachers adopt similar methods to circus proprietors and music-hall artistes, with the same professional results. But the purely business side of religion is seen clearest in the methods now adopted in order to raise revenue for the propagation of a religion founded by a pauper, and professedly "without money and without price."

The extent to which ordinary commercial means have displaced voluntary contributions so long in vogue in connection with religious bodies is very significant. The old-fashioned method of collecting coppers and threepenny-bits during the services is no longer considered adequate. Even the amateur sale of work is being largely superseded by more topical and efficient substitutes. So much is this the case that religious trading is considered by business men as a menace to the welfare of the trading community. Bazaars, conducted on a strictly business basis, are held for the reduction of church debts and the erection of costly places of worship. Missionary and other propagandist societies owe a good deal of their large incomes to sales of goods, and many thousands of pounds are raised annually in this manner for religious interests. At a bazaar held at Lincoln over £1,000 was realised, and a week's missionary exhibition at Southend-on-Sea brought

£200 clear profit. A common sale of work in South London produced £250, and a score of similar functions realised over £2,000.

Imagine the many similar exhibitions and sales held annually throughout the country for the various religious organisations, Bible and missionary societies. Add to this the 18,000 parish churches, and 10,000 chapels, mission halls, and tin tabernacles, all of which now look to bazaars, exhibitions, and sales as a legitimate and easy means of raising money, and we begin to realise the extent of the practice. Where is all this to end? Its logical outcome is seen in the vast trading organisation of the Salvation Army, which sells regularly among its members tea, clothing, children's toys, musical instruments, and all manner of requisites, and uses the profits for its propaganda. Insurance business is also encouraged, thus justifying the pleasantry that members of the Salvation Army are insured against fire in both worlds.

This inclusion of Mammon as the fourth person of the Christian Trinity has had another result, which would have shocked the sober Christians of the ages of faith. It has led to the desire to make religion a pleasant, as well as a profitable, pastime. Painful Sabbaths have been replaced by Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. String bands and sweet-voiced soloists take the place of leather-lunged preachers. Labor Members of Parliament, and other tame publicists, share the platform or pulpit with professional evangelists. One sometimes wonder how the spiritual work of the Church was conducted before the introduction of these alluring attractions. Faith, one must suppose, was stronger in those days, not needing the artificial and meritorious impetus of secular amusement. Our believing ancestors went to church or chapel, and their children with them. It was a duty which had to be done; but nowadays the majority of men stay at home, or make for their golf links or other recreation, and even the children have to be bribed to attend.

For there is no question that Sunday-school excursions, boys' and girls' brigades, and socials for young people are bribery, and nothing else. It is said that the Churches organise these holidays with the object of taking these children into healthy surroundings. In theory the practice is excellent, but the effect can be gauged better from the point of view of the children than the clergyman. The scholars regard these holidays, not as a privilege, but as a right. They have attended the Sunday-school, and the holiday is a payment. Take away the bribe, and they would have considered themselves under no obligation to go to church or chapel at all. A smart juvenile can attend the excursions of every religious denomination for which it is possible to qualify. By a neat arrangement of the program he can get nearly a week of holiday-making, and figure in religious statistics as four boys instead of one.

All these straws show which way the wind is blowing. Christianity is undergoing a transformation, and is no longer a serious religion. It is not even comedy, but is now passing from farce into the region of harlequinade, and the sooner the man in the street realises this, the better it will be for everybody. The God of the Christians is no longer the sad-faced figure of the poor Nazarene, but the rubicund self-satisfied form of Mammon, with the leer of the miser. Gone are the crown of thorns, and the spear-wounds in the side, but in the bejewelled hands of the new deity are held the money-bag and the alms-dish. The purple robe covers the huge imposture of an organised hypocrisy. Could the pale shade of Christ that slinks past the altar-rails but speak, it would bewail an agony of spirit deadlier than that which drenched Gethsemane with tears of blood. Mohammed has a direct influence over his professed disciples; Gautama Buddha still colors and controls human life; Brahma still affects the lives of millions; Mumbo Jumbo has devoted followers; but where, in all Christendom, are the single-hearted disciples of the carpenter of

Nazareth, who pleaded for the poor and denounced the rich.

The clergy pretend hypocritically to be uninfluenced entirely by commercial undertakings. They manage, however, to keep very sharp eyes on the main chance. The salaries of the bishops of the Established Church, for example, amply justify the sneer that Christ died on the cross, and these gentlemen live on it. Nonconformist leaders are just as keen after the cash. They take up their crosses, and follow their Savior on the salaries of Cabinet Ministers. The bishops suggest ingeniously that they spend the money they get in the upkeep of the dignity of their positions. It is a characteristically untrue statement, for they frequently leave very large sums. The late Bishop of Colchester left estate valued at £60,848. Bishop Creighton, who used to talk of the fearful struggles of the wretched bishops to keep out of debt, left £29,500. Archbishop Tait left £85,000, and Archbishop Benson a similar sum. The biggest episcopal estate of late years was that of Bishop Walsham How, who left £72,240. A good second to this was Bishop Taffnell's £65,800, and Bishop Phillpotts left £60,000, whilst Archbishop Thomson left £55,000, and Bishop Trollope £50,790. Compared with these sums, the £19,361 of Bishop Harvey Goodwin, the £10,000 of Bishop Tozer, or the £12,605 of Bishop Pelham seem small. The princely bishops, who have seats in the House of Lords, follow humbly in the footsteps of "the carpenter." In defiance of the dictate of their god, they lay up treasure on earth. What hypocrisy is like to this, to live by preaching the gospel of poverty and to die wealthy?

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

SOME little time ago, the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield, College, Oxford, published an orthodox defence of the "Miracles of Christ," which, after reading, I laid aside as a curiosity. I now take it up as a sample of modern Christian apologetics. In opening the subject, Principal Fairbairn says:—

"If you exclude from your view of the Universe a personal God, miracles of the supernatural will vanish with Him."

Here our reverend apologist has hit the mark the first time. During the many long ages which preceded the investigations which gave to the world correct ideas relating to the Universe and natural phenomena every man worshiped a god, and every nation had its own local deity, who was credited with the power to work miracles. Dr. Fairbairn's next utterances are, however, not quite so felicitous. He says:—

"The late Matthew Arnold used to say..... 'The most fortunate thing about miracles is, they do not happen'; to which I simply reply, 'The remarkable thing is that they have happened.'"

Here, it may be noticed, there is no contradiction. The first statement is to the effect that miracles do not happen in the present enlightened age; the second merely asserts that they did occur in Bible times, when the real facts connected with natural phenomena were unknown. And here, I think, Principal Fairbairn is perhaps a little too cocksure; he cannot and does not know what he asserts; he merely believes. However, coming to his argument for the miracles, he says:—

"Strauss started in his great *Leben Jesu* from this position, that Miracles are impossible; but the man who starts in this way is at once faced with the historical question, How did men ever come to believe in them? and were the men who so believed honest men, as honest as we? Strauss tried to show that which miracles were impossible honest men came to believe in them. But in order to do this, he had to get a very wide distance between the men and the events. Strauss had to ignore the criticism of the Epistles, and place the composition of the Gospels at an immense distance from the events they describe."

Dr. Fairbairn asks: How did the early Christians "ever come to believe" in the Gospel miracles? and were those who did so "honest men, as honest as we"? Well, our second-century Luke tells us in his Preface that the Gospel in use in his time (which he was about to revise and re-write) had been originally written by "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," and had been handed down to his day (Luke i. 2). It was thus given out by the early Church that the primitive Gospel narratives had been composed by apostles or companions of apostles, who had seen and heard Jesus and had witnessed the miracles recorded. Why did the Christians of Luke's day "come to believe in them"? They did so for two reasons: first, because they had been told that the original accounts had been written by eye-witnesses; and second, because in that age both Jews and Gentiles believed that miracles were almost of daily occurrence, and could be performed by magic, or the agency of invisible demons, as well as by the power of God.

The next question is, Were the early Christians who believed in the Gospel miracles really honest men? The answer is that the great majority of them—the most ignorant and simple-minded amongst them—certainly were; but that many of the more enlightened, who had some education, were not. It was from the pens of Christians of the latter class that had emanated all the lying Gospels and "histories" which are now called "apocryphal." But, apart from these mendacious writings, we have other documents whose authors were not "as honest as we." Take, for instance, the Epistle of Barnabas, written by a second century Christian teacher. This book is full of ignorant and silly misstatements—some of them indicating a positively filthy mind—and deliberate misrepresentations. Yet the writer had the effrontery to say: "Blessed be our Lord who has placed in us wisdom and understanding of secret things." Take, again, the "Shepherd," written by another second century Christian. This book is a collection of visions, commandments, and similitudes—all, from beginning to end, pure fiction—which the writer claimed to have received as a revelation from God, made to him by an angel in the form of a shepherd. Of this writer Mosheim says:—

"He thought himself at liberty to invent conversations between God and angels, for the sake of giving precepts which he considered salutary.....He knowingly and wilfully was guilty of a fraud.....At the time when he wrote, it was an established maxim with many of the Christians that it was pardonable in an advocate for religion to avail himself of fraud and deception, if by so doing those frauds conducted toward the attainment of any considerable good."

This "established maxim" in the early Church will account for the large number of lying apocryphal writings. Moreover, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd were read in the Christian churches from the second to the fourth century, and probably longer.

Next, Principal Fairbairn says that Strauss, in his endeavor to show that miracles were impossible, "had to get a very wide distance between the men and the events." This is incorrect. It was not that Strauss "had to get" this wide distance, but that, upon investigation, he found a wide distance. In summing up the result of his inquiry, Strauss says:—

"The review of evidence with regard to the first three Gospels gives this result, that soon after the beginning of the second century, certain traces are found in existence, not indeed in their present form, but still of the presence of a considerable portion of their contents, and with every indication that the source of these contents was derived from the country which was the theatre of the events in question."

The reference here is not to the existence of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but only to the portions common to those Gospels, which had been taken from the primitive Gospel. As a simple matter of fact, we have no evidence of the existence of any Gospel, or of any portion of a Gospel, in the first century—though the first Gospel may have been

composed towards the end of that century. The earliest documents known—the writings of the so-called "Apostolic fathers"—though placed by Christian writers in the first century, were all written in the second. Paley, for instance, says of the time when these "fathers" lived:—

- Barnabas—"soon after the destruction of Jerusalem."
- Clement—"a fellow-laborer of Paul."
- Hermas—"contemporary with St. Paul."
- Ignatius—"became bishop of Antioch about 37 years after Christ's ascension."
- Polycarp—"taught by apostles.....appointed bishop of Smyrna by apostles."
- Papias—"a hearer of the apostle John, and companion of Polycarp."

Not one of these statements is correct: all these "fathers" lived and wrote in the second century—between A.D. 110 and 150. Thus the result of the investigations of Strauss as to the distance (in time) between the appearance of the first written Gospel and the alleged events recorded in it, is seen to be correct.

Principal Fairbairn further states that Strauss had taken little account of Paul, who was "a strict contemporary of Jesus." He says:—

"Jesus could only have been away from the scene, if at all, about a year or even less when Paul came struggling up to Jerusalem, and through its conflicts and parties into faith.....Paul supplies us with this cardinal question: How did it happen that he (i.e., Paul) became the great exponent of the miracles and the person and the passion of Jesus?.....Paul was so near Jesus [in time] that he could not help gaining first-hand knowledge touching him and his acts. Without Jesus Paul is inexplicable."

Here our worthy Principal assumes that the Book of the Acts is historical; for it is only in that book that Paul is represented as "struggling up to Jerusalem," etc. It is also solely from the contents of the same book—its mention of the death of Herod Agrippa, of the procuratorship of Felix and Festus, the reference to the emperor Claudius, and other matters—that the time when Paul is supposed to have lived and labored is fixed. Again, assuming the first four of the Pauline Epistles to be authentic—as many rational critics regard them—they contain no dates; neither are there any references in them to any person or event which might help to fix a date. When, therefore, the Book of the Acts is set aside as unhistorical, all the dates which had been assigned to the Epistles from that book disappear, and no one can then say when Paul lived. There is, it is true, a passage in one of the Epistles (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33) that gives a date; but this, unfortunately, is an interpolation, which would place Paul in the time of the Jewish king Alexander Jannæus (105—78 B.C.), in whose reign Aretas, an Arabian king, was made king of Coele Syria, his capital being Damascus. In 65 B.C. Syria was annexed to Rome, and from that year was governed, for a long period, by a *legatus* or *proconsul* appointed by the Roman emperor.

Dr. Fairbairn asks: "How did it happen that Paul became the great exponent of the miracles and the person and the passion of Jesus?" This is equivalent to asking, How did some event, which never occurred, contrive to make itself happen? To which I can only answer, "I give it up." As a simple matter of fact, Paul preached "Christ and him crucified"—but very little else. Having never seen Jesus, he knew next to nothing about that mysterious personage. The "great exponent of the miracles and the person and the passion of Jesus" has not mentioned a single miracle alleged to have been wrought by Jesus; he has not quoted a single saying that was believed to have been uttered by Jesus; neither has he once referred to Judas, the agony in Gethsemane, Caiaphas, Pilate, or anything connected with the so-called "passion" of Jesus. One explanation of these remarkable facts is, that there was no written Gospel in Paul's day: the sayings and doings of Jesus had not then been thought of. The passage relating to the "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 23—26) is a later interpolation, inserted after the

appearance of the Gospels; it is a slightly altered copy of Luke xxii. 19—20.

The remainder of Dr. Fairbairn's contentions I must leave to the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

Blake's Satire.

SATIRE is an effect, not a cause. The writers who wield this effective weapon do so with many regrets, and the age that is to be trounced is responsible for satirists. The bludgeon of downright common sense, or the quarter-staff of reason, is useful for battering to pieces the silly, pious, half-truths of religion; but, for the neat, cleanly, and quick despatch of hypocrisy, there is no weapon so useful as the rapier of satire. It can penetrate the vitals of stupidity; it can strike with lightning rapidity; and, like the child who cried out that a certain king was naked, it can tell the truth that cannot be denied. And a child's truth is a sacred and holy thing, and that is why we hate religious liars to children.

We have lately stumbled across a copy of an unfinished MS. of William Blake, entitled *An Island in the Moon*, and, in the same spirit that a man discovered water would not run uphill, or fish could not live on dry land, we intend to offer a few comments, in the hope of lifting the veil of Blake's satire.

The age of Blake seems to have been just as dull and stupid and pious as the present, with the noble exception of witch-burning and the gallows for sheep-stealing. We have advanced, true; but the price of mutton and social ostracism have replaced these two abominations. We have left the faggot and the sheep as eternal symbols of the world's depravity, but other evils have taken their place. Yet, as it were, that age of powdered wigs and Swedenborg was a fitting one for the production of this satirical gem now under consideration.

In an amusing and ambiguous style, Blake discourses of the island in such a manner that we know he is not speaking of Malta or any other than England. He introduces us to three Philosophers: Suction, the Epicurean; Quid, the Cynic; and Lipsop, the Pythagorean. With a quick turn, he scuttles any vestige of respect that we might entertain for any of them by saying, "The three Philosophers sat together, thinking of—nothing." Before we have recovered, this delightful touch is capped by the following sentence: "In comes Etruscan Column, the Antiquary, and, after an abundance of inquiries to no purpose, sat himself down and described something that nobody listened to." In this trite manner the sententious gasbags afflicting mankind are classified, lampooned, and jostled out of the court of common sense, that rare commodity so scarce in all ages. After this treatment of his subjects, the reader's mind is well prepared for the exquisite drollery of one who looks down on the self-centred pedants who are only solicitous of their own fame.

Mrs. Gimblet, the next character, is delicious. Hail! thou immortal type of respectability, thou stiff-jointed prude, thou killjoy mouth with the drooping corners. Numberless thy victims, devastating thy influence, we see thee twitching the skirts of Venus de Milo to the nape of that fair lady's neck, and clothing little naked nigger-boys in red flannelette. This lady seated herself, and pretended to be interested in the conversation. The Antiquary seemed to be talking of virtuous cats; yet she was thinking of her appearance, and he was thinking of his eternal fame. Shades of pretension and advertising novelists; a century does not find us changed. The sham virtue of respectability, the selfish grasping of babblers in the market-place, is not only peculiar to our times.

Inflammable Gas, the Windfinder, joins the company, and there follows a delightful discussion chiefly on the subject about which the three Philosophers sat thinking. In the course of this buffoonery, the

Antiquary tells of a little incident that occurred as he was walking along the street:—

"A vast number of swallows were on the rails of an old Gothic square; they seemed to be going on their passage, as Pliny says. As I was looking up a little *outré* fellow, pulling me by the sleeve, cries, 'Pray, Sir, who do they all belong to?' I turned myself about with great contempt. Said I, 'Go along, you fool!' 'Fool,' said he, 'who do you call fool? I only asked you a civil question.' I had a great mind to have thrashed the fellow, only he was bigger than I."

There we have the true type of ponderous ignorance—of dignity, like a stuffed peacock, evading the question. There are many to-day who would like an answer to similar questions; but the tedious fools of the theology are silent, hidden behind the mists of what Swinburne called the Supreme Evil—God. Obtuse Angle then joins the company, and he is followed by Steelyard, the Lawyer; and the first chapter ends by stating that "Mrs. Gimblet drew her mouth downwards."

Not content with this number of whimsical characters in the first chapter, Blake, in the second chapter, must needs exercise his satirical powers in a further description of other types that form additional inflictions to the Ten Plagues of Egypt. "Tilly Lally, the Tip-tippidist; Aradabo, the Dean of Morocco; Miss Gittipin, Mrs. Naannicantipot, Mrs. Tigtagatist, Gibble Gabble, the wife of Inflammable Gas, and Little Scopprell entered the room"; and this brief chapter concludes by saying, "If I have not presented you with every character in the piece, call me Ass."

Aradabo is induced by the Epicurean to say something. He says:—

"In the first place I think, I think in the first place that Chatterton was clever at Fissics, Fology, Pistiology, Andology, Arography, Transmography, Phizography, Hogamy Hatomy, and hall that; but in the first place he eat very little wickly, that is he slept very little, which he brought into a consumsion; and what was that he took? Fissics, or somethink, and so he died."

And so, in this genial manner, we can picture Blake raising his hat to the ologies and ographies of his time. It is such pitfalls as these that obscure the issues of life, which, in all conscience, is complex enough already. Let us fly to the hills of laughter for relief, and our bitter-sweet satirists shall point the way. If we have not written down all the bugbears, the screech-owls, and the scarecrows that Freethinkers throw overboard, let our name also be found in the second chapter of *The Island of the Moon* when the full edition can see the light of day. We understand that it is impossible to print in full the unfinished MS., owing to the exactions of modern speech; but, as every country vicarage shall have its Marie Corelli, we sincerely hope that every Freethinker will examine Blake. Let us try to imagine Swinburne writing an essay on the humanity of Torquemada; if we are unable to do so, we shall not be surprised to find that he wrote one on Blake, and no man taketh a serpent to his heart.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Holy Thursday.

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land—
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?
Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!
And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are filled with thorns;
It is eternal winter there.
For where'er the sun does shine,
And where'er the rain does fall,
Babes should never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

Acid Drops.

The religious conscience of England, says Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury, is satisfied that the War was inevitable. Of course it was; but so was everything else beside the War. When certain things are done that involve certain consequences, these consequences are inevitable. That is a "blessed" word, indeed. It sounds so big, and it means so little. It is exactly the word that the pulpit leaps at. When one nation asserts command of the sea and another declares its intention to command the earth, and when all nations go on year after year writing war, talking war, preparing for war—probably under the delusion that they are keeping peace—the result is almost certainly war sooner or later. And then some wiseacre assures us that war is inevitable. Wonderful discovery! Great, indeed, is human stupidity! For it shall endure for ever and ever.

Nothing beats being business-like. According to the *British Weekly*, a "well-known" Congregational Church is sending out a card with two names on it, to men only, with special request for prayers for the two individuals named on the card. These are names of soldiers at the front. We are told that "a careful registry is kept, and if any casualty occurs, or the soldier returns, the recipient of the card is notified." This is quite as it should be, and we congratulate this London church on its pious bookkeeping. The Lord is prayed to for Private Smith, "somewhere in France," which is as near preciseness as Army regulations will permit. So far as Private Smith is concerned, the prayers stop if he returns. He can then go to the Devil. But it would be very annoying for the Lord to hunt round Northern France to protect Smith, only to discover that he was in the Navy, and somewhere on the high seas. So, too, the reason for stopping the prayer if Private Smith returns home. That would otherwise mean Providence hunting round the British lines for one who was not there. And it would sound very sarcastic to go on praying for Providence to protect a man who was already wounded. Clearly, every contingency has been foreseen—except a profit and loss account—which would debit the Lord with the responsibility for all those wounded ones who have been prayed for by the recipients of the postcards.

The *Star* states that at least three duchesses are confirmed vegetarians, and that there are other noble devotees. Our contemporary might have remembered the Biblical monarch, King Nebuchadnezzar, who ate grass.

According to the *Christian Commonwealth*, the Rev. R. J. Campbell has been invited to visit America to explain the War from the English point of view. This should be from the point of view of what Paine calls the "sunshine patriot," for Mr. Campbell belongs to the "black army."

The Press boycott of Freethought is slowly but surely relaxing. The *Westminster Gazette*, in its issue of March 10, quoted the well-known passage from Thomas Paine, beginning, "These are the times that try men's souls." It has taken Christians about a century to find out that Paine was a great writer.

In the *British Weekly* for March 4 "Claudius Clear" puts in what he considers a strong plea for religious instruction in all day-schools. Secular Education, he maintains, will not and cannot make a nation moral, though "it may deter from crimes of violence and mitigate the ferocity of revenge." Even this he regards as doubtful, and supports the doubt by the following reference to German education:—

"But we have the spectacle before us of a great nation, boasting loudly of its culture, undoubtedly most effective in the communication of secular knowledge, and yet reverting, apparently without difficulty or hesitation or a moment's effort, into the worst outrages that have ever stained the sorrowful history of humanity."

That sounds plausible and final, clinching the argument most successfully, and Sir W. Robertson Nicoll is eminently satisfied with it. After that, the advocates of Secular Education haven't a single leg to stand upon, and the blush of shame and defeat ought to redden their cheeks.

So thinks the oracular Sir William; but, fortunately, he and the facts are not on speaking terms. There is no *Secular Education in Germany*. As Mr. Charles Tower tells us in his interesting little volume, *Germany of To-day*, the schools are generally under the supervision of the local clergy, and religious teaching plays an important part in them. In the lower classes, four hours a week are devoted to religious

instruction, and five in the two upper. The teachers responsible for giving it must profess either the Catholic or the Protestant faith. Whether we approve or disapprove of German culture, we must admit that religion lies at the very roots of it. Is it possible that Sir William is ignorant of this elementary and indisputable fact? If he is, he is guilty of a moral crime in writing on the subject at all; if he is not, then the extract just quoted is hopelessly steeped in bigotry and prejudice.

It is a characteristic and illuminating fact that the War was the only subject discussed at the recent meetings of the Free Church Council in Manchester. The men of God are exploiting the War with a vengeance. One of them resolved not to mention the subject in his sermons; but his people rebelled, and he is now preaching on the War every Sunday. The truth is that the Churches, which claim the Prince of Peace as their head, are war-mad. The War offers them splendid opportunities for Christian work, and magnificent will be its effect on religious and social activities, on the Lord's Day, and on temperance reform. It will certainly result in the closer co-operation of men and women in all departments of life. However, it has always been a peculiarity of Christian prophecies that they are never fulfilled, which is a source of great comfort to sober-minded people. The people have had enough of Christian work, Sabbatarianism, priestcraft, and all other manifestations of religious bigotry; and, for our own part, we are deeply convinced that the War will prove the severest blow Christianity has ever received.

Referring to the effect of the War on Christian belief, it may be interesting to mention a fact that came to our knowledge a few weeks ago. An old gentleman of eighty-five, well known to us for many years, conversing with a parson, said: "I have been a believer all my life; but I must confess that this War has been an eye-opener to me. I can no longer believe in a just and good God. If there is a God at all, he must be the embodiment of all wickedness." That is good logic, and good ethics too.

Moneylenders, it is said, make a special point of circularising clergymen, but they occasionally find one of "the cloth" as shrewd as themselves. Then they get bitten. The Vicar of Sherburn, near Scarborough, was last week sentenced by Mr. Justice Coleridge to nine months' imprisonment in the second division for obtaining £172 from moneylenders by fraud.

Rev. J. H. Rushworth told the Free Church Council at Manchester that the War "registered the calamitous failure of organised Christianity." After saying this, Mr. Rushworth pleaded for a more united movement between the Churches. Only a congregation of parsons could have kept a straight face after that.

County Courts are not often troubled with theological questions, but at Southend recently a case of trespass was tried before His Honor Judge Tindal Atkinson, and a solicitor argued that the blowing down of a tree by a gale was either "an act of God or a trespass." His Honor said that "an act of God could not be a legal trespass, for He had a right to trespass all over the world." Presumably, this trespasser cannot be prosecuted.

Giving evidence at Westminster Court, an eighty-years-old man said that he and his wife had been living on an old-age pension of five shillings, out of which they had to pay a weekly rent of 4s. 6d. This aged couple should be able to express a very decided opinion concerning the Biblical view of the blessings of poverty.

"The Conscience of Christendom has been awakened by the War." That, in various forms, is the kind of thing the religious press has been serving up week after week. "Self-sacrifice was never so pronounced." This is another piece of information we are constantly seeing, with the assumption that it is entirely due to Christian influence. When it comes to facts, the *British Weekly*, to inspire people in this country to further efforts, points out that the end is not yet in sight. "The hesitation of the Balkan States shows that they are doubtful whether we shall win or lose. The American nation, so far as we can judge from the newspapers, is also hesitating." Presumably the same consideration weighs with Italy and Greece. They are willing to join in, but only when they discover which is the side that is certain to win. If victory seems certain for the Allies then they will declare for them. If not, then at the most they will continue neutral. So much for the war of "ideals," for the Christian championship of right against might. So much for the self-sacrificing power of the Christian con-

science. Its chief function appears to be to supply ethical and religious excuses for the most miserable and sordid motives.

Professor David Smith devotes his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for March 11 to a discussion of answers to prayer. A Christian lady complains that a relative of hers, a young military officer who was wounded in the early stages of the War, died in spite of the fact that very earnest prayer had been made for his recovery, and she anxiously asks, "Why was not prayer answered in his case? Does God answer all believing prayer?" Dr. Smith cannot get away from the promise made by the Gospel Jesus, which in its completeness reads thus: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive; if ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do" (Matt. xxi. 22; John xiv. 14). The prayers offered up for the wounded officer's recovery were both believing and in Christ's name; why were they not answered? Dr. Smith cannot tell; but, being a theologian, he does not admit his inability. He beats clumsily about the bush and arrives at no intelligent, or even intelligible, conclusion. He vainly tries to show that *believing* prayer means prayer which "entrusts our case to God, and leaves him to deal with it as he may see best"; but that is the Professor's *commentary* on the Gospel promise, which completely robs it of its original and simple meaning, the fact being that no prayer, however believing, or however fervently in Christ's name it may be, is ever answered. Some wounded soldiers recover, and others die; but, in each case, the issue depends, not on the character of the prayers made on their behalf, but on the seriousness or lightness of the wounds, and on the quality of the medical aid and nursing provided. At best, prayer is nothing but an expression of the wish of interested parties, and its value is purely sentimental. In his endeavor to make it out to be anything higher and nobler, Professor Smith is seen to be hopelessly floundering in a continent of mud.

The Rev. Dr. Gordon, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, fully shares the bigotry and prejudice common to the majority of the men of God. He says that "all the soul qualities register themselves in the face," which is true enough; but in classifying the different types of face one meets with, he comes to what he contemptuously calls "the hardened face of unbelief." It is an infamous calumny against unbelief to say that it hardens the face. It does nothing of the kind. If Dr. Gordon visited an assembly of Freethinkers, or were in the habit of meeting Atheists in society, he would know what bright, radiant, happy faces they nearly all have. Unbelief means emancipation from the cruel tyranny of supernaturalism, deliverance from all superstitious hopes and fears, and friendship with Nature at her best, with the result that the mind is at rest, saved from all religious abnormalities.

Two Army chaplains have been wounded in the War, and the newspapers have celebrated the event in headlines. The Bishop of London is not among the victims.

At the 111th birthday celebration of the British and Foreign Bible Society, held at the Guildhall, London, Sir Vezey Strong, who presided, stated that 300,000 German versions of the Bible had been distributed in Germany. Maybe that is why the German soldiers are copying the "frightfulness" of Old Testament fighting.

What weird ideas Christians possess. A writer in *T. P.'s Weekly* says "we are nearer Universal Peace at this moment than we have been for two thousand years. For the first time have professed Christians been in a position to shape Europe." As a fact, Europe has never been so much like a slaughterhouse.

A Sunday picture-paper has been announced, and we are wondering whether we shall see full-page pictures of the whale swallowing Jonah and other Biblical stories, or photographs of the latest criminals.

We confess that the workings of Sir Oliver Lodge's mind baffle us. Speaking at Birmingham the other Sunday, he said:—

"It was not easy on the surface to reconcile what was going on with, let them say, the Sermon on the Mount, and what they commonly thought of as the Christian thesis. But they ought to remember that the epoch of Christ was one of peace. It was one of the few times they read of in history when the gates of the Temple of Janus were closed."

Now, what in the name of all that is sensible, had the epoch of Christ, or the influence of Christ, or anything that is Christian, to do with the time at which Jesus lived being a

period of peace? And yet, if Sir Oliver means anything at all, he means that the fact of its being a time of peace reflects credit on the Christian "mesis." But Christianity was then only held by a handful of insignificant, illiterate individuals. The ruler of the world was then Rome—Pagan Rome. And when did Christian rulers give the world the same fruitful peace? Perhaps Sir Oliver Lodge can answer the question. He might also point out what the world gained in the transfer of the rulership from Pagan to Christian hands.

Sir Oliver stated, "Christ said, 'I come not to bring peace to the world, but a sword,' and it was that sort of sword, the sword of the Crusader" that would defeat the Germans. A most unfortunate illustration. History is not Sir Oliver's strong point or he would remember what the Crusaders were. Ripping up women and children was not an unfamiliar or apparently uncongenial occupation with these soldiers of the cross, and right through the Crusades it was only when they were not busy fighting the common, and far more civilised, enemy, that they ceased trying to cut each other's throats. Not even the Germans could say anything worse of the British Army than to compare them with the Crusaders.

It is bound to keep turning up, that wonderful Bible which saved a man's life by deflecting a bullet—although a pack of cards has been known to answer the same purpose. In this instance it is a wounded officer staying in Tunbridge Wells. The Bible did not prevent his getting wounded. It only saved him from being killed. Still, it was "miraculous," because it was a Bible. More wonderful still, the bullet passed into the pages and stopped at Psalm xci. 9-10. That is truly wonderful, since this verse says "no evil shall befall thee." The wound, perhaps, is a blessing in disguise.

Sir Andrew Wingate, in presiding over the annual meeting of the London City Mission to the Jews, said that an "eminent Jewish scientist" in Paris had asked him whether it was possible to form a Jewish Army to capture Palestine from the Turks. We fancy that this eminent scientist must have been "taking a rise" out of Sir Andrew. The latter, however, told the scientist that in the present War the forces that had kept the Jews out of Palestine were being weakened. We were not aware that any forces were keeping the Jews out of Palestine if they cared to go. But they prefer other places. Sir Andrew Wingate says he can now hear the nations of Europe saying, "Let the Jews return." We congratulate Sir Andrew on the quality of his hearing. But we are also quite assured that unless the Jews are carried to Palestine by force they will stay where they are.

A church-worker and Sunday-school secretary, charged with bank thefts to the amount of over £400, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment at the Guildhall, London, recently. It was stated that defendant had kept two homes. This is another example of the restraining power of the Christian religion.

Christians are as 'umble as Uriah Heep, but they seldom go so far as the Rev. Thomas Phillips, who said, "there was a bit of the German Emperor in most of us, and a slice of Prussia in most of our churches." A caustic critic might call this Potsdam silliness, although pious folk like to regard themselves as "miserable sinners."

The Right Rev. Bishop Bury, who was advertised as the preacher at a teachers' service at St. Mary's Church, Prittlewell, Essex, was described as "Bishop of Northern and Central Europe." If his lordship's diocese includes Germany, France, and Belgium, it is surprising that he can find the leisure for strengthening the faith of school teachers.

Defenders of the Design Argument will be delighted to learn that bacteriologists have discovered in the throats of victims of influenza, not only the usual bacillus, but also a large diplo-coccus. Perhaps the champions of orthodox will contend that the new micro-organism is introduced by a fatherly Deity to prevent the patients being too frisky.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox's latest book is entitled, *The Art of Being Alive*. It should have a good sale on the Continent just now.

"Fairy Tales Believed by Army Officers" was the headline in an evening paper recently. We wonder if they include the stories of Balaam's Ass, Noah's Ark, and Jonah and the Whale?

NOTICE.

On and after March 25, the business of THE PIONEER PRESS, will be transferred to 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15 : —G. Smith, 10s.; G. B. Taylor, £1; R. Wood, 5s.; J. Robinson, 10s. 6d.; H. King, £1 1s.; A. Waymark, 2s. 6d. Per Miss Vance:—N. S. Mundy (Silchar), 10s.; H. T. C., £1 1s.; Mrs. H. T. C., £1 1s.; K. C. C., £1 1s.; J. Pendlebury, £2; T. A. Matthews, £1 1s.

G. B. TAYLOR.—We appreciate your thoughtful subscription in the midst of, as you say, "dodging German mines and submarines." We sincerely hope that you will manage to "keep out of Heaven"—and the other place. At any rate, if you are destined for either place, we hope it will be by a more orthodox route than that provided by the pious Kaiser.

G. SMITH.—Your good wishes for Mr. Foote's health will be duly forwarded.

J. ROBINSON.—Your position is similar to that of many. The only hope lies in the growth of a public opinion that will not make honesty of thought and speech quite so expensive a luxury as it is at present. Your subscription to the *Freethinker* has been handed to the shop manager. The balance applied as directed.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always useful. Thanks.

H. R. WRIGHT.—We are afraid we must let the discussion on the point contained in the first part of your letter rest where it is. With regard to the second part, a directory of newsagents who sell the *Freethinker* would doubtless serve a useful purpose, but unfortunately we have not the material at present to hand necessary to compile one. Most of those who sell the paper order through a wholesale agent. If readers will assist us by supplying the names of newsagents who stock, or are willing to display the paper, we shall be pleased to publish them for the benefit of those who, like yourself, take an interest in furthering its sale.

H. KING.—We will hand your very kind invitation to Mr. Foote as soon as possible.

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

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

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

Personal.

I THINK it better to put what I have to say in this form rather than in that of an impersonal paragraph in some other portion of the paper.

First and foremost, I am glad to be able to report that Mr. Foote's health has undergone a marked improvement during the past few days. But he is still very weak, and is at present unable to do anything in the shape of work. The doctor has advised complete rest for the present, and all his friends will be glad to know that that advice is being acted on. This is, from all points of view, the wiser course, although it is naturally irksome to one who has always led an active life.

Mr. Foote's illness has occurred at a very critical time in the history of the Freethought movement, but in these matters one must take such things as they occur. Readers of the *Freethinker* are aware that the Secular Society, Ltd., is at present engaged in litigation over the Bowman legacy, and they will be glad to learn that the defence is proceeding along the lines marked by Mr. Foote prior to his illness, and that both solicitor and counsel are fairly confident of the result. The end may be delayed awhile by some quite needless complications that have been introduced, but these are not likely to affect the issue.

With regard to the Honorarium Fund. I had hoped this week to have been able to print a complete list of subscriptions to date. This would, however, have thrown some amount of labor upon Mr. Foote, and involved an infraction of the doctor's orders. So far as subscriptions up to March 15 are concerned

they must, therefore, remain unacknowledged, publicly, for the present. What I have done, as will be seen, is to take all subscriptions from March 15 and acknowledge them. This will be continued week by week until such time as Mr. Foote is able to attend to the matter, when a more complete statement will be made. I trust that subscribers will decide that I have adopted the wisest course in this matter, but none other seemed open. The great thing is to allow nothing to stand in the way of Mr. Foote's return to health.

C. COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

We have received a number of inquiries concerning Mr. Foote's health, with many earnest wishes for his recovery. It is impossible to acknowledge all of these individually, either through the Correspondence column or otherwise. We hope that those who have written will take this as an acknowledgment of their solicitude. Meanwhile, as said above, Mr. Foote is steadily improving.

In spite of the general slump in intellectual matters produced by the War, we are glad to say that the *Freethinker* continues to hold its own. There has been a drop—a very slight one—in circulation, but that we hope to see made good very shortly. We are also glad to observe that the War has not stopped *Freethinker* lovers pushing the claim; of the paper wherever possible. That form of advertising is very effective, and we are under obligation to those who have helped in this matter. We have had several rather interesting letters on this topic, and we hope to quote from them in our next issue. Meanwhile, we wish it to be remembered that we are still willing to send free copies to probable subscribers, on receiving their names and addresses.

It is not usual to place a notice of death in this column, but we feel that an exception will be pardoned now and again. We were sorry to hear from the *Star* of March 15 that Professor Del Marmol died very suddenly on that date, and is to be buried at Lewisham Cemetery on Saturday, March 20, at 3.30. We first met Professor Del Marmol some years ago in connection with the Committee that was formed to protest against the torture of political and religious prisoners in Spain. The Professor held a post in Barcelona University, but was compelled to leave the country owing to his advocacy of justice for the prisoners. Their abominable torture was placed beyond question by medical examination of such as were in England. Since he has been in England, Professor Del Marmol has contributed to several of the scientific journals here, and was a constant contributor to many journals on the Continent. He was an ardent Freethinker, and leaves behind him a widow and several children.

The quality of English newspaper criticism is well shown by the way in which a revival of one or two of Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays and the reissue of some of his writings are being treated. One critic remarks that it is "almost impossible to believe that not long ago we thought Mr. Bernard Shaw witty, and even wise." Another remarks that the present more serious temper of the country has shown "us" the superficial character of his writings, and so on through a number of other organs of public "opinion." We have said over and over again that, in our opinion, Mr. Shaw's work has been much overrated, but we have never been blind to its generally witty character, or to the value of his shrewd thrusts at many of the stupidities and injustices of social and political life. And our opinion has not been in the least affected by the alleged existence of this "more serious" public temper. It is, we repeat, evidence of the quality of English critical journalism, that writers who pose as leaders and educators of public opinion, should have had their judgment so profoundly changed in the course of six months. Mr. Shaw's plays and books are exactly what they were. And what is the value of a parcel of critics who can declare a man's work wise and witty one month, and the next discover there is nothing in it? Such men write themselves down as either fools or knaves. They are either fools incapable of forming a balanced judgment, but each taking his cue from the other, and all of them waiting for the inspiration of public prejudice, or they belong to the other variety, ready to turn out written judgments to order. They are no more than the cockchafers of public passion. Men of ability and character do not veer about in this fashion. Their opinions are carefully formed, honestly expressed, and have, at least, the durability of sincere conviction.

The Father of Bacteriology.

AT a time when the countrymen of Pasteur stand side by side with those of the Russian Metchnikoff and the English Lister in one of the most appalling calamities that has ever overtaken the world, it will not be out of place to recall some of the services rendered to humanity by the great Frenchman and his disciples and successors.

A few months ago a neat volume was issued from the press, from the pen of the eminent surgeon, Mr. Stephen Paget.* This timely work—one of the Medical History Manuals—presents in untechnical language a most excellent outline of Pasteur's contributions to science, and proceeds to describe how this chemist's pioneer studies have been deepened and developed by Lister, Manson, Roux, Koch, Behring, and other leading authorities. Dr. Paget proclaims in his preface his indebtedness to Radot's *Vie de Pasteur*, a splendid biography, which is now accessible in English, and which, unquestionably, ought to be on the shelves of every Public Library. There is also a most reliable and well-written little work on Pasteur by Professor Frankland, which is entitled to the highest praise, and which should be perused by all who are interested in the biological achievements of one of the very greatest of modern men of science.

The son of a French soldier who had survived the Peninsular War, Louis Pasteur was born in 1822. A promising schoolboy, Pasteur proceeded in 1840 to Besançon, where he was appointed as teacher of mathematics and physics. After taking a minor degree in science, he passed on to Paris, worked as a teacher, read industriously for a higher degree, and attended the lectures on chemistry then being delivered at the Sorbonne by the famous scientist Dumas. Passing his chemical examination very successfully, Pasteur's coming career was now determined.

A dutiful son, a loving brother, and affectionate friend, Pasteur's correspondence at this period presents the family and social side of his radiant nature in glowing colors. The value and importance of duty and sacrifice are never absent from the mind of the rising student. His thoughts constantly return to the poverty of the old folks at home, and he offers to defray the cost of the schooling of one of his little sisters, as he is now able to earn small sums of money as a pupil teacher.

A competent mathematician and physicist, Pasteur made important discoveries in chemistry. As a matter of fact, a great authority, Professor Frankland, hails him as the creator of stereo-chemistry, "one of the most wonderful departments" of that fascinating science. But although Pasteur's proficiency as a chemist was always of immense value to him in his subsequent investigations, it was in biology that his supreme triumphs were to be won.

Every inch of him a "pure scientist," Pasteur never, however, lost sight of the practical aspects of scientific discovery. In 1854 he became Professor in the University of Lille. In the December of that year he delivered his inaugural address to the Lille students. His lectures were attended by large and appreciative audiences, but in addition to lecturing, the new Professor conducted his classes through foundries and factories, so as to enable them to obtain first-hand knowledge of the applications of science to industry. Pasteur now became more and more attracted to the phenomena of fermentation, and in 1856 he was engaged in evolving alcohol from beet sugar. This proved the beginning of a long line of startling discoveries. In 1857 we find him reading a paper on lactic-acid fermentation before the Lille Scientific Society. As Dr. Paget says:—

"He had discovered in sour milk a trace of greyish substance; had proved it to be indeed a ferment of milk; had isolated this *bacterium lactis*, had sown it on milk,

and seen it act. If we care for that ill-treated phrase, *An epoch-making discovery*, here is an occasion for its use. It fixes the date of the birth of the New Learning."

Pasteur was restored to Paris in 1857, where he directed the science teaching at the Ecole Normale. He was provided with an insignificant and vilely equipped laboratory, but, despite its limitations, he made it the instrument of his revolutionary achievements. He taught the world how to better the quality, and maintain in fine condition its vinegars, vinegars, and beers. And he, likewise, laid the firm foundations of all subsequent improvements in the brewer's and the vintner's arts.

Liebig—a bold innovator in his day—was by this time too old to assimilate the doctrines of the younger and more progressive chemist. Liebig continued to cling to the belief that fermentation was exclusively a matter of molecular physics, while the more modern Pasteur viewed this process as one of vegetable physiology. He saw that the presence of plant life was essential to the fermentative process, and the whole matter in dispute was finally set at rest by Buchner, who, in 1897,—

"extracted from yeast the very substance of its ferment, the zymaze, separable from the yeast-cells, yet formed within them, as ptyalin is formed within the cells of the salivary glands. The action of zymaze may be stated in terms of molecular physics; the formation of zymaze may be stated in terms of plant physiology; thus the old lines of dispute are left behind."

The now demonstrated fact that fermentation is the result of the activities of organic matter, gave rise to a prolonged discussion concerning the spontaneous generation of life from non-living substances. Pasteur held that life always arises from antecedent life, at least in our day, and he was unquestionably victorious in his controversy with Pouchet and Joly on this subject, as was Tyndall in his with Bastian at a later date. But although Pasteur and Tyndall succeeded in proving that life does not appear as Pouchet and Bastian originally contended that it does, the problem of spontaneous generation is still unsolved, and Dr. Charlton Bastian and others still claim that living matter develops *de novo* from lifeless material.

We now know that fermentation, putrefaction, and decomposition are all due, not to the action of the air, but to the activities of the aerial, aquatic, and terrestrial micro-organisms which everywhere encompass us. Sterilised food and drink, any organic substances in fact, will remain sweet and pure for any period, so long as they are protected from these putrefactive micro-organisms. But as soon as they are exposed to a germ-laden environment the processes of putrefaction begin.

Such phenomena led Pasteur to speculate concerning the genesis of infective and contagious diseases. "What is wanted," he declared in 1860, "is to extend these observations far enough to prepare the way for a thorough study of the origin of different diseases." This teaching was destined to exercise a great influence over the English surgeon, Joseph Lister, who applied the discoveries of Pasteur to the treatment of hospital diseases. As Dr. Paget, in a striking passage, states:—

"It would be useless to put here a long account of the misery and peril of compound fractures, wounds, operation cases, and maternity cases, in the years before 'Listerism' came into general use..... The tragedy is too great for words; it was the burden of all military surgery, all hospital and private practice, all midwifery, in every city on earth for centuries. Pyæmia, septicæmia, erysipelas, cellulitis, hospital gangrene—it is nothing to write the names; but it is enough here to write them; we have only to note that these infections were scourging the Glasgow Infirmary to their heart's content, right up to 1865, as they were scourging other hospitals in all countries; and were called—no writes the most evil-sounding of all the names—hospital diseases."

Other medical humanists and reformers were also at this period inspired along lines of progress by Pasteur's researches. But it remains the honor and glory of Lister that he discovered and utilised the

* *Pasteur and After Pasteur*. A. and C. Black. 1914.

antiseptic method in surgery. This magnificent achievement was the result of long years of patient and laborious study. In their ignorance of the danger of microbial infection of wounds, the older surgeons attached no special importance to the cleanliness of the fractured flesh or bones which they were struggling to heal and mend. Syme, one of the ablest and most careful operators of this period, once told the young Lister that in cases of compound fracture of the lower limb, where the wounded skin communicated with the broken bones, in his opinion, it was on the whole safer to amputate the leg, instead of striving to save it.

In these pre-Listerian days exposed wounds were soon transformed into running sores. The putrefactive powers of the environing germs were as yet undreamed of. But now all was about to be changed. Speaking of his surgical labors, Lister informs us that he had long been appalled by the awful phenomena of putrefaction in surgery:—

"I had done my best to mitigate it by scrupulous ordinary cleanliness, and the use of various deodorant lotions. But to prevent it altogether appeared hopeless, while we believed with Liebig that its primary cause was the atmospheric oxygen which, in accordance with the researches of Graham, could not fail to be perpetually diffused through the porous dressings which were used to absorb the blood discharged from the wound. But when Pasteur had shown that putrefaction was a fermentation caused by the growth of microbes, and that these could not arise *de novo* in the decomposable substance, the problem assumed a more hopeful aspect. If the wound could be treated with some substance which, without doing too serious mischief to the human tissues, would kill the microbes already contained in it, and prevent the future access of others in the living state, putrefaction might be prevented, however freely the air with its oxygen might enter."

The serious obstacle, then, that confronted Lister was the prevention of wound putrefaction. Pasteur employed the aseptic method in sterilising broth or any other putrescible substance. He merely boiled his infusions and decoctions, thus destroying the microbes, and then preserved them from future contamination in carefully filtered air. While maintained in motionless air, these preparations continued indefinitely in a state of purity. But it was clearly impossible to apply this aseptic treatment to a wounded patient. No surgeon could sterilise the germs which had entered an open wound by boiling the sufferer. As an only alternative, Lister chose the antiseptic method of treatment, and destroyed the poisonous germs with carbolic acid, and left untouched the scabs that formed over the wound. His first experiment along these lines proved unsuccessful, but his second succeeded. He meditated long and deeply as he proceeded with his task. He devoted six months to saving the limb of a child that was injured by an omnibus. Gaining knowledge and experience as he advanced, he modified, as every true scientist modifies, his methods. And the consummation of all this labor was a great and glorious triumph. From chambers of horror our hospitals were changed into the magnificent temples of the healing art they have since become.

Pasteur's successful study of the silkworm diseases, which threatened and nearly strangled the silk industries of France and other countries was a further service to his nation and to mankind. For many years this manufacture had been sadly smitten in the numerous lands in which it was followed. In France the destitution occasioned by the decline of a great national industry was appalling. And sneer, tracked the course and the causes of the malady, and saved from utter ruin millions of men, women, and children, whose means of living depended upon the prosperity of the silk manufactures.

Pasteur's heroic efforts were encumbered by envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Domestic affliction overtook him. He was stricken with cerebral hemorrhage, and very nearly died. In 1870 his country was humiliated and overrun by the Prussian hordes, but still he fought the battle of science. In

the darkest hour of his distress Italy proffered him a professorship at Pisa, but he resolved to remain with his crushed country. He turned his attention to chicken cholera, a disease which was fatal to 10 per cent. of the French fowls, and reduced the death-rate to less than 1 per cent. This victory secured, he next proceeded to deal with the dire cattle scourge known as anthrax. This, also, is a malady of microbial origin, but Pasteur's researches and results have saved the lives of millions of sheep and kine in all parts of the world. Here, again, the death-rate was lowered from 10 to below 1 per cent.

His treatment of rabies in the lower animals and, as it is termed, hydrophobia in man, was marvellously successful. In this triumph alone he earned, in the words of Sir Henry Roscoe, "the gratitude of the human race." As a reward for his priceless services, the Pasteur Institute was established in Paris by a grateful people and an enlightened and progressive Republican Government. Pasteur's work is immortal, for it lives after him. Throughout the civilised world to-day, men like Metchnikoff, Wright, Ehrlich, Koch, Roux, and their colleagues continue his labors. When the human race recognises its real and abiding benefactors, the name and fame of Pasteur will shine like stainless stars in the highest heaven of its thoughts and thanksgivings. Men such as he will be esteemed of vaster value than the best belauded conquerors and kings. These are almost invariably the instruments of destruction, while humanists like Pasteur are the dispensers of noble gifts. We will conclude by annexing Alfred Hayes' poem, "Pasteur's Grave":—

"No cypress-shadowed churchyard, nor the gloom
Of haunted cloisters doth immortalise
The dust of him whose patience proved more wise
To save, than death to slay. The busy loom
Glancing with silk, the teeming herd, the bloom
Of purpling vineyard, and the grateful eyes
Of souls reprieved at Death's most dread assize,
Shall make eternal gladness round his tomb.
Not 'mid the dead should he be laid asleep,
Who wagemeth still with Death triumphant strife,
Who sowed the good that centuries shall reap,
And took its terrors from the healer's knife;
Defender of the living, he shall keep
His slumber in the arsenal of life."

T. F. PALMER.

What it Means to be a Catholic.—III.

A lecture delivered in Chicago, by
M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Continued from p. 172.)

AGAIN, the Middle Ages neglected the acquisition of knowledge or of science because it would not be needed in the other world. Things were valued or neglected according to the use people could make of them, not here, but in heaven. And heaven was very much more important than this world because while the latter was temporary, the former was eternal. Moreover, man, a pilgrim and a stranger, was *en route* to a world so complete, so perfect, so finished in every detail, that nothing he could take with him in the form of information, or skill, or ability, or even virtue, would be of any service there. Nothing remained to be done, and everything had been attended to by the Deity. If a man were a genius, he would be as useless as a beggar, in a perfect world. No one looked forward to an opportunity to be of help or guidance in the world to come; hence, nothing was required of man but to count the days when he would be translated into an angel.

This faraway look in the eye made man not only indifferent to present duties, but blind also to present opportunities, and disdainful of the beauty, the joy, the happiness which *this* life offered to him. We read that St. Bernard, travelling along the lovely shores of Lake Lemman, saw not the azure of the waters, nor the grape-laden vines, luscious and luxuriant, nor the mountains, clad in all the glory of sun and

snow. These things did not interest him, but with his head down over the neck of his mule, he kept thinking of the day of doom, and the judgment seat of God. St. Bernard is as representative of the Middle Ages as Petrarch is of the Renaissance. The next world had blinded man to the beauty and the loveliness, as well as to the opportunities, of the present world.

Again, the hope of heavenly rewards actually increased the horrors of this life. To earn the rewards of the next, people were not only willing to be punished here, but they welcomed the punishments of this world, and considered themselves fortunate when they were chastised. Job, who was treated more inhumanly than a master would treat his dog, is called "blessed" in the Bible. Job's sufferings, according to theology, proved how much he was favored by heaven. This view actually placed a premium upon suffering. Of course, suffering is caused largely by evil or error; hence, any effort to diminish evil, or to educate the people out of error, would be feared, since such effort would diminish suffering, reconcile man to this life, and tempt him to forget the next world. We understand now why the plague and the pestilence, why war and famine, why persecution and poverty thrived and waxed strong during the Middle Ages—they were cultivated, so to speak, as a means of weaning man from the desire for this world. The more the believer suffered here, the surer he was of his future reward. There was no salvation "without the shedding of blood"; that is to say, without a tragedy, without agony, without pain and panic, without the utmost suffering.

No doubt you have all seen pictures of the cross topped with a crown. That embodies the idea which is the core of every supernatural religion: Suffer now, and you'll be rewarded hereafter; the cross will lead to the crown. Of course, that will make the cross dear to the seeker of a crown. You have also seen pictures which represent the believer clinging to a cross. It means that, even if we escape suffering ourselves, the sufferings of another, a Christ, for example, will win for us the coveted crown. But the idea that suffering is indispensable to the wearing of a crown, whether we suffer ourselves, or whether the suffering of another be vicariously placed to our credit, remains the fundamental doctrine of revealed religion. Our objection to this teaching is, that it makes man indifferent to present evil—to oppression, misery, and injustice. Believing that suffering fits a man for heaven disarms him against evil, and makes him a ready victim of the tyrant and the persecutor. The text, "The Lord chasteneth whom He loveth," as also the other text, "In the world ye shall have tribulations," cheered the sufferer and made him bless his misery. Happiness and prosperity, on the other hand, led him to fear that perhaps he was receiving his reward now, and would, therefore, be punished in eternity.

The example of Jesus as a sufferer has contributed much to encourage this pessimistic philosophy of life. Was not Jesus born in a stable? Did he not sleep in a manger? Was he not homeless and without a place where to lay his head, and foodless, except for what charity bestowed upon him? Was he not reviled and spat upon, and then fastened to a gibbet? And was it not because of his willingness to bear the cross that he now wears a crown and sits on the right hand of God in glory? Had Jesus been born in a palace, or had he loved and married and lived to a good old age, and died a painless death, would he now be sitting on a throne in heaven? And must Jesus bear the cross alone? If he had to suffer before he could reign, how can we reign without suffering? It will be seen that the Christian scheme, or solution, is: The cross now, the crown later. Ah! but while we make sure of the cross, who can guarantee us the crown?

It may be urged that Christians have done much to reform present evils, notwithstanding their belief in a better and more enduring world beyond. It must be admitted that there have been not a few great reformers in the Churches. Yet it is a fact, I

believe, that the early Christians, for example, did not begin to pay any attention to things of this world until they were compelled to abandon the hope that the end of the world was close at hand. One reason for political corruption is the unwillingness of Christians, who at one time represented the bulk of the population, to take part in secular affairs. "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus said, and his disciples refused to be interested in mundane matters. It was only after modern thought had succeeded in making an impression on the ecstatic believer, and shaken his faith in the future, to some extent, at least, that he permitted politics, economics, art, science, social reforms, and commerce to occupy his thought and engage his interests. Thus, not until the next world had ceased to dazzle the beholder, did he begin to see this world.

Again, the Middle Ages conferred upon God, or speaking more properly, upon his representatives, the king and the priest, all the rights, leaving man only duties. The Renaissance reversed this order completely. This was a *coup d'état*, a master stroke! The Renaissance gave rights to man for the first time in modern history; and for every new right conferred upon man, a corresponding duty was imposed upon the gods and their agents on earth. Is not that very interesting? The day on which kings and priests were driven to consent to duties—the day on which the gods were made to accept duties toward man, was a Renaissance day—the anniversary of which should be celebrated with music and flowers, with song and gifts.

The first effect of conquering rights for man was an immediate burst of activity. Mountains were levelled, oceans were crossed, new worlds were discovered. The Renaissance, as I said, discovered the Prometheus in man, and Prometheus replaced the gods. Previous to the period we are speaking of man had been driven from every field of activity and responsibility. This inactivity had made a fossil of him. And then this fossil blossomed! That blossoming we call the "Renaissance." To perform this incredible miracle only one thing was necessary. Could you guess what it was? Exercise! To maintain the tone of the physical body—to draw the nourishing blood to the muscles, the nerves, the organs, we must give them something to do. If the king or the priest did our walking for us, or breathed the air for us, or masticated our food for us, what would become of our bodies? One does not have to be a physician to know that unless we did our own walking, breathing, and masticating, we would become puny, paralytic, and smitten with every imaginable melody. Yet, in the ages of faith, the priest did everything for man—thought for him, chose for him, and told him what to believe. Both religion and politics were offered to man in the form of pre-digested food, which he was expected to swallow without mastication; and as religion and politics covered practically the whole field of life, there was nothing left for man to do but to vegetate. Small wonder, then, that Europe rotted to the core. And the Rome which had once been worthy to be called the Mistress of the World, the Eternal City, now became a nunnery for celibates of both sexes, sterile in mind as well as in body. Shall I quote again Shelley's lines?—

"Where once Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowed and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses, and deceives."

Let me now offer an illustration or two to show the extent to which the priest as the agent of the Middle Ages, still labors to continue the regime of the possible dimensions, shutting him up in the narrowest possible sphere, and reducing his activities to the smallest possible fractions—leaving him nothing to do but to walk in a beaten track, to repeat by antiquated formulæ, and to swallow pre-digested food.

Whenever we complain of the increasing interference of the Church in human life, the reply has been that the Church concerns itself only

religion, leaving people all the freedom in the world in the other spheres of life. But this is true only in a Pickwickian sense. It is an evasion instead of an answer. In reality, religion is so interpreted by the Churches as to embrace the whole life. I was asking myself, the other day, how much of a margin of freedom I would still command if, for example, I were to become a Roman Catholic—not a nominal, but a practical, consistent, loyal Catholic. In how many important relations of life would I still be free to follow my own thought, and to act without feeling the hand of the Church upon me every moment or so? How much of a margin would there be left to me in which I would be my own master, developing my resources, training my judgment, and cultivating my sense of responsibility, if I were to subscribe to the Roman Catholic creed in earnest?

(To be concluded.)

Critical Chat.

We see that the publishers of the *Everyman* series has included in the last issue Paine's *Rights of Man*, with a preface by the late G. J. Holyoake. We have not had time to compare the text of this edition with others, but we think we may assume that Messrs. Dent & Co. would not be guilty of placing a bowdlerised version of so well-known a work before the public. Meantime, we welcome the fact that a publishing house of credit has had the good sense to include a classical work such as the *Rights of Man* in a popular series. The low price, and the handy form of the volume, will tempt many to read the work who have never read it before, and those who have done so may well read it again with profit at such a time as the present.

What we should like now would be for Messrs. Dent to follow the *Rights of Man* with an edition of the *Age of Reason*. In its way, the one work is quite as epoch-marking as the other, and Paine lived to recognise that of the two it was the more important. Intrinsically this may be a disputable proposition, but extrinsic circumstances made it so. It was religion upon which Paine's enemies—and, in the main, he was honored by their enmity—relied to overcome the influence of his political writings. Anyway, the time has surely arrived when the *Age of Reason* should take its place in publishers' "libraries," and the public is quite ripe for its being there. There is to-day an enormous public quite ready to read advanced works, or works with the most heretical reputations, provided these can be put forward under "respectable" auspices. And it may be safely assumed that the first publisher of standing who has the courage to put forth really advanced books will most probably meet with a success that will please him, and make his trade rivals envious. A boycott is maintained as much by the fear of one class as by the bigotry of another. A little timely courage is all that is needed.

It is probable that no other book published at that time had so deep an influence as Paine's *Rights of Man*. It was published in 1791, and in 1793 it was calculated that no less than 200,000 copies had been sold. And bearing in mind the time at which it was issued, it is certain that a sale of 200,000 copies would mean at least three times as many readers. We know that societies were formed for the express purpose of studying and propagating its teachings. It became with many almost the gospel of a new religion. Montagu Conway thinks it is not too much to say that if the *Rights of Man* could have had two or three years uninterupted sale in England, it would have produced a similar effect to what Paine's *Common Sense* did in the United States. Everything was in its favor as a creator of a new public opinion. The abuses of Government and Monarchy were patent, the unrest of the people widespread. Paine's style was admirably adapted for the work its author designed to accomplish. It was simple, direct, and represented a reaction from the ornate style of the eighteenth century. In this respect he anticipated Cobbett. And he paid the penalty of his clear thinking and fearless speech.

The Government took alarm, and resorted to the usual weapon of prosecution. An "Information," which covers forty-three pages octavo of the edition that lies before us, was sworn against Paine, and the trial came on—in his absence. For the Crown, the case was conducted by the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General; for the defence

there was the Hon. T. Erskine, afterwards Lord Erskine. The Judge was Lord Kenyon; the date of the trial 1792. Erskine's speech for the defence was a remarkable one, logical and eloquent. But the issue was a foregone conclusion. The obliging Jury saved the Attorney-General the trouble of even replying to the speech for the defence. The Foreman of the Jury, directly Erskine rose, said, "My Lord, I am authorised to inform the Attorney-General that a reply is not necessary for them"; their verdict was, Guilty. A most obliging jury.

Other trials for publishing or selling the *Rights of Man* or various other of Paine's political writings followed. Conway gives the following summary of prosecutions, but it does not include all:—William Holland, £100 fine; H. D. Symonds, £20 and two years, with additional imprisonment of £100 fine, with sureties for three years, and imprisonment until the fine was paid and sureties given; Richard Phillips, eighteen months; J. Ridgway, £100 and one year's imprisonment; Richard Peart, three months; William Belcher, three months; Daniel Holt, four years; Robinson, £200 fine. There was an almost continuous stream of prosecutions. The printer of the *Manchester Herald* had seven different indictments against him for selling the *Rights of Man*. In Scotland the sentences were more ferocious than in England. The most famous case there was that of Thomas Muir, an advocate. His trial took place at the end of August, 1793, and the report before us is dated the same year. The Judges were decided on a conviction, and obtained it. Each Judge delivered his opinion, which was progressively vindictive. Muir had advised people to read the *Rights of Man*, and the *Rights of Man*, in attacking the Monarchy, taught by implication "every sort of crime, murder, robbery, rapine, fire-raising," etc., etc. The verdict was transportation for a period of fourteen years. The Lord Justice Clerk, in giving his opinion, said he hesitated at the sentence of fourteen years, but only to consider whether it should not be for life. A most admirable Christian.

After all, we may take the ferocity of the attack as a measure of the power and influence of Paine's work. All over the United Kingdom, Paine's work found readers and advocates. And yet one may pick up history after history of the nineteenth century, written by reputable and "respectable" writers, and sometimes find Paine ignored altogether, and at other times brushed lightly aside with a line or two. Thus is history written. The glittering figure-heads of the political world treated as all in all, the greatest moulder of the political thought of the people brushed aside as of no consequence. Fortunately, Paine was too strong to be killed by this policy of boycott. He has never lacked either readers or followers, although his religious heresy has now become almost orthodoxy and his political heresy the platitudes of politicians. Bigots, tyrants, place-hunting politicians, and their kind hated Paine with an unmitigated hatred. But, on the other hand, he never lacked the respect and affection of good and brave men and women, who paid him the compliment of thinking their own life or liberty as naught at the side of propagating the principles he had taught them.

It is an old saying that only the busy man finds time to do extra work. The man who is not busy usually has his time so filled up by the contemplation of things he intends doing that in the end nothing is done. This was evidently overlooked by a eulogist of Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett, who writes in awestricken admiration that he studies philosophy for pleasure, writes literature for pastime, pursues politics out of public spirit, and, until recently, directed a huge business. Really there is nothing in this at which to wonder. In fact, the condition of being able to do one thing with skill and freshness, is that of being engaged with other things and so prevent over-absorption. It may be taken for granted that Sir Joseph's skill in conducting his business (we assume that it was skilfully conducted) was, in no small measure, due to the relaxation of studying philosophy and writing essays. Such things are not hindrances to business success, but helps; and many a man would find his whole life healthier and cleaner through interesting himself in matters that brought no direct financial gain. Life is a varied, but connected, mass of phenomena, and the secret of standing well with it is to cultivate a sympathetic responsiveness to all its aspects.

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