

# THE Freethinker

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*Knowledge is the bond of union between man and nature—ANATOLE FRANCE.*

## Easter.

THE Bishop of London is spending Easter at the Front. Not, of course, the *very* front, but some little distance behind where the actual fighting is proceeding. His business there is to perform the Church services attendant on Easter, deliver Easter addresses, tell the soldiers of the great significance of Christ's death and resurrection, of the manner in which that act of sacrifice established love and brotherhood and goodwill as supreme factors in the life of the modern world, and, having done all this, dismiss his Christian listeners, cheered and encouraged, to pursue their duty—of killing other Christians. And on the other side of the road—so to speak—are other Christian soldiers, and other Christian clergymen telling exactly the same story, drawing exactly the same morals therefrom, and dismissing their congregations, also cheered and encouraged, to renew their share of the slaughter. The religion is the same, the preaching is the same, the conviction on both sides is equally sincere—and the result is the same. The only difference is the direction in which the guns are pointed. And with all this before him, the man who cannot see the immense benefit Christianity has been to the world must be mentally blind and morally dishonest. Every battle that has been fought since August last has been a witness to the abiding and powerful influence of the Christian faith.

If the world were at peace, the Bishop would find in that, proof of the tremendous significance of the Church's Easter message. As the world is not at peace, he will discover exactly the same thing. We know he will. That is all he is going to the Front for. Otherwise, he might as well stop at home. He will find the soldiers cheerful and brave because they are Christians. And the German preachers will discover the same on their side. Any Freethinker could write out beforehand the report that will be made by Bishop Ingram concerning his visit. Has he not already said, when talking of the War, that the present is "God's day"? The War is God's opportunity. In what way the War offers God an opportunity we are not told. Perhaps it will enable him to dispose of a surplus stock of harps and haloes. Looking at the death-roll, that seems the most probable conclusion.

What is it that the Bishop has gone to the Front to celebrate? He would reply, in the cant of his profession, "The death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Nonsense! Easter has no more connection with the death—or life—of any historical person than has the story of Jack the Giant Killer. The mere fashion in which the date of the festival is fixed proves it. An historical event must happen on a certain date; and even though the date may be wrongly fixed, still it is fixed. It remains the same year after year. The Battle of Waterloo was fought on June 18, and whatever day of the week—that is the anniversary of Waterloo. But Easter is not fixed in this way. The date of

Easter is fixed, not by anything of an historical character, but by a phenomenon in astronomy. It is avowedly determined by the spring equinox. Was ever any genuine historical occurrence, any man's birthday or deathday, fixed in this fashion? That alone is enough to prove that we are in the region of mythology, not of history.

Easter has no connection with the death of a Jewish peasant some two thousand years ago. It is not even Christian, save in the sense that the religion known to the world as Christianity has adopted it. But it is non-Christian and pre-Christian. Every symbol connected with Easter—the gilded egg, the marked bun, the fires still lit and the vigils still kept by the Christian peasantry in many parts of Europe—are all pre-Christian. Even the name of Easter is not Christian. In all probability this is derived from the Saxon Eostre, and may be connected with the worship of Ishtar, the goddess of fecundity. The earlier Christians did not keep Easter at all. They kept the Passover. It was at a later date that Easter made its appearance. It is all part of a system of mythology already old at the time when Jesus is assumed to have been born.

We are not only faced with something that is older than Christianity; we are dealing with something that is deeper and more profoundly symbolic than Christian doctrine. Spring is the real, the natural, beginning of the year. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, represent the true cycle. It covers the birth, the development, the maturity, and the decay of vegetation. And all over the world the superstitions of men have fashioned ceremonies around the resurrection of nature from the death-like sleep of winter. In the ancient world Attis, Adonis, Osiris, Dionysius, all had their death and resurrection symbolised at the annual spring festival; and in the case of Jesus we have no more than another variant of the same theme. Nor amongst students of comparative mythology is there any longer doubt as to the real meaning of the miraculously born, peculiar-dying, and resurrected Christian Deity.

Mr. C. J. Lawson, in his *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, has the following suggestive summary of his own observations which serve to show the identity of Christian beliefs and practices with pre-Christian ones:—

"It so happens that Easter falls in the same period of the year as did the great Eleusinian festival—the period when the reawakening of the earth from its winter sleep suggests to man his own reawakening from the sleep of death; and it is probable that the Church turned this coincidence in time to good account, by making her own festival a substitute for the festival of Demeter or other kindred rites..... Again, the absorption of pagan ideas is well illustrated by the belief still prevalent among the peasants that the Easter festival, like the cult of Demeter, has an important bearing upon the growth of crops. A story in point was told me by one who had travelled in Greece. Happening to be in some village of Euboea during Holy Week, he had been struck by the emotion which the Good Friday services evoked; and observing on the next day the same general air of gloom and despondency, he questioned an old woman about it; whereupon she replied, 'Of course I am anxious; for if Christ does not rise to-morrow, we shall have no corn this year.'"

From the researches of Professor Frazer it is extremely probable that the custom of cake-eating at



Easter is a survival of the custom of killing and eating the God. For it is one of the commonest phases of primitive thought to identify things with persons. And when the identity is established, it would be enforced by the kindred belief that in eating a person one absorbed his qualities. At any rate, there is no doubt of the antiquity and universality of the custom of cake-eating. In Mexico the image of the principal deity was made in dough, baked, and eaten by his worshipers. In India, in Asia, and in many parts of Europe the same custom, under various forms, has been observed. In ancient Rome, loaves made in the form of the sacrificial animals were baked, sold, and eaten.

Mr. Sidney Hartland has collected, in connection with this custom of cake-eating, some curious examples of what he calls "sin-eating," and which lasted well into modern times. He points out how widespread is the custom of passing round sacramental cakes and wine on the occasion of the death of a chief or a relative. Originally this eating and drinking seems to have been restricted to the bearers of the corpse. An eighteenth century writer tells of a Welsh custom of employing people whose function it was to eat a cake stamped with the name of the deceased person. These people were called "sin-eaters," and they were supposed to take upon themselves all the sins of the dead man. It is not difficult to see the connection between this custom with the god-eating of Christianity and the bun-eating of Good Friday.

There is no need to dwell upon the stories of the death and resurrection of Jesus. They are historically false and intrinsically absurd. All impartial students of religion realise this; so, one may assume, do many of the clergy, but it is their business to pretend otherwise. In its pagan garb the spring festival, with its obvious and avowed reference to the quickening of vegetation and the rejuvenation of life, had at least some justification for its existence. But Christianity, in associating these ancient ceremonies with an assumed historical person, has converted what might have lingered on as a harmless piece of symbolism into a mere senseless buffoonery. It has associated the season of the earth's rebirth with the depressing picture of a tortured, emaciated, Jewish peasant. It is true that the mass of people do not show themselves at all depressed by the supposed sufferings of Jesus; they eat and drink rather more lustily than usual, they arrange for holidays whenever circumstances allow, and instead of Easter being the anniversary of an assumed murder, it might, to all appearances, be the anniversary of a wedding. In this respect the natural expressions of the primitive mind have shown themselves more enduring than the sophisticated refinements of the Christian Church. Spring-time was a season of rejoicing long before Christianity was heard of. It will remain a season of rejoicing long after it has been forgotten. At present, all that the Church succeeds in doing is burying what might be retained as a harmless, and even pretty, nature symbolism under a mountain of false statement and stupid superstitions.

C. COHEN.

### A Distinguished Freethinker.

MESSRS. METHUEN & CO., have published a remarkable and highly interesting work entitled *My Life*, by Sir Hiram S. Maxim. It is a book of fascinating reminiscences, sagacious reflections, humorous anecdotes, and instructive accounts of numerous scientific inventions. Sir Hiram Maxim's fame as an engineer of genius is world-wide, and the public will heartily welcome and enjoy this autobiography of a man who has done so notable a work in the world.

Sir Hiram's ancestors were French Huguenots, who, when driven out of France, settled in Canterbury, England, from which place they emigrated to America. Hiram was born in the State of Maine. His father had cleared a farm in the heart of a dense

forest; but ere long he gave up farming and started a wood-turning establishment in the same township. Here the boy's education began in the little school-house. His chief interest, however, was bear-hunting, which occupied much time in the days of his boyhood. Bears were exceedingly plentiful in Maine then, and some people tamed and made pets of them, though they were by no means safe pets. From earliest childhood Maxim was of a constructive frame of mind. He used to collect sticks and bits of wood and attempt to build a saw-mill over a little stream of water that leaked through a dam.

The atmosphere in which this young genius was brought up was extremely Puritanical. Playing cards at any time was considered very wicked, while playing cards on Sunday was a criminal offence. Deacon Hunting was noted for his Sabbatarianism; but his son John had his full share of original sin. Hiram obtained a pack of cards; and one Sunday morning he took a position where he could watch old Deacon Hunting's house. He made signals which John saw and the two met behind the wood pile. John had been learning his Sunday-school lesson and had the book with him. Hiram showed him the pack of cards, and he asked, "Are those the cards that are so dreadfully wicked?" Of course they were, and because of their extreme wickedness John was most anxious to become acquainted with them. So the two arranged to go to the river below the saw-mill in order to be invisible from the Deacon's house. They played the game known as "Seven Up," or "High Low Jack and the Game." But John was not an expert player, and while the game was dragging on old Deacon Hunting approached with a club in his hand. John instantly vanished, while Hiram stopped to gather up his precious cards, and by the time he had finished, the Deacon was within ten feet of him—

"He then cornered me up, shouting, 'Oh, you bad wicked, Sabbath-broaching boy.' By shifting his club from one hand to the other he drove me out on the side which ran out into the pond, and as he followed me off he said, 'Now I've got you, you wicked little wretch you Sabbath-broacher.'"

All this time Maxim had been educating himself. Geography, Astronomy, and natural philosophy were subjects he studied with the utmost care. It was his desire to become a sea captain, and being too poor to buy a chronometer, he set to work and succeeded in making an instrument by which he could determine the latitude. At fourteen he was put to work with a carriage maker, and his employer gave him a journeyman's job. He was to make six wheelbarrows, and when he had finished the work his employer brought several men to see the result, to whom he said, "This is the boy's first job; they are the best wheelbarrows I ever saw." While working there he had the enormous salary of four dollars (16s) a month, and even that was not paid in cash. His next employer, Daniel Flynt, treated him much better; but the hours were the same, eight in the forenoon and eight in the afternoon. He did all the decorative painting, and he worked for Flynt for about four years.

Maxim was a lad of exceptional physical strength and endurance. He became a celebrated boxer, beating every antagonist that came along. Several entertaining boxing adventures are recorded in the book. But it was as a mechanical genius that Maxim was destined to become known to the world. Even as a boy he invented an automatic mouse-trap, one that would wind up like a clock, and set itself a great number of times. Then he invented a blackboard with a surface as hard as slate, on which one could write with a slate pencil. A little later he invented automatic gas machines, automatic sprinklers, and a steam-trap. He made the first electrical regulator and the platinum lamp. The whole world knows that the wonderful Maxim gun is the product of his fertile brain, and nothing in the book is more interesting than the story of its trials in different parts of the world, in the presence of kings and emperors and eminent soldiers. It is not so well-known that he



also invented a flying-machine, and that King George and Admiral Commerell were passengers during one of its trips. It is beyond all doubt that Sir Hiram Maxim is one of the very greatest engineers the world has ever seen.

In the *British Weekly* for March 18, "Claudius Clear" reviewed *My Life* at length, and while it was on the whole a favorable review, yet it contained a few observations that cannot be allowed to remain unchallenged. Having related some feats of strength which Maxim accomplished in his youth, the reviewer says: "I wonder what Sir Hiram Maxim thinks, in the light of such stories as these, of his careful abstinence from the fighting in the Civil War." Again: "I do not think that Sir Hiram Maxim can be particularly proud of the fact that when the Civil War broke out he did not join the Army." "Claudius Clear" continues thus:—

"He was told by an old clergyman that he was altogether the most promising young man in the town; that he was very hard-working without any bad habits; that it might be all right for those less gifted than himself to go to the war, but that it was his duty to stay at home and work; also that he would find soldiering a very hard job indeed. So he made up his mind to give it up and refused to go on. All this is the genuine and standard apology of the shirker."

It never occurred to Sir W. Robertson Nicoll to think that the whole story is not told in the book. He is evidently ignorant of the fact that two of Sir Hiram's brothers did join the army and were both killed. At the time there were only three of the Maxim boys old enough to enlist—Hiram, Henry, and Leander; and it was their able and loving mother who prevented Hiram from doing so, on the good ground that he was the best qualified to manage the affairs of the family. But she readily permitted Henry and Leander to give their lives for the emancipation of the slaves. All who enjoy the privilege of friendship with Sir Hiram Maxim, as well as all unprejudiced readers of *My Life*, know that he is constitutionally incapable of shirking any duty. Furthermore, "Claudius Clear" is entirely mistaken when he states that Sir Hiram "almost boasts that he never enlisted, and that he never was in the service." The author of *My Life*, so far from "almost" boasting of such a fact, records it simply in order to disprove the allegation that he was a deserter.

But is it not Sir Hiram Maxim's attitude to religion that accounts for the readiness to hint that he shirked his duty to fight in the Civil War? "Claudius Clear" begins his review by oracularly asserting that Sir Hiram's "references to religion are silly and offensive in an extraordinary degree," and that "irreligion seems to be part of the character depicted." We might return the compliment by remarking that such an assertion is "silly and offensive in an extraordinary degree," but we prefer to take the charge seriously in order to show how utterly false and absurd it is. Sir Hiram Maxim is a thoroughgoing Freethinker, to whom God, Christ, heaven, and hell are merely non-existent. He regards supernaturalism as an empty dream of the superstitious. Naturally, then, his attitude to religion is that of unbelief and opposition—religion and supernaturalism being, in his opinion, synonymous terms. Surely, it cannot be "silly" for such a man to declare that he "can do without religion," nor ought it to be "offensive" to any fair-minded person. "Irreligion," in the sense of no religion, is "part of the character depicted" in *My Life*. Does "Claudius Clear" imagine that to sneer at a man's views is to refute them? Is he not aware that there are many millions—hundreds of millions—of human beings to whom his religion is wholly unbelievable because fundamentally immoral? Are the majority of scientists necessarily "silly" because they can get along well enough without religion? We have no desire even to suggest that he is not a perfectly honest and sincere believer himself; but we deny him the right to sit in judgment upon unbelievers and to call them "silly and offensive" persons if they venture to express their unbelief in strong and unambiguous

terms. There would be some plausible excuse for him if unbelievers, as a class, were morally inferior to believers; but he knows, or ought to know, that they are not.

Sir Hiram Maxim's autobiography will amply repay careful perusal. To chemists and engineers it presents a wonderful story of mechanical and chemical discoveries, while to readers in general it is full of food for thought and reflection, and to Freethinkers its atmosphere is delightfully wholesome and agreeable.

J. T. LLOYD.

### A Master Critic.

*Essays* by Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve. Translated, with an Introduction, by Elizabeth Lee. Walter Scott, Ltd.; 1915. 1s. net.

"THE greatest literary critic of the age, maybe of all time," is the description applied to Sainte-Beuve by Miss Lee in her Introduction to this delightful selection of the best essays from the famous "Causeries du Lundi," contributed to the French press by this most famous of critics. The praise is well-merited, for no one approaches Sainte-Beuve in the urbanity of his style or the felicity of his judgments of all literary matters. His most distinguished English disciple, Matthew Arnold, imitated, but never rivalled, the master in this respect.

It was a fortunate circumstance that Sainte-Beuve's mother was of English descent, for it was due to this fact that the great critic approached the study of English literature without that national prejudice which hampered even so fine a writer as Voltaire in his estimate of the complex genius of Shakespeare. Sainte-Beuve knew the English writers well, and his fine studies of Cowper, Pope, Milton, and Chesterfield, included in the present volume, are as truly sympathetic and illuminative as his estimates of Rabelais and Montaigne, who were at the opposite pole of literature.

In Sainte-Beuve's hands criticism became a fine art. In studying an author he found out everything down to the minutest details. Nothing mental, moral, or physiological escaped him. He then produced a life-like portrait, and when we have once read a criticism of Sainte-Beuve on any writer, he remains in our minds as the great critic painted him. It is a superb tribute to his mastery, and Arnold's eulogy springs to the mind in writing of this great Frenchman:—

"Certain spirits are of an excellence almost ideal in certain lives; the human race might willingly adopt them as its spokesmen, recognising that on these lines their style and utterance may stand as those not of bounded individual, but of the human race. So Homer speaks for the human race, and with an excellence which is ideal in epic narration; Plato in the treatment at once beautiful and profound of philosophical questions; Shakespeare in the presentation of human character; Voltaire in light verse and ironical discussion. A list of perfect ones, indeed, each in his own line; and we may almost venture to add to their number in his line of literary critic, Sainte-Beuve."

Sainte-Beuve is interesting because he was so great a critic; but he is still more interesting because a critic was the very last thing he desired to be. His career might be cited as the classic illustration of Disraeli's maxim, that the critics are those who have failed in art. Sainte-Beuve became a critic because criticism was the line of least resistance to the pursuit of a living. His real ambition was to be a Byron—a creative artist and a lady-killer. It was by failure in both directions that his critical genius was formed, and the story of his life has the pathos of persistent, unsuccessful egotism. Sainte-Beuve began his career, like Gustave Flaubert, as a medical student, and he made his first literary appearance as sub-editor in the office of the *Globe*. Accident made him acquainted with Victor Hugo and his friends. Associating with the greatest French poet of the century, Sainte-Beuve made up his mind that he, also, was a poet. The poetry is there to



judge, and it was criticised ferociously. Alfred de Musset summed up the situation in a cruel epigram, "Sainte-Beuve dreamed of the treasures of the Hesperides, and woke to find himself tenderly pressing a turnip to his heart."

An essay in psychological fiction was not more successful. By the fearless analysis of a vicious temperament with superstitious inclinations, Sainte-Beuve hoped to rival the great Rousseau. He was not classed with Rousseau, and he never will be. "Volupté" is only read as a task by biographers and other specialists. Finally, Sainte-Beuve resolved to win a definite place in literature as an historian, and he wrote "Port Royal." Here, at least, one would have thought, a man of his ability could not fail, but success again eluded him. Unity and design were wanting, and the point of view shifted as the work proceeded. The work was begun by a believer and completed by a Freethinker. Its merit as a portrait gallery is not to be denied; but if Sainte-Beuve had written nothing else, we should not be discussing his fame to-day.

Side by side with the failure in creative art proceeded the failure in the search for an enthusiasm. Extremely sensitive, he always felt the need of enthusiasms, but his critical mind refused to surrender to them. By education he was a Republican and a Deist, but many of his friends were Monarchists and Catholics. He quarrelled with the *Globe* in the interests of his new friends, and then found he could not go all the way with them. Hugo and the other poets wanted a trumpeter, not a critic. Sainte-Beuve could not admire without reserve, and without deploring extravagance. The breach came, and unkind friends then suggested that Sainte-Beuve's enthusiasm for Hugo's poetry was contemporaneous with his admiration for the poet's wife.

Saint-Simonism next attracted him, but the absurdities were very near the surface. Ridiculous doctrines were developed, and impossible creatures put forward sacerdotal pretensions. Another enthusiasm was found in the Neo-Catholicism of Lamennais; but very soon Sainte-Beuve lagged behind and played the infidel with George Sand. His emotions, thus stimulated, ran ahead of his intellect, and he inclined to mysticism. But it was as impossible for him to be a mystic as to be a Christian.

A critic, no doubt, as he realised ultimately, was what Nature intended him to be. He was as certainly a better critic for his knowledge of the creative side of literature, and his religious experiences enabled him to direct his shafts with unerring aim at the weak places in the defences of the Christian Church.

M. Anatole France has defined criticism as the adventure of a mind among masterpieces, and he has advised the candid critic to say: "Gentlemen, I am about to speak of myself *apropos* of Shakespeare, Racine, Pascal, or Goethe." Adopting that familiar phrase, we may describe the "Causeries du Lundi" as the adventures of Sainte-Beuve among the great writers. Nothing strikes us more forcibly than the many-sidedness of his mind, the universality of his sympathy, and the freedom of his judgment. Never were newspaper articles so worthy of preservation, for it was the intellectual value of Sainte-Beuve's work that the celebrity which it won for its author was mainly due. How striking in this respect was its appeal to the educated public, we of this day may well find it difficult to realise. Freethought has extended its dominion so widely since he wrote, and has so completely saturated contemporary thought, that to the present generation the truths on which Sainte-Beuve insisted have often an inevitable air of truism.

At the close of the magnificent series of essays comprising the "Causeries du Lundi" one asks whether there is any unity in all these suggestions. Sainte-Beuve emphasises the universality of art. Exclusiveness is a meaningless word in literature. The true critic refuses to be constrained by any other bond than that of good writing. Literature, like music, is wider than opinion, broader than dogma,

as limitless as the humanity to which it appeals. When Gladstone passionately addressed his magnificent oration on the Oaths Bill in the House of Commons, he quoted some perfect lines of that old-world Freethinker, Lucretius, as daring a blasphemer as Voltaire himself. The majesty of the quotation was its justification. Gladstone's brain and taste persisted in being independent of his heart, as in the case of the French officer who fought in the present war, and who, when killed, was found to have in his pocket a well-thumbed copy of Heine's poems.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Origin and Development of Man.

WHEN we remember how extremely modern the science of prehistoric anthropology really is, there seems no cause for discouragement concerning our present limited knowledge of the early history of the human race. Not merely is the science of man still in its infancy, but many and varied have been the obstacles presented to any sudden or revolutionising discoveries relating to man's primitive condition. And the reasons for this are not far to seek. Fossil remains of man are extremely rare. Save in very favorable circumstances skeletons decay and disappear, and, doubtless, the first bodies that were interred were laid in places from which they were torn by beasts of prey. Man was long living on earth before he made his most primitive attempts to sail on the river or the lake, thus reducing the chances of his remains being imbedded in the mud of stream or pool, while the prevalence of cannibalism and cremation also assisted in lessening the number of his osseous relics.

Fossil fragments have in the past given rise to the most extravagant explanations of their meaning. To take one example, a Swiss fossil of a huge amphibian was seriously figured and exhibited as the skeleton of a man who was drowned in Noah's flood. The literal accuracy of the Hebrew creation myth was first challenged by the discovery of the stone implements of prehistoric man. Monkeys commonly employ stones for the purpose of cracking the shells of nuts; and even among birds, the thrush fully understands the art of crushing the shells of snails when he desires to feast on the dainty molluscs within. Savage races still survive in the South Seas and in other parts of the world, whose implements and weapons are exclusively of stone, as metals are, or were until recently, quite unknown to them. Similar stone tools have been found in the soil in many parts of the earth, even in Europe itself. One was discovered at London, in Gray's Inn-lane, and this may be seen in the British Museum. But the importance of such finds was not at all realised until the middle of the nineteenth century, and even then by very few. The unearthing of large numbers of ancient flint implements by Boucher de Perthes in the gravels of the Somme Valley, in Northern France, awakened considerable interest. But this innovator was so carried away by his discoveries that he exaggerated his case, with the result that the conservative element seized the opportunity to altogether discredit the theory of their human workmanship. But fuller and more discriminating study completely substantiated the main claims of de Perthes. The stone implements which betrayed undeniable evidences of artificial shaping were separated from the naturally formed flints by Professor Prestwich and Sir John Evans, and the whole world of science was soon convinced that these selected remains represented the handiwork of men who lived many thousands of years ago.

That the human race is of immense antiquity has also been demonstrated by the recovery of its implements from caves. In England, Kent Cave and Brixham Cave are among the most celebrated of these. We now know that primitive savages who fashioned and used flint implements inhabited the



areas of North-Western Europe. And as their relics were accumulated, it became clear that these tools represented two main types. The ruder ones were roughly chipped, while others were ground to a smooth edge, and were substantially the same as those still employed by some of the Australian natives and the West Indian Caribs. The more rugged implements were usually found in more ancient deposits than those that yielded the better made tools. For this and other reasons, the late Lord Avebury termed the older implements Palæolithic, while to the more modern ones he gave the name of Neolithic.

That period of man's progress which preceded the Old Stone or Palæolithic Age is known as the Eolithic. Obviously, the phase of human development which antedated the epoch in which his tools were strikingly rude, must have been more primitive still. And for this reason among others, certain crudely chipped flints discovered in strata underlying the Palæolithic deposits have been regarded as surviving evidences of man's earliest efforts to profit by the improvement of natural objects for purposes of use. These rugged stones—the eoliths—were brought to light by the industry of Mr. B. Harrison, and were accepted as authentic remains of man's manipulation by a few geologists and archæologists. But Sir John Evans refused to admit their genuineness, and urged that they were of purely natural origin. In 1897, while conducting a party of excursionists over the Eolithic gravels at the Downs near Ightham, Professor J. W. Gregory, the geologist, and his friends were met by Mr. Harrison, and the eloquent persuasiveness of this gentleman, coupled with the fine stone specimens which he displayed to his visitors, served for the moment to win the geologist's belief in their human origin. But a more detailed examination of these flints led Professor Gregory to the conclusion that their curious appearance was the result of their having been frozen, and afterwards fractured by friction. This view Professor Gregory submitted to Mr. Cannington, the archæologist, who then journeyed to Ightham to inspect these wonderful stones for himself. He, also, was at first fully convinced of their artificial origin, but later investigation made him a thorough unbeliever in their genuineness. He saw many reasons for concluding that the same stones had been chipped at separate times, and he found it impossible to imagine the use which these alleged implements could possibly have been made to serve. Others, again, to which a definite purpose had been assigned, must have proved extremely imperfect, or entirely inefficient instruments. And Mr. Cannington further asserts that the chipping frequently blunted the edges of implements originally sharp and smooth, which would have served for cutting very much better in their unchipped state. And as the "eoliths" were, in his opinion, really fractured by the action of the intense frost of the Ice Age, he proposed to substitute the term "Glacioliths" for the one by which they still continue to be known.

Although these critical considerations have since been reinforced by the inquiries of Professor Boule, and now carry great weight with a large number of scientific men, yet some there are, and these of no mean authority, who remain steadfast in their adherence to the view that the eoliths are reliable records of man's early life.

A more cogent sermon has been preached by the cold, but not altogether inarticulate stones, which have been studied from the Suffolk "Crag." Professor Gregory writes:—

"In gravels at the base of both the Red and Norwich Crag chipped flints have been found, which are regarded as of human workmanship. These worked flints are very different in character from the ordinary Palæolithic stone implements. They are beak-shaped, and are, therefore, called the rostro-carinate implements. They have been described in detail by Sir Ray Lankester, who claims that the evidence for their human workmanship is unanswerable, and many eminent authorities on stone implements accept them as undoubtedly made by man. After a careful examination of some of the specimens,

the evidence for their human origin seems to me conclusive."\*

The antiquity of the deposits in which these worked flints were found proves them to be far more ancient than any previously discovered. It is thought probable that their age coincides with that of the ape-man, whose remains were unearthed in Java by Dr. Dabois, although their antiquity may not turn out to be so great as some experts suppose. But of their immense age there can now be no reasonable doubt.

Of the next stage in human development our knowledge is far more extensive. This is the Palæolithic or Old Stone Age, and within this period there are unmistakable evidences of steady progress. The earliest Palæolithic savages appear to have dwelt in the river valleys, where they, doubtless, protected their bodies with skins, and erected rude wooden habitations against the inclement seasons of the year. At a subsequent stage, these rough forefathers of civilised man utilised caves and rock-shelters as houses. In this pre-agricultural era our Palæolithic ancestors gathered fruits from the forest and shell-fish from the shore, and eked out a precarious existence with the proceeds of their primitive fishing and the trophies of the chase. The art of weaving was as yet unknown, and there is nothing to suggest that early Palæolithic man was acquainted with pottery. Nor are we justified in supposing that any of the lower animals had so far been brought under the dominion of mankind.

The Old Stone Age is arranged in a series of sections, which bear the names of the European localities in which they are most richly represented. As we ascend from section to section, there is unquestionable evidence of the gradual advance of the flint implements both in quality and finish, while the bone tools and the drawings of animals executed by still more developed Palæolithic peoples display artistic powers of a very high order indeed.

Salamon Reinach has suggested that these representations of animals were intended to place the creatures in the power of those who drew them. These early savages may have thought, as contemporary savages still think, that the possession of a portrait confers power over him that the likeness represents. In any case, all these remarkable drawings "were of animals which were useful to man, such as the horse, reindeer, mammoth, cattle, and goat; the lion, hyena, and wolf, which would have been his most serious enemies, were not drawn."

Turning to the fossil remains of the men themselves, or of their immediate ancestors, the most interesting and revolutionary discovery yet made is that of the skull-top and thigh-bone, which came to light in a Javan gravel-bed. These represent the fragments of the original skeleton of the famous *Pithecanthropus erectus*—the erect ape-man. After a sustained investigation, those best qualified to judge are agreed that *Pithecanthropus* was an animal linking man with the anthropoid apes. This creature bore several marked resemblances to the chimpanzee, and, although intermediate to man and ape, its affinity to the chimpanzee is rather more close. "The top of the skull is much flatter than that of man, so that the cavity of the brain was much smaller, and corresponded more to that of the chimpanzee than to that of man."

The oldest completely human relic so far known is a lower jaw discovered near Heidelberg in 1907. This fossil fragment differs so widely from the jaw of modern man that its possessor was raised to the rank of a separate species, with the title of *Homo heidelbergensis*. This jaw is brute-like, but its teeth are small, and that important human feature, the chin, is absent. In the judgment of Dr. Duckworth, the original owner of this jaw was little, if at all, different to the ape-man of Java. On the other hand, most authorities consider the fossil, low as it is, as distinctly human, and belonging to an organism much more evolved than our Javan relative.

\* *Geology of To-day*, p. 306. 1915. Seeley, Service & Co.



The fuller knowledge which future discoveries will reveal may be relied upon to set all doubts at rest. Not so long since a portion of a skull was found in a cave in the valley of the Neander near Düsseldorf. This fossil showed brute-like brow ridges, and indicated that its possessor was of a very low type. Evolutionary anthropologists never entertained any doubt as to its real meaning, but a leading light of a now defunct school first denied its human character, and afterwards alleged it to be the fragment of an idiot's skull. Now, however, our knowledge of Neanderthal man is far more complete. Entire skeletons of this human stock have since been discovered in the South of France, while skulls have been unearthed both at Spy in Belgium and at Gibraltar. All these remains prove that the Neanderthal race was characterised by the possession of powerful teeth, a receding forehead, and a very considerable brain.

Even in remotely distant Palæolithic times mankind was represented by more than one race. It has been suggested that the Neanderthal men find their surviving descendants in the native Australians; that the South African Bushmen are the remnants of the cave-men of Grimaldi, near Mentone; and that a third Palæolithic race, the Aurignacians, were the forefathers of the Eskimo. If these very reasonable conjectures be granted, then, as Professor Gregory puts it, "mankind had already been divided in Palæolithic times into the three chief sub-divisions—Caucasian, Mongolian, and Negro." In other words, the black, white, and yellow races of the present human world, all trace their descent from the three Old Stone Age races referred to above.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

#### GOD.

(From the viewpoint of Thomas Body, a working potter.)

"'Tis a pity you didn't come along half an hour sooner, Porter, for, then you might have seen Mr. Body make a plate" [said Mr. Pitts, the artist of the Pottery].

"I make more than I unmake," declared Thomas [Body]. "A plate to-day and a god to-morrow—'tis all one while the clay knows you for its master. Yet a god's a higher matter than a plate to a serious-minded man. God made me in His own image, and one good turn deserves another, so now I'm making Him in mine! Yet, not in mine, either, for that would be disrespectful. No doubt He's very old now—as old for a God as I be for a man—but there must be some respect shown from the creature to the creator, and you may be sure I'll mark it. I always know the company of my betters."

He was pounding and pulling the clay and making a fantastic image as he talked.

"I'm making Him full of eyes before and behind," he said. "And He'll have a larger beard than me. But there's no nonsense about Him. He ain't in His Sunday best, like He always is in the picture books and church windows. God's a worker, and His hands be stained with clay, and pushed out of shape, and scarred along with so many thousands of years of labor. And the stuff of stars be spattered over His blouse and His face. And He's round in the back and gone in the loins a bit, and His holy eyes be growing dim, and His holy heart aches off and on at His many failures. He's getting terribly old, I tell you, and thinking of the time when He'll work no more, and take His rest. But mind this, you men: when He stops, we stop! When He knocks off, it's all up with us. The whole universe will fall to pieces and go to rack when He's done. So, we'll hope He'll last our time, at any rate."—Eden Phillpotts, "Brunel's Tower."

He does not dread the sea who never sails; nor he a war who never goes to camp; nor he a robber who keeps his home; nor he an informer who has no wealth; nor he envy who lives retired; nor he an earthquake who dwells in Gaul; nor he a thunderbolt who inhabits Ethiopia. But they who fear the gods fear all things—land, sea, air, sky, darkness, light, sound, silence, dream. By day as well as night they live in prey to dreadful dreams, and fall a ready victim to the first fortune-telling cheat they come upon. They dip themselves in the sea: they pass all day in a sitting posture: they roll themselves on dunghills: cover themselves with mud: keep Sabbaths: cast themselves on their faces: stand in strange attitudes, and adopt strange methods of adoration.—Plutarch.

#### Acid Drops.

The destruction of so many thousands of young men, physically fit, representing the pick of the nation's physical manhood, is a most horrible aspect of the present Christian War, and we have no desire to minimise its gravity. But we quite fail to appreciate the necessity for the articles that are being written by a number of journalists calling upon women to become mothers as quickly and as frequently as possible, as though the world's well-being depended upon each nation substituting a competition in birth-rates for a competition in armaments. The writers referred to harp upon the present destruction of male life. That, we admit, is bad enough, but what does it amount to in plain facts? Probably not more than one per cent. of the male life of the nation. This country would have to lose, by death, over 200,000 to reach that percentage. And to assume that this is going to bring a nation to ruin is ridiculous. It is, of course, serious enough, because these deaths represent men of a marriageable age. But there is no need for "sore" articles of the kind referred to.

And there are two considerations about which our popular journalists never trouble themselves. One is, that a rapidly increasing population is not a necessity to national well-being. A nation is not necessarily better because it every year adds so many millions to its population; and it may possibly be the worse for that fact. Nations are not the better because they are large. Some of the most prosperous to-day are the small nations; and just now, by a strange contradiction, these same writers are singing their praises. A competition of populations is a mere political question, nothing else. It is the same kind of stupid competition that is responsible for the War which is now devastating Europe. It is the obsession that we must breed more rapidly than some other nation, in order to be able to spread over more territory than another nation, or to prevent that other nation spreading over us. That, we repeat, is a political problem. It has nothing whatever to do with the breeding of a better human race.

The second point overlooked is that the contest between nations will never be decided by mere numbers. In nature size is nothing. It is quality alone that tells. And, ultimately, dominance will rest, not with the nation that is able to call up the largest number of men for mere "cannon-fodder," but with the nation that can show the best type of manhood or womanhood. Recent events in no wise disprove this; for although one country may overrun or occupy another by force, the real and abiding contest for supremacy commences when the occupancy becomes a settled fact. It is not, therefore, more people that we need, but better people. We agree with Ruskin that it is not a vital matter whether a man has two children or four. But it is of very vital concern whether the children he does have deserve hanging or not. There is no proof that at any time in the world's history a people have gone under through not increasing its numbers. But there is plenty of examples of nations being ruined through a lowering of the quality of its collective life, or a worsening of its institutions.

The Young Men's Christian Association is supposed to be formed for the dissemination of the "Bread of Life," but it also deals in actual loaves, which are sold in the motor-restaurants for the troops, in addition to tea, coffee, cocoa, and soup. A pennyworth of soup and a hot tract on hell ought to keep a soldier warm on a cold night.

Bishop Browne, speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Literary Fund, said that the War had caused a decrease in the number of novels written by young women, and he hoped that this effect would be permanent. We hope that the circulation of that famous work of fiction, the Holy Bible, will be affected also.

Funerals are dearer owing to the scarcity of gravediggers and the *Daily Mail* says that "the clergy have been compelled to raise their fees." We cannot understand this clerical move, for there is no scarcity of parsons.

Numbers of bakers have announced their intention of dispensing with the making of hot-cross buns this Easter, owing to the scarcity of labor caused by the War. This will be a severe blow to religion, for gastronomics and godliness are associated with the chief festivals of the Church.

A popular novelist, writing in the *Daily Mail*, suggests that the name Fatherland, as applied to Germany, should



be corrected to "Father-of-Lies Land." The name would apply to Palestine.

The Bishop of London has announced his intention of "spending Holy Week and Easter behind the trenches." No one expected he would be in the front.

St. James's Church, Piccadilly, is reported by surveyors to be out of the straight. We have heard of a number of clergymen in a similar condition.

Professor Ivan Sokolof, in the *Constructive Quarterly*, says "What a salve it will be to reintroduce Christianity to Constantinople by means of the *Queen Elizabeth's* guns." But Constantinople will not be the only place that has had Christianity preached to it by big guns. It is not at all an unusual way of introducing Christianity. Indeed, if peaceful moral suasion had been depended upon, it is doubtful if Christianity would have existed to-day save as an obscure sect. We know of no nation where Christianity has not been established by force, and whether the force employed be of one kind or another is a mere matter of accident.

"There is only one thing," says the *New Age*, "that a Christian preacher can conscientiously do in these days—give up his job." It would be impossible to give sounder counsel in fewer words. The only weakness about it is that it is offered to a class of men who are the least likely to adopt it.

"A chronic inventor"—that is how Sir Hiram Maxim describes himself in his interesting volume of reminiscences, entitled *My Life*. He is best known to the general public by the famous machine-gun that bears his name; but there are few notions, from flying machines to gambling systems, that he has not given his mind to. Curiously, the first instrument of destruction which Sir Hiram invented was a mouse-trap, which caught five mice at a time. One of the most amusing things in the book is the remark of the Dutch poet who, according to the author, summed up life in the words, "You can't sometimes pretty much most always tell how things are going to turn out sometimes, ain't it?"

A lance-corporal, in a letter published in the *Daily Mail*, who was one of the few survivors of a shell explosion which killed many men, says "I firmly believe it is all the prayers at home that are being answered." A most unselfish and Christian view, too!

Billy Sunday, the Yankee revivalist, has announced his intention to come to London as soon as he can. People are getting tired of the English Sunday here, so the American doesn't stand a great chance.

"We do not all hate the robber rampant. It is where he poses as a saint that we find it hard to put up with him," says the *Daily Mirror*. The worst of this matter is that most robbers are religious.

"Will the War Hurt Religion?" was the title of an article in a Sunday paper, written by a novelist. That is an open question; but the War will not hurt many ministers of religion, for thousands of them are remaining at home to comfort the other fellows' wives.

Professor David Smith, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for March 25, attributes a most unenviable character to the loving Heavenly Father. He tells an inquirer that suffering "may be a providential dispensation." A certain man was blind from his birth. Why? God had caused him to be born blind in order that "he might serve as a monument of mercy." His blindness afforded Jesus an opportunity to exhibit his miraculous power in giving him his sight. Fancy a God of love treating one of his children in such a brutal manner. According to Dr. Smith, that man's blindness was his "most precious possession," because it gave Jesus a chance of showing what he could do.

The doctrine of resignation under suffering is a most pernicious heresy, and the harm done by it is incalculable. Suffering is never "a sacred opportunity," as Professor Smith teaches. It is always an evil to be got rid of as quickly as possible, as the Buddha describes it. Of course, the Professor's view is thoroughly Biblical. From the Christian point of view, this world is a vale of tears, in which happiness is unattainable. A Christian is taught to believe that deliverance from sorrow is possible only at death; and at the close of life he discovers how poor he would have

been without suffering. How any sane person can believe such a damnable doctrine is beyond our comprehension.

Professor Smith is radically mistaken when he affirms that *Nirvana* is "the third article of Hinduism," and signifies release from suffering "in a state of motionless and actionless repose." As a matter of fact, *Nirvana* is not in the Hindu creed at all, and the definition he gives of it is utterly false. What he defines is not *Nirvana*, but *Moksha*. *Nirvana* is to be found only in Jainism and Buddhism. In the latter, it means a state of serene happiness attainable in this life. Buddha entered upon it when he was comparatively young, and lived in the enjoyment of it until he was an old man of eighty odd years. In his case, it was a state of great activity, and to enter it denoted to triumph over suffering and sorrow. That is the true philosophy of human life. Pain is an evil to be put under one's feet by obeying the laws of Nature. Our supreme duty is not to be resigned, but to struggle, fight, and conquer—to become in very deed our own providence.

Obituary notices, written by persons little skilled in authorship, make curious reading sometimes. *John Bull* recently quoted a death-notice from a provincial paper: "March 3. —, the dearly loved husband of —, for twenty-nine years with Messrs. —, Whitechapel. With Christ, which is far better."

"The primary object of this War and of all wars is to lacerate human flesh, to break bones, to inflict torture, to paralyse, and to kill. Every army in the field to-day is out for maiming and homicide, and for nothing else." Thus Mr. Arnold Bennett, writing in the *Daily News*. Yet Christians call this war a crusade!

The *New Age* has a smart hit at the part the clergy are playing in the War. "The churches are appealing to the public to come to church and pray for the soldiers as being the least they can do for them. It is, indeed, the least; also the cheapest."

Dr. Jowett, of the Fifth-avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, says that a certain awe is to be at the background of his festivity. His movement cannot be hallowed, or his laughter pure and sweet, unless he is in a state of fear. According to this well-paid divine, awe, fear, dread, is the atmosphere in which every true man lives and moves and has his being, and in the absence of this atmosphere the Christian life is quite impossible. We are in full agreement with him, and that is one of many reasons why we are not Christians. Every supernatural religion owes its origin to ignorant fear, and it is the cultivation of such awe that renders its continuance practicable. We maintain that the fear of something beyond phenomena is a disease that needs to be rooted out of human life altogether.

The religious mind is a fearful and a wonderful thing. Dr. Martin, a surgeon with the Expeditionary Force, writes, describing battlefield horrors: "The agonised groans of our wounded men, the screams of dying horses, suggested that impalpable, but nevertheless real, feeling of standing for a moment in the face of the Creator."

Luther once declared that the Bible was a nose of wax, and could be twisted in many directions. Bishop Faulhaber, a German ecclesiastic, declares that war is justified by the Gospels. Other bishops declare the exact opposite; but this does not prevent them blessing the regimental colors in the name of "The Prince of Peace."

It is quite the fashion now to attack everything German. German philosophy has nothing in it, German science is mere imitation, German poetry is drivel. It is regretfully allowed that there is a little in German music. But the latest is to fall foul of poor Martin Luther. After seeing him depicted clasping the Bible to his breast, and with an expression suggestive of chronic dyspepsia, accompanied by the assurance that he was the savior of modern Europe, we are now assured that Europe must relieve itself from the burden placed upon it by German Protestantism, and have only the English variety. Poor Luther! We wonder what would have happened had Jesus been born on the Rhine instead of in Palestine?

There is some plain writing in Mr. John Bailey's book on *Milton*, a recent addition to the Home University Library. Referring to the great poet's theological opinions, Mr. Bailey says, "The attitude of Milton's God is below the standard of any decent morality." The critic forgets to add that Milton found his Deity in the Bible.



Lecturing on the subject of "The Belief in Immortality among the Polynesians," Sir James Frazer, the author of *The Golden Bough*, said at the Royal Institution that "native necromancy is not confined to priests and males." How delighted the Witch of Endor would have been with this lecture.

It is not often we find ourselves in agreement with a clergyman on the question of Determinism, but we were pleased to note a letter by Rev. J. P. Malleon, of Great Tew Vicarage, administering a sharp reproof in the *Challenge* to what he properly called "an intolerant and slap-dash treatment of a difficult philosophical problem by Mr. S. C. Carpenter." Mr. Malleon points out that, as a mere matter of fact, there are thoughtful Christians who are themselves Determinists. This is generally ignored by modern popular writers, although there were no more ardent champions of a theological Determinism than Augustine, Calvin, and Luther. In sober truth, the choice that lies before really logical thinkers is not one of Determinism *versus* "Libertarianism," but a choice of either a physical or a psychical Determinism. If God is, and, as religious metaphysicians assure us, he is the ultimate reality, all that occurs must be a resultant of his nature or his will. If the "ultimate reality" be not God, but "matter," the same principle applies with a mere change of terms. Determinism, in short, is inescapable. It may be demonstrated by an appeal to facts, but it is an indispensable condition of rational thought.

Mr. S. C. Carpenter is a Fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge, and so discusses philosophical questions "as one with authority"—that is, to all who fail to distinguish between mere education and capacity. And in reply to Mr. Malleon, he writes: "At any given point in his career, a man is limited in his choice of a course of action by his parentage, his education, his physical constitution, his environment." That is, in Mr. Carpenter's mind, "choice" is one thing, and education, heredity, parentage, and environment other things. But choice is the expression of a preference, and a man's preference for this or that simply must be determined by his parentage, etc., etc. That is really the only rational meaning of choice. It is the expression of conscious decisions in favor of this or that thing, or this or that action. A man's choice is not limited by the things named by Mr. Carpenter; it is these that determine choice. Mr. Carpenter seems in hopeless confusion about the whole question.

Some journalists have been poking fun at the German fondness for sauerkraut and other Teutonic food-stuffs. Even a German would have hesitated before dining with the prophet Ezekiel.

Alderman Eve, of Stoke Newington, has retired after serving for thirty-five years as a Churchwarden. What a Churchwarden Methuselah would have made!

"An odd thing it is, surely, that in this age of ours the voice that counts above all others is the voice of *Queen Elizabeth*." This appeared in the *Echo*, London, and refers to the new battleship. But, surely, the Elizabethans would not recognise the voice of "Good Queen Bess."

We are glad to see that a vigorous fight is still being maintained in some quarters against the employment of child labor in agriculture. It is a bad policy in many respects, and any present advantage is almost certain to be purchased at the cost of much greater disadvantages later. We are the more suspicious about the whole movement since we note that it is only the children attending *elementary* schools who are to be allowed to labor in the fields. Children in *secondary* schools are to remain as they are. And yet in the case of any genuine national emergency they would be of much greater use, and should be the first to be made use of.

Mr. William Archer asks, "Was there ever such an opportunity for a golden-mouthed evangelist?" We give it up, frankly. We only know the flannel-mouthed evangelists.

"The beacons of the Gospel have been shining brightly during these six months of national stress," says the *Standard*. Presumably, since then the lights have been blown out.

A sample of religious bigotry is recorded in the *Clerk*, a paper devoted to the interests of that profession. It says that in a Leamington bank, some years ago, a clerk was

dismissed because he had written letters to the press stating that Bradlaugh should be allowed to sit in Parliament. The manager, who was a Christian, contended that the clerk was devoid of moral principle.

We do not wish to unduly lacerate the feelings of the religious world, but we cannot help drawing attention to the flippant way in which many of the ordinary newspapers refer to religious matters. The following, from a recent issue of the *Shipping World*, illustrates this:—

"A Strassburg pastor has been condemned for preaching the unorthodox doctrine that there is no special German God. We suppose that settles the question, and it must now be taken as definitely established that there is such a deity. Well, in the great epic wars of the past, the conflicts of mortals on this terrestrial shore used to have their counterparts in the realms of Olympus. Now, it would be interesting to have a record of the proceedings in Olympic conclaves at present, when the various tribal gods who are on speaking terms happen to hold colloquies together. For example, when the German God, as by law established, and whom we may allude to as Potsdam—when Potsdam, with his turned-up moustache, happens to meet the Turkish Allah just now, what is the conversation about? Perhaps the embryo Homer, who is laying up materials for the epic of this war, will devote a passage to this episode and oblige."

A conversation between the German God, the British God, the Russian God, and the Turkish God would certainly be interesting—that is, if faithfully reported.

Mr. W. Foat the retiring President of the Southend Free Church Council, has been expressing his indignation at the fact that this country was full of Romanist refugees. Out of the three European nations fighting on our side, two are Roman Catholic, whilst the Russians belong to the Greek Church. Perhaps Mr. Foat had overlooked these facts.

The *Christian World*, as is to be expected, raises a strong protest against the appearance of two new Sunday newspapers. It appears to regard this as one of the worst consequences of the War; and, worse still, they are "clean, wholesome" papers. That, we presume, makes the offense still more objectionable. Sunday papers ought to be objectionable, just as every Freethinker ought to be a scoundrel. That would make the work of the religious advocate so much easier. For our part, as we said last week, the world could have done very well without these new papers. They are certainly not better than the ordinary daily papers, and have a tendency to be a little sillier. For it is a striking fact that editors will publish things in a Sunday paper that are too silly for a daily issue. But all this talk about the burden of Sunday labor rings hollow. Sunday labor is involved in the opening of a new church, but no Christian objects to that.

Another grievance is, inquiry leads to the conclusion that "Many Nonconformists, hitherto hostile to Sunday newspapers, now take in a Sunday paper." And so the Sunday paper threatens to become an institution even with the "unco' guid." But though bad begins, there is worse to follow, as in this lament:—

"The Sunday paper question is only one aspect of the Sunday problem which is being accentuated by the War. In the sudden shock to the public mind which came in the early days of August, people flocked to the churches, and for a period the temperament of the nation was essentially religious. It was prophesied that a spiritual revival would spring out of the War. The religious mood rapidly passed off, and information gathered from over a wide field leads us to conclude that the wave of churchgoing has ebbed, and that church attendance—whether from impatience of the war or other causes—is now even lower than in the pre-war period. Judging from London and some of the large provincial cities, there is now more Sunday travelling for pleasure-seeking than, say, a year ago. The great London hotels advertise expensive dinners, followed by concerts, and our information is that they are crowded with patrons."

Alas, Alas! Sunday papers, Sunday dinners, Sunday concerts, churchgoing less than ever, and the City Temple bound to close its daily Intercessory Services for want of worshippers. What, oh what, has become of the great revival of religion!

The commonplace Christian is a miserable figure, a man that really cannot add two and two together, and who, moreover, just because of his mental incapacity for responsibility, did not deserve to be so severely punished as Christianity has decreed.—*Nietzsche*.



### NOTICE.

The business of THE PIONEER PRESS has been transferred to 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

All editorial and business communications should be sent to the above address.

All communications for the Secular Society, Ltd., or the National Secular Society, should be addressed to 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

### To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £12 10s. 6d. Received since:— J. E. T., 5s.; D. J. D., £1 3s. 6d.; M. B. (Warrant), 2s. 9d.; M. B. (Warrant), 2s. 4d.; A. J. M., 2s. 6d.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.

SCUBSCRIBER.—The subscriptions acknowledged for the President's Honorarium Fund are only those that have come to hand since March 15, at which date Mr. Cohen took charge of the Fund. Previous subscriptions were received by Mr. Foote, and will be dealt with by him on his return to the office.

A. PHILLIPS (somewhere in South Africa).—Thanks for copies of the Review. We are glad to see that things are moving in South Africa as elsewhere. If only all the papers would break this conspiracy of silence, the work of Freethought would be comparatively easy.

S. H.—Your compliments overwhelm us. We try to do our best, but after reading your letter, we are blushing too furiously for anything.

G. MORGAN.—There is no need for alarm. Mr. Foote has been very ill, but he is now improving, and we are hoping that the arrival of more genial weather will enable him to once more resume his duties.

H. WILBER.—Good wishes noted. Mr. Foote will, we have no doubt, be as glad to visit Leicester again as the Leicester folk will be pleased to see him.

R. H. ROSETTI.—We agree with you that there is no genuine reason why a vigorous Freethought propaganda should not be carried on this year. It is, in fact, in times of stress that opinion runs strongest, and an extreme in the one direction always creates a sturdy revolt by way of protest or reaction.

J. W. WOOD.—The published price of "In Humanity's Name" is twenty-five cents.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

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

Letters for the Editor of the Freethinker should be addressed to 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

### Sugar Plums.

This is the first opportunity we have had of referring to the Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League. The proceedings were of a formal character, and, owing to the absence of a public meeting, the attendance was smaller than usual. But, in spite of the War, the League is alert and healthy, and although circumstances compel it for the present to mark time, it will not fail to make its presence felt when the right moment arrives. Mr. G. Greenwood, M.P., whom we were pleased to see is recovering from his recent accident, was elected President of the League; and Mr. Halley Stewart—on whom time seems to make no impression—was elected Treasurer. Mr. Harry Snell remains Secretary, and fully deserves the kind things that were said of his devotion to duty.

Prior to the General Meeting an Executive Meeting was held, and a very cordial and sympathetic message sent to

Mr. Foote in his illness. Warm personal messages were also sent by Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Halley Stewart, and Sir Henry Cotton.

The last meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive had before it the question of the Whit-Sunday Annual Conference. After some discussion, it was resolved to hold the Conference in London this year. There are many things that make this necessary. First, the state of the President's health make it advisable to have the Conference as near London as is possible. In addition, there is considerable difficulty in obtaining halls in many towns, owing to their being taken over for military purposes. The cancelling of all excursion trains by the railway authorities will also prevent many delegates attending who otherwise might be there. All these circumstances point to London as the most desirable place for the Conference, and the Executive has so decided. Meanwhile, Branches will please note that motions for the Conference Agenda should be sent in as early as possible, and also that the financial year closes on April 23, by which date all subscriptions should have been received.

Mr. Foote, we are pleased to say, is still making progress towards recovery, and he hopes to be able to address Freethinker readers personally within a reasonably brief period. At present he is wisely obeying the doctor's orders, and refraining from all unnecessary labor. Those who have written will please take this as an acknowledgment of, and an answer to, their inquiries. At the last meeting of the N. S. S. Executive a vote of sympathy with Mr. Foote in his illness was passed, coupled with an expression of pleasure at his reported improvement.

We are glad to learn from Mr. W. Heaford that he is rapidly getting over his recent illness, and hopes to resume work soon. Mr. Heaford has a vast appetite for work, and his energies should put many a younger man to the blush. Unfortunately, he managed to get a bad fall a fortnight ago, and sprained his right foot, which is not quite the correct way for a convalescent to behave. We solemnly warn him not to do this sort of thing again.

Several old friends of this paper who have called at our new offices have expressed themselves highly pleased with the change, and we are inclined to agree with them that it is all for the better. The many thousands of people who pass along Farringdon-street daily will at least have the opportunity of knowing that there is such a paper as the Freethinker in existence. This may not lead to anything further with the majority, but we feel convinced that it will with some. And we have a strong conviction—although one risks being called conceited to say it—that the Freethinker only needs to be known to be appreciated. The proof of this is the way in which the Freethinker holds its readers year after year. One day, perhaps, that much-sought-for millionaire will come along, and we shall be able to embark on a really extensive scheme of advertising. Until that happens we must continue to rely upon the personal advertising of our well-wishers.

In spite of the weather and the War, the West Ham Branch of the N. S. S. has decided to commence its open-air work for 1915 to-day (April 4). Mr. W. Davidson is to speak, under the auspices of the Branch, at Maryland Point, at 7 o'clock p.m., and we hope that the weather by then will be more gracious than it is at present. The Branch Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, reports having had good meetings last season right up to November, and anticipates equally good gatherings this year.

Mr. F. Lonsdale will lecture on behalf of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram-street, at 12 noon. The subject is "James Thomson (B.V.) the Poet of Pessimism." Admission is free. We hope there will be a good meeting.

We are pleased to see a vigorous correspondence going on in the Birmingham Weekly Mercury on Freethought topics. Evidently something other than war is attracting attention amongst the Mercury's readers. A pleasing feature of the correspondence is a vigorously written letter—from the Freethought point of view—on "The Nazarene Reformer," by a Lady. When the women come out boldly in advocacy of Freethought, the Churches will find one of their greatest supports weakening. We congratulate the Mercury on its fairness in publishing the correspondence, and we hope that other papers will follow its example. As we have before said, we should like to see Freethinkers availing themselves more generally of this method of bringing their views before the public.



## Materialism: A Restatement.

MATERIALISM is usually defined as the doctrine that only physical substance exists—physical substance being understood as that which is extended and offers resistance. This definition has made the doctrine a too easy target for the religious apologist, and the object of the present article is to offer a restatement of Materialism in a form less vulnerable to the shafts of the orthodox. For this purpose, Materialism may be defined as the view that the reality underlying physical and mental existence is the same; in other words, that the distinction between matter and mind is not real, but apparent only. In this sense, Materialist thinkers include Spinoza and Schopenhauer, as well as others who are usually excluded from this class.

The real antithesis to Materialism, in this sense, is not idealism, but dualism. Dualism holds that spirit, or "that which thinks," is finally and irreducibly different from matter, or "that which is extended." In the course of our investigation, we shall see that the existence of a personal God, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the individual "soul," all depend upon dualism; *i.e.*, without dualism, there can be no Christianity.

According to the dualistic theory, there are two kinds of substance in the universe—matter and spirit. Matter is simply the hard, extended substance assumed to be presented to us in ordinary external perception, and supposed to be, in its nature, dead and incapable of consciousness, and determined only by mechanical laws. With this conception of matter, it follows logically, to the dualist thinker, that that which thinks must be different from matter. The thinking substance or spirit is therefore concluded to be immaterial, indivisible, and yet somehow inherent in the physical organism actuated by it, and distinct from other spirits inhering in other organisms. Two results are supposed to follow: first, that the finite spirit cannot have been a product of matter (defined as above), and must therefore have been created by an "infinite spirit" or God: secondly, that the dissolution of the physical organism cannot destroy the spirit, being immaterial and, therefore, immortal.

As this article is not intended as a refutation of Christianity, but as a vindication of Materialism, the foregoing position will not be criticised here in detail. In the opinion of the present writer, the dualist theory does not admit of a refutation from empirical data alone. The argument that mental life is affected, or altogether changed, by accidents to the brain, leaves it open to the dualist to say, if he chooses, that because mental life, as we know it, is thus conditioned, it does not follow that it always must be; or, again, to use the simile of the brain being merely the temporary tool of the "spirit," to infer that the "spirit" may hereafter be able to use other and better tools. The thoroughgoing Materialist, therefore, will not be content with empirical arguments, but will turn his attention to the conceptions of "thinking substance" and "material substance," with which the dualist starts.

If we look at these conceptions, we shall see that neither "spirit" nor "matter," "thinking substance" nor "material substance," is a thing of which we have at any time any experience. Both are merely assumed realities, which thought supposes must underlie certain facts of experience. As Berkeley showed, experience does not give us matter, but only certain qualities and processes (*eg.*, resistance, extension, color, heat, and motion) which our reason assumes must inhere in some reality. Similarly, Hume shows that experience does not give us spirit, but only certain qualities and processes (sensation, thought, and will) which we equally tend to assume must inhere in some reality. It is not true that this assumption is unreasonable, as Hume went on to conclude. There are certain first principles of reason which, unless we are to renounce all belief whatever in reason as a guide to truth, we are

compelled to admit. One of these principles is that a quality, or process, presupposes something in which the quality exists, or the process occurs. Another principle is that no such process occurs without some preceding process, which causes it to occur. Although substance of any sort is not a matter of experience, it is none the less an indispensable presupposition of experience.

Whether the substance in which consciousness inheres must be different from the substance in which the qualities of external objects inhere is the next question, and the ultimate one between dualism and Materialism. According to the dualist, the qualities of "matter" exclude, and are incompatible with the qualities of "spirit." This is an unproved assumption, and is, in fact, contradicted by certain considerations which follow. We all recognise some qualities of "matter" as only apparently belonging to it—*eg.*, color and heat. These, on analysis, are shown not to be real qualities of external objects, but only sensations produced by their real qualities. Color and heat, that is, are sensations, and therefore psychological processes. It follows that the other sensible qualities of "matter" which are inseparable in sensation from color or heat—*eg.*, extension and resistance (as present to sense) are equally sensations, and therefore, also, psychological processes. Everything, in fact, which our senses give us is a sensation, and therefore a psychological process. So far, therefore, from the qualities of "matter" and "spirit" being mutually exclusive, the sensible qualities of "matter" resolve themselves, on examination, into psychological processes.

This, of course, is not to say that external objects do not exist independently of our sensations. They obviously do. But the definitions of "external object" or "matter" need revision in view of the above. An external object, we now say, is the combination of causes which produces a certain group of sensations. Matter is the substance in which this combination of causes inheres.

The only question remaining is whether we are bound to think of "spirit," meaning by this the substance in which sensation, thought, and will inhere, as different from matter, or the substance in which the causes of sensations inhere. It rests, we submit, with the dualist to show why we should so think of it. There is an insuperable difficulty in conceiving the sequence of cause and effect, if cause inheres in one substance and effect in another. The interaction of spirit and matter is a stock difficulty for the dualist. A further obstacle to dualism arises from the nature of knowledge. Our powers of thought, as above pointed out, presuppose the validity of certain first principles of reason, *eg.*, that qualities presuppose substance, and processes, causes. These principles are *a priori*, that is, self-evident apart from any possible experience. Now, it is impossible to see what entitles us to affirm these principles as universally valid, unless that in us which apprehends them is really doing no more than recognise its own nature in them—*i.e.*, unless the thinking substance, which knows these truths *a priori*, is itself the same as the substance whose laws it apprehends thereby. The reader who finds this argument obscure may realise its import more clearly if put in the following concrete form: "How do I know that two and two make four, or that every process is caused by some other process, irrespectively of time and space—*eg.*, in Sirius, or a million years hence—unless it is that the real 'I,' who knows this, is identical with the universal substance, of which this is really predicated?"

We thus reach the result that "spirit," or that which knows, and "matter," or that which is known, are two names for one and the same universal substance. This position has been called "monism," but it may also properly be termed Materialism, if we bear in mind the original meaning of "matter" before the term was tied down to certain sensible attributes. This was the infinite, undetermined substance that underlay the forms of things. One who believes



all existences to be modes of this one substance may justly be called a Materialist, whether he prefers to call this substance "will to live," as Schopenhauer did, or "the absolute," as other philosophers do, or "God," as many quite improperly do.

In conclusion, we may point out (if it be really necessary) how completely this Materialism excludes the conceptions of a personal God, free will, and individual immortality. A personal God, an "infinite mind," is a contradiction in terms, as mind or personality presupposes the consciousness of self as opposed to, and therefore limited by, a not-self, and therefore involves finitude. A finite God, on the other hand, would be a mere mode of the one substance, and neither almighty nor eternal—no use, therefore, to the Theist. Free will, again, is a flat contradiction of the law of cause and effect, which is a first principle of reason, and according to which all processes (our actions included) follow one another necessarily, from the nature of the one substance. Lastly, personal immortality is an illusion, since the one substance alone persists, and every personality—yours, mine, or anyone's—is a local and temporary manifestation of the "immanent will," the "life-force," the "absolute," which causes them to be and will cause them to cease from living.

This view of the world is, as the reader is probably aware, immeasurably ancient. It goes back to the Vedas of Hindustan, and all that philosophy and science have done since has been to strengthen it by reasoning, and to bear it out by observation, as far as possible. It may be said, indeed, to be native to the reflective consciousness of man, as truly as may any view. And when this view is compared with the silly, petulant, bloodthirsty Bible doctrine of an "infinite spirit," who is finite enough to feel resentment at the deeds of creatures for whose nature he is obviously responsible, if he exists, and savage enough to exact endless future retribution from them, to be remitted only on condition of "faith" in these improbabilities, and of acquiescence in these monstrosities—however the Churches find it expedient to pare down and refine this Bible doctrine, can it be believed that anyone can thoughtfully maintain it to be more credible than Materialism, which only the ignorance of the many, and the interest of the few, prevents from sweeping it away like a dream before dawn?

ROBERT ARCH.

### Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. R. WADDY MOSS, D.D.

SOME two or three years ago, the Rev. R. Waddy Moss, "Tutor of Systematic Theology" of Didsbury College, published a lecture entitled "Can a man sin against God?"—the answer to which was given in the affirmative. I now take up this lecture in order to note how that conclusion was arrived at. In opening the subject our Tutor in Theology says:—

"In the discussion of such a question something must be taken for granted.....On the one hand, we must assume the existence of God.....on the other, we must assume man's responsibility for his acts and omissions."

Some such assumptions are, of course, indispensable, otherwise the question would be utterly absurd. In the case of Man, however, there can be no doubt whatever. As our lecturer says, Society, the laws and social opinion of this country, the relationship in which each one of us stands to the other, all these things continually press home upon a man his responsibility for his own acts.

Just so: a man is under an obligation to consider the other members of the society in which he moves, and to say or do nothing that might injure, annoy, or interfere in any way with their rights. That a man can sin against his fellow-men, no one will for a moment deny; but that he can sin against a god whom he has never seen or known, and who may not really exist, is not so evident.

Upon this point our Professor of Theology says:—

"Some men exalt impersonal forces to the throne of the universe, or assume some first cause that originally started the universe on its career, but has ceased to concern itself with the history of the universe ever since."

To those who think they must believe in some sort of a god I would strongly recommend a deity of the foregoing description; for assuming the actual existence of a god, such a Being has certainly taken no part in the government of this world or the Universe since the advent of man upon the earth. Our great Theologian, however, assumes the existence of a totally different kind of deity. He says:—

"But the God of whom I propose to talk is not to be confounded therewith. He is a God, who is not only almighty and wise, not only the Lord and Governor of all things, august, and terrible in his lofty places, never to be trifled with impunity, but a God of patience and grace, of compassion and lovingkindness, and, in Jesus Christ our Lord, God and Father of us all, supreme and patient and merciful to all men.....Now the question is, whether against such a God it is possible for a man to sin?"

Here our Theologian has assumed far more attributes for his god than he or anyone else can adduce evidence for. A deity such as he has described cannot so lightly be assumed to exist, more especially since neither ancient nor modern history reveals any such "Lord and Governor of all things" as exercising control over the human race. Take, for instance, the history of the Jews, from the earliest period, through all subsequent ages, down to the present day. From this history it will be seen that the Jewish tribal god Yahweh—who is also the Christian deity—has never once, throughout that long period, intervened to protect his chosen people from persecution by other nations, but has completely ignored both them and their unfailing trust in him all along the line. Again, a god who could permit an arrogant and unscrupulous king to kindle such a war as that now raging in Europe cannot be called "wise, supreme, of compassion and lovingkindness, and merciful to men." Neither, again, should "Jesus Christ our Lord" be added to the list of gods against whom man is said to have sinned.

And what is our Theologian's definition of "sin" which man can commit against the god he has portrayed? Well, he says:—

"Sin may be taken as covering all acts and negligences that are currently spoken of as wrong, together with all interior attitudes of heart and will from which such acts or negligences spring.....The term 'sin' must not be confined to wilful disobedience to a known law of God.....A present volition in defiance of God is not always more serious than a condition of volitional abeyance, brought about by repeated acts of will in the past."

The word "sin" is thus said to denote "all acts and negligences" now considered wrong, and all the thoughts which led to them, as well as any "wilful disobedience of a known law of God." In this way we arrive at the Bible statement—"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10; Psalm xiv. 3, liii. 3). As regards "sin" our Theologian further states: "There may be said to be many grades," and, as an example of a very grave offence, he cites:—

"Sins of satisfaction with self, such as led the Savior to look round upon the people 'with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart'.....Imagine how enormous a sin must be to arouse the anger of Christ, patient and all-loving!"

The reference here is to the Jews who watched Jesus to see whether he would heal a man with a withered hand on the sabbath day (Mark iii. 1—5). Matthew and Luke, who narrate the same miracle, say nothing of Jesus being angry or grieved, though they took the story from the same source as Mark: there can be no doubt that all three stories are unhistorical. Our Tutor in Theology next says:—

"The unity or solidarity of the race implies that all men are in some sense members one of another, and are related to one another, with claims and reciprocal obligation attaching to each.....Some men say that it



exists and was originally formed in complete independence of religious influences and considerations.....I doubt whether you can find any adequate foundation for the solidarity of the race in the absence of religious considerations and influences."

This unity or solidarity of the race is, of course, an undoubted fact, and those who say that it was originally formed in complete independence of religious influences and considerations are perfectly correct. It is this solidarity which inspires feelings of common humanity, and incites our British marines to save their German foes from a watery grave, though they know, at the same time, that many of those foes richly deserve hanging. Religious considerations have no part whatever in the matter, and never even enter the minds of the rescuers.

I come now to the crucial questions—Can a man sin against God? and if he can, How is this shown to be the case? To reply to these questions one must be a Professor of Systematic Theology like Dr. Waddy Moss. That Professor says:—

"Our Lord puts himself in the midst of that motley crowd.....hungry men and thirsty men, sick men, and men who had been in prison.....and says concerning little human kindnesses, 'Inasmuch as ye did them unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.'.....That is the brotherhood of our Lord..... And this being so, all our duties to our neighbor become at once duties to the universal Father, duties to the universal Savior.....God in Christ gathers up into Himself our duties to the state, our duties to one another, our duties to our families, all duties into the unity of one inexhaustible obligation that we owe to Him.....The man who is unkind and harsh to his neighbor, not only sins against his neighbor, but sins against the Savior of them both.....The solidarity of the race being found in the Fatherhood of the supreme God, or the brotherhood of the universal Savior.....all sins and offences of life immediately relate themselves to God Most High, and to Christ who died for us."

This is how "sinning against God" is placed by our Theologian upon man. Jesus Christ is, so to say, the elder brother, and his heavenly father is the "universal Father" of all men. Jesus Christ, having "died for us," places us under an obligation to him and to God, his father, and one of these personages, if not both, "gathers up into himself" all our duties, those we owe to the State and to our fellow-men; so that any sins we commit against our neighbors or relatives become by this process sins against the "universal Father" and the "universal Savior." This theory our rev. apologist offers, of course, "on his own," though he presents it to his readers as an undoubted theological fact. That the tribal god of the Jews was a purely imaginary being, like the Babylonian Merodach, the Syrian Baalim, the Moabite Khemosh, or the Egyptian Osiris, does not, apparently, matter in the least; neither does it signify that the miracle-working Jesus of the Gospels is not an historical personage: we are asked to believe, all the same, that any offence we commit against our fellow-men are really sins against these two mythical Beings.

Again, the "motley crowd" in the midst of which, it is said, "our Lord puts himself" was as imaginary as the universal Father and Savior. The reference is to the parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. xxv. 31—46), in which those who had assisted their neighbors who were in want are rewarded—such assistance being regarded as offered to Jesus himself. This parable makes salvation dependent upon acts of kindness to poor, hungry, sick, or destitute brethren, and was evidently suggested to the writer by the description of the Last Judgment in the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead—according to which only those who had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, tended the sick, etc., were judged worthy of eternal life.

Now, had the "universal Father" appeared to men through all the ages, and given commands to them, as in the mythical stories of the Fall and the early patriarchs, men *could* be said to sin against him, as against an earthly king. In the story of the Fall, for instance, the "Lord God" appeared to the newly made man and woman in the garden, and forbade

them to do a certain thing: the disobedience of the woman was therefore undoubtedly a sin against that god. But in the present enlightened age when all phenomena, that anciently were ascribed to some almighty being, are found to have natural causes, and no sign or trace can be discovered of the "universal Father" who governs or controls the Universe—it is pure nonsense to talk of men sinning against an old Canaanitish god, created by the ignorance and superstition of three thousand years ago.

But what evidence does our Professor adduce in support of his contention that man *can* sin against God? Well, he refers to several passages of scripture, from which I select the following:—

(1) Before the Deluge, "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great.....and it repented the Lord that he had made man.....and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. vi. 5, 6).

(2) David says: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight" (Psalm li. 4).

(3) The Prodigal son says to his father: "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight" (Luke xv. 21).

In the first example "the Lord" stood in the place of king, and personally governed the world, in the course of which he often held intercourse with men. In Example 2, David ruled over the kingdom under "the Lord" as suzerain, and was continually in communication with that deity. Having caused the death of Uriah the Hittite, and taken Uriah's wife, he claimed that he had sinned only against his god, the murdered man and the dishonored woman not counting. In Example 3, the statement is made by an imaginary prodigal in a parable, who, after wasting his estate in riotous living with harlots, returns to his father a penniless beggar. These examples are the best Dr. Waddy Moss can find, and, even if assumed to be historical, not one of the three applies to the present common-sense age. If, as was believed in Bible times, the "universal Father" dwelt in heaven just above the clouds, whence he sent forth at times his lightnings and rains, and, from "his lofty places," kept watch over the affairs of men, recording "every idle word that men shall speak, counting "the very hairs of their heads," and taking care of sparrows (Matt. xii. 36; x. 29, 30)—then, no doubt, men *could* sin against the so called deity. But this state of things has long passed away, dispersed by the growth of knowledge. No man can now sin against a god whom unthinking or irrational people assume to exist.

ABRACADABRA.

### A Judicial Humorist.

ALTHOUGH the late W. S. Gilbert included in the category of those "who never would be missed," the "judicial humorist," yet there can be little doubt that he would have made a special exception of Sir William Henry Maule. Sir William was born in 1788, and became a judge of scholarship and personality. There is a grimness at times about this gentleman's jests quite in harmony with the Gilbertian school of humor. His honor, Justice Parry, has a highly entertaining article in this month's *Comedian Magazine* ("Mauleiana: A Study in Judicial Irony, March) which gives specimens of the humor of this "master of irony." In Justice Parry's judgment, he was a not great judge, but he was a "great character," and was free from the slightest taint of sycophancy.

Maule simply couldn't withhold the "nippin' jest." No matter how solemn the occasion, it had to come out. For example:—

"The prisoner was found guilty of a sensational murder, and being asked in the usual way why sentence should not be passed upon him, exclaimed dramatically in a loud voice, 'May God strike me dead, my Lord, if I did it!' There was a hushed silence throughout the crowded court. The spectators gazed at the prisoner in horror. Maule looked steadily in front of him and waited, without a movement. At length, after a pause of several moments, he coughed, and began to address



the prisoner in his dry, asthmatic voice, as though he were dealing with some legal point that had been raised in the case: 'Prisoner at the bar, as Providence has not seen fit to interfere in your case, it now becomes my duty to pronounce upon you the sentence of death.'

Justice Parry does not hesitate to term him "probably the greatest wit on the English bench." As, however, his irony was mainly directed against affectation, and bumptiousness, he could not, in his day, have been altogether popular. So merciless was he, in fact, when these symptoms presented themselves, that he sometimes forgot his "more menial duties" in the exercise of his humor, which is, by the way, a distinctly Mauleian touch. His irreverence can be gauged by his remark to a mumbling witness, "For the sake of God and your expenses, do speak up, man"; and his antipathy to parsons was well-known.

This was clearly illustrated in a case of murder in which a defence of insanity was raised. The principal witness was a cleric, who gave evidence that for thirty-four years prisoner had regularly attended his church, then, without any apparent reason, he became a Sabbath-breaker, and then the murder took place. Maule made a few rough calculations and asked him if he were aware that the man had heard 5,084 of his sermons, and then followed on with:—

"I was going to ask you, Sir, had the idea ever struck you when you think of this unhappy being suddenly leaving your ministration and becoming a Sabbath-breaker, that after thirty-four years he might want a little change. Would it not be reasonable to suppose that the man had had enough of it?"

And on the cleric nervously assenting, he gave him no rest, but put it to him that instead of this proving the prisoner insane did it not show him to be a very sensible man?

An altogether admirable example of this same side of his nature can be got from his reply to a counsel who had once the temerity to remind him that, in his summing-up, he had omitted the testimony advanced "as to the prisoner's character." "You are right, Sir," said his Lordship, and then addressing the jury, he continued:—

"Gentlemen, I am requested to draw your attention to the prisoner's character, which has been spoken to by gentlemen, I do not doubt, of the greatest respect and veracity. If you believe them, and also the witnesses for the prosecution, it appears to me that they have established what to many persons may be incredible, namely, that even a man of piety and virtue, occupying the position of Bible reader and Sunday-school teacher, may be guilty of committing a heinous and grossly immoral crime."

This is perfect in its way; and many of his smart rejoinders are equally impervious to criticism. Could anything be more effective than his retort to a counsel who complained that his client was the victim of a "diabolical prosecution": "It is my duty to direct you that you must give the Devil his due, and that you can only be done by finding the defendant guilty."

Justice Parry's article is a mine of similar incidents, and the level of humor is of almost equal quality throughout. For, as the writer points out, Maule never took advantage of his position to inflict bad jokes on an audience, in a sense, at his mercy. Probably, it is this tendency to overdo it that has made the "judicial humorist" the nuisance that Gilbert abhorred.

The following story, although very well known, is of too great interest to Freethinkers to leave out. From it, Justice Parry surmises, Maule's own religious views can best be gauged. It is a dialogue between him and a little girl witness.

"Do you know what an oath is, my child," said Maule.

"Yes, Sir. I am obliged to tell the truth."

"And if you do always tell the truth, where will you go to when you die?"

"Up to heaven, Sir."

"And what will become of you if you tell lies?"

"I shall go down to the naughty place, Sir,"

"Are you quite sure?"

"Yes, Sir; quite!"

"Let her be sworn," said Maule, "it is quite clear she knows a great deal more than I do." T. H. E.

### Nietzsche on the Military State.

No Government will nowadays admit that it maintains an army in order to satisfy occasionally its passion for conquest. The army is said to serve only defensive purposes. This morality which justifies self-defence, is called in as the Government's advocate. This means, however, reserving morality for ourselves and immorality for our neighbor, because he must be thought eager for attack and conquest if our state is forced to consider means of self-defence. At the same time, by our explanation of our need of an army (because he denies the lust of attack just as our state does, and ostensibly also maintains his army for defensive reasons) we proclaim him a hypocrite and cunning criminal, who would fain seize by surprise, without any fighting, a harmless and unwary victim. In this attitude all states face each other to-day. They presuppose evil intentions on their neighbor's part and good intentions on their own. This hypothesis, however, is an *inhuman* notion, as bad as and worse than war. Nay, at bottom it is a challenge and motive to war, foisting as it does upon the neighboring state the charge of immorality, and thus provoking hostile intentions and acts. The doctrine of the army as a means of self-defence must be abjured as completely as the lust of conquest. Perhaps a memorable day will come when a nation renowned in wars and victories, distinguished by the highest development of military order and intelligence, and accustomed to make the heaviest sacrifice to these objects, will voluntarily exclaim, "We will break our swords," and will destroy its whole military system, lock, stock, and barrel. Making ourselves defenceless (after having been the most strongly defended) from a loftiness of sentiment—that is the means towards genuine peace, which must always rest upon a pacific disposition. The so-called armed peace that prevails at present in all countries is a sign of a bellicose disposition, of a disposition that trusts neither itself nor its neighbor, and, partly from hate, partly from fear, refuses to lay down its weapons. Better to perish than to hate and fear, and twice as far better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared—this must some day become the supreme maxim of every political community. Our liberal representatives of the people, as it is well-known, have not the time for reflection on the nature of humanity, or else they would know that they are working in vain when they work for "a gradual diminution of the military burdens." On the contrary, when the distress of these burdens is greatest, the sort of God who alone can help here will be nearest. The tree of military glory can only be destroyed at one swoop, with one stroke of lightning. But, as you know, lightning comes from the cloud and from above.

—Human, All Too Human.

### Obituary.

In the pretty little cemetery of Carlton, near Nottingham, on March 24, there was laid to rest the remains of another of the veterans of Freethought. Mr. W. Matthews had for fifty years been a most sincere and devoted believer in the principles of Freethought. He thought nothing of walking ten or fifteen miles to hear the late Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Foote lecture. He was held in great esteem by all who knew him, for the gentle sweetness of his life, and his earnest sincerity exercised a great influence for good upon all with whom he came in contact. He lived to the ripe age of 79 years, but had been a great sufferer for the last year or two of his life; this he had borne with great patience and courage owing, doubtless, to the tender nursing and care which he received from a most devoted sister and an affectionate niece. It was his earnest wish that, when the end came, he might have a Secular Service. This wish was faithfully respected by his friends, and was conducted by an old member of the Leicester Secular Society. There was a good attendance of friends who had come to pay their last tribute of respect. His grave adjoins that of his dear friend, the late John Bell, another well-known Freethinker, who was buried on August 11 last year; they were both great readers and, between them, they possessed every book published by the late Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote. He looked for his *Freethinker* coming as one looks for a dear friend.—W. WILBER.



# DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY  
**G. W. FOOTE.**

Being a Three Hours' Address to the Jury before the Lord Chief Justice of England, in answer to an Indictment for Blasphemy, on April 24, 1863.

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