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PRICE TWOPENCE

It would be well if nations and races could communicate their qualities; but in practice, when they look upon each other, they have an eye to nothing but defects.

—R. L. STEVENSON.

The German God.

BEFORE the War broke out, and while the German Emperor was on good terms with the rest of the world, he was very widely advertised as a sincere Christian. He had confessed that he kept a Bible by his bedside at night; he consulted it on all important occasions; he guided his life by its teachings; and, above all, he failed to understand how anybody could read the Bible and doubt its inspiration. All this deserved recognition from the Christian world, and it was freely given at the time. The religious papers circulated the glad tidings, clergymen used it very largely in their sermons, and the Kaiser was bracketed with King George as examples of Christianity in high places, set there for the confusion of the sceptic.

Then came the War; and the Kaiser, with his intense religious fervor, became a veritable thorn in the side of British Christians. They would have dearly liked to forget that the Kaiser was a Christian, but that could not well be done. For that aspect of the Emperor was kept well to the front. His proclamations and speeches bristled with reference to God and appeals to religious conviction. So two other plans were adopted. The one roundly declared the Kaiser to be a hypocrite, which was quite unwarrantable; for if there is one thing sincere about the Kaiser, it is his religion. The other plan was to say nothing about the Kaiser, but to talk generally of the prevalence of irreligion and Materialism in Germany, to assert that Germany had renounced Christianity altogether, leaving it to be assumed that in some way or other Freethought was responsible for German militarism. This, of course, served a double purpose; it served to divert attention from the Christianity of the overwhelming majority of Germans, and it turned the blame on the ancient enemy of religion—Freethought.

After this, and more recently, came a third plan. This was to admit that the Germans really were religious—as religious, that is, as other civilised nations—but they had a religion of their own. It was not Christianity; it was quite another religion, peculiar only to Germany. And all Christians were called upon to witness the demoralising consequences of a nation rejecting Christianity and following another religion. This is the line of argument developed in a recent article in the *Daily Mail*, in the course of which the writer, perhaps unconsciously, hits upon some rather important truths. The Kaiser's god, he says, "is the god of nobody else. It is in Berlin alone that his altar smokes with the burnt sacrifice of slaughtered beasts.....He is the Kaiser's colleague, not his ruler. So remote is he from divinity that he thinks with the Kaiser's thoughts and speaks with the Kaiser's voice." But what really a proof of remoteness from divinity? What is the difference between a man who speaks the thoughts of God and a god who speaks the

thoughts of man? What assurance have we that the Bishop of London is voicing the thoughts of God more accurately than is the German Emperor? The one preaches a message that suits the Christians this side of the North Sea; the other preaches a message that suits the Christians on the other side. That is the sole distinction between the two. And if Bishop Ingram belonged to Berlin instead of to London, he would have been just as fervent on the other side.

Long ago, says the *Daily Mail* the Germans renounced Christianity—which is a discovery quite in accord with the Harmsworth traditions. And having renounced Christianity, they promptly established a new god, and one who is responsible for all that has been done, thus:—

"It is their god who stood by and smiled when Louvain was burned to ashes; who saw, without disapproval, we may suppose, the ruin of Belgium; who has whispered in the Kaiser's ear that his cause would be furthered by the sacrifice of children and the murder of non-combatants. It is their god, too, who has inspired the insensate passion of hate which to-day rocks all Germany in the cradle of madness."

Certainly, if Germany has a god, whether it is the Christian God or some other, he has stood by while all these things were being done. But why blame the German god? The *Daily Mail* is on rather dangerous ground, although we daresay that its nature may not be very apparent to the *Mail* readers. On the British hypothesis, the German god is pure fiction. He has no real existence. There is only one genuine Deity, and that is the one that Britons worship. It is, then, really he who stood by while Belgium was being ruined, while Louvain was being burned, while children were being sacrificed and non-combatants murdered. That God, at all events, did nothing, is still doing nothing, and will keep on doing nothing till the end of the chapter. If he did not inspire these things, he permitted them; and permission, with the power to prohibit, is next door to commission. It is really dangerous work for Christians to go round in this manner blaming gods—particularly when the god they blame is believed to be non-existent, while the God they worship is declared to be the creator and ruler of all things on earth as in heaven.

And why, after all, should not the Germans believe that all they have done is consonant with God's will? Surely God does not change, and in the Bible, which forms the common text-book of English and German Christians alike, and which English Christians still declare must be kept in our schools, lest the nation goes headlong to ruin, it is not hard to find parallels to Louvain and Termonde. What of the God—not the new German God, but the old Christian one—who said?—

"Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

Or of the God—of the British Christian—who said?—

"And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it [the city] into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, thou shalt take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine

enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee..... Of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth."

Really, the Kaiser does not need a new God in order to obtain sanction for the worst of the offences that have been charged against the German Armies. The old one is quite adequate. If anything, the Kaiser's action has fallen far short of the example set by the "God of our fathers."

Here, again, is quite a gem from the *Daily Mail*:—

"The Germans, like all savages, have made their God in their own image. They follow in their worship the crudest kind of anthropomorphism. Their God is not only a man, he is a German; he is not only a German, he is a Prussian. The Emperor William is not far removed from those who bow down before sticks and stones."

These be brave words! A Freethinker can agree that, on the whole, they are true words; but for a Christian they are very dangerous words. They suggest things; they invite comparisons, and that is always dangerous to religion. Naturally, the Germans have made their God in their own image. What else could they do? Has any god ever been made by any different method? What is the God of Englishmen but a reflection of the character of Englishmen in general? That is really why we are carrying out God's will, and why the will of our God is different to that of the German's God. What is the essence of what is somewhat facetiously called the evolution of religion, but a rechanging of the national or tribal god in terms of a modified national or tribal character? Look at the God of Russia, of Spain, or of any other nation. They are all reflections of the people who worship them. That is why each nation recognises its own God as the true God—they merely discover themselves, and therefore feel quite sure of the good will of their deity.

Of course, I agree that the Germans—so far as they are religious—are savages. That is because I believe that all religion is fundamentally savagery. Religions are not a product of civilised times or of civilised nations. People inherit their gods, just as they inherit their kings or their rudimentary tails. But they do not create them. Disguise it how we may, refine it how we may, the idea of a huge, overmastering personality, creating and governing the universe is a conception born, in germ, in the brain of the savage. If it had not been born there, it would never have been born at all. Civilised people do not discover gods, they discard them. And that, again, is the reason why even a Christian can see that the gods of other people are made by man, fashioned in the likeness of man, and that their worship is akin to the worship of savages. He is looking at their gods from the standpoint of civilised common sense. When he looks at his own god, he forgets his science and his civilisation, and relapses to the mental viewpoint of the savage. Then it is the chance of the other man, and he returns the criticism with interest. Perhaps, one day, each will discover that the truths which apply to the gods of other people, apply with equal truth to his own. And when that day arrives kings and kaisers and governments and peoples will no longer be able to veil with the cloak of religion the character of their own motives and aims. The world will be saved from that duplicity at least; and the world will, I believe, be all the better for the change.

C. COHEN.

The Cant of Humility.

"HUMILITY" is a prominent Bible word, and has always occupied an exalted position among Christian virtues. St. Augustine assigned to it the highest place of all. A Christian is a person "clothed with humility." It is said that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble," and there immediately follows the exhortation, "Humble yourselves

therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." We are now in possession of the whole Biblical and Christian doctrine of humility; and knowing it, we are not in the least surprised to learn that at an early period there sprang into being the cant of humility. Uriah Heeps are a natural product of Christian teaching on this subject. To make any virtue the condition of a reward other than itself is to defile it. Even St. Paul alludes to a mock humility that prevailed in his day (Col. ii. 23), and which he condemned as being morally unwholesome. Is it not, indeed, safe to declare that the great majority of Christians have nothing but a show of humility, without the substance? On their knees they all alike abase themselves most shamefully, calling themselves all manner of opprobrious names, such as miserable sinners, worms, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters, and hell-deserving rebels; but they do not really mean what they say; it is merely a habit they have got into while addressing the Supreme Being. In the practical conduct of life they are fully as self-assertive and self-seeking as others who never share their professions. That is to say, their humility is purely a *religious* or *pious* virtue which has no place whatever in their secular affairs. Like Uriah Heeps in *David Copperfield*, under a cloak of the most diabolical humility many of them conceal the most abject malignity, as their attitude and treatment of unbelievers, for example, so conclusively testify. In reality they are not, but *pretend* to be, humble, their humility being an emotional religious profession, and nothing more. Of course, a few are genuinely—this is, constitutionally and by training—humble; of these we wish to say nothing at present.

Christian workers, specially clergymen, are notorious slaves to the cant of humility. Whenever apparent success crowns their labors they exclaim with ostentatious emotion, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." Well do we remember hearing an exceedingly popular London preacher, now deceased, describe the results of his own work at the close of a thirty years' ministry, in the following scriptural words: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Another, an equally well-known living minister, speaking of the great prosperity of the church under his care, stated that most of the glory belonged to the Holy Ghost. Far be it from us to cast suspicion upon the sincerity of people who attribute their success to a Divine source; but a necessity is laid upon us to characterise their language as the cant of humility. What is cant? Carlyle, in his *French Revolution*, defines it thus: "Cant is itself properly a double-distilled Lie, the second power of a Lie." It is doubtless possible to repeat a lie so often, and with such ardent emphasis as to get to believe it to be true. It is a common misfortune to have come into contact with a constitutional liar, whose word on no subject whatever can be relied upon; but we are not prepared to assert that this person is a *conscious* liar. Indeed, we have known him to condemn lying in very caustic terms on more than one occasion. Even in Scripture we read that God chooses some people's delusions (Isaiah lxvi. 4), and that he sends others strong delusion (2 Thes. ii. 11), with the result that they believe a lie. Such being the case, according to the high authorities, it is by no means unreasonable to infer that Christian workers generally are honestly of the conviction that whatever success they achieve is the Lord's, whose fellow-workers they claim to be. It is beyond question that what is entirely false to the intellect is not seldom perfectly true to the emotions when superstitiously trained. This we know by a bitter experience to be a fact. But a man emotionally believed to be true is not, on that account, any less a lie. There are multitudes of people who emotionally cherish beliefs which they dare not rationally look in the face. We speak from experience when we say that beliefs may be true to the feelings after they have ceased to be true to the

intellect. When such was the case with us, a friend wrote: "Why, man, cling to and follow your feelings at all cost; they are far more reliable than your reason." By this time, however, we had begun to see that what the intellect has once rejected as a falsehood cannot long retain its hold upon the emotion as a truth.

Now, what we maintain is that what is called Christian, or God's work, is exclusively man's work, and that success or failure in it is equally man's. There is absolutely nothing supernatural about it at any point. When a man asserts that he has been supernaturally born again, and that a supernatural process of sanctification is going on within him, he is an egotist of the worst type. He may be laboring under a delusion sufficiently dense to allow him to believe such an absurdity. So far as this world is concerned, and neither he nor we can go beyond it, he is not one whit superior to one who has been sarcastically described as an entirely excellent Pagan, or as an entirely noble Atheist. In other words, there is nothing in the character of an average Christian that entitles him to be put in a higher category than an average non-Christian. The facts of human life do not betoken any form or degree of supernatural interference. Whereupon, it follows that Christians never do any form or degree of supernatural work, and in so far as they make such a claim for themselves, they consciously or unconsciously play the hypocrite to themselves. Why should a minister of the Gospel attribute his success to supernatural agency any more than a play-actor? Did Dr. Parker accomplish more in the pulpit than Sir Henry Irving did on the stage? It was his dramatic, oratorical gifts, his exceptional power to move his hearers emotionally, that set the first minister of the City Temple upon a pedestal among his brethren, as it was his histrionic and interpretative endowments that gave Irving his pre-eminence among theatrical performers. Put an inferior man in a pulpit, however pious, or however full of the Holy Ghost he may be supposed to be, and he will inevitably prove a lamentable failure. In the pulpit, on the stage, and on the political platform, it is the men who can stir and sway their fellows, whether legitimately or illegitimately, alone who turn out brilliant successes in their respective careers.

Why should a preacher sail under false colors, any more than an actor, or a politician? If a preacher has a bad time in the pulpit, he puts it down to the absence of the Divine breezes from his sails, never to inadequate preparation, a sluggish liver, or an unsympathetic congregation. If an actor or a politician fails to get into touch with his audience, he holds purely natural causes responsible for the misfortune. On what grounds does a minister set himself apart from all others whose profession it is to play upon the emotions of their fellow-beings? If God performed miracles of grace through there would be a plausible justification of the preacher's claim, but he never does. The success or failure of a Church is determined by the degree of qualification for his calling, piety or so-called spirituality. It is talents of some sort that invariably spell success, and this fact places the preacher precisely on the same level as the actor, the politician, or the musician, though he persistently refuses to acknowledge it. He still foolishly regards himself as a man apart, who is entrusted with a message from and about another world and life, and who is inspired to deliver that message by a supernatural being of omnipotent power. He asserts that he has a Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, and he keeps reiterating that claim, in spite of the fact that only a miserable minority take him seriously. He affects a glowing optimism in face of the fact that his fellow-beings are turning their backs upon him, having lost all confidence in him. Wherever a Picture Palace is permitted to open its doors on a Sunday, however spacious it may be, it is crowded to excess, and many are

turned away, whilst churches and chapels in its vicinity are, most of them, more than half empty. No wonder the preacher is afraid of competition. Where would the Church be if theatres, music halls, and cinemas enjoyed the same Sunday privileges as itself? Standing on his imaginary pinnacle, the preacher says: "Hands off; Sunday is mine; my Lord has fenced off this day, and given me the sole monopoly of it; all others who imagine that they have a right to ply their worldly trades on it are wicked interlopers, enemies of God and man, and I protest in the name of my Divine Master against their getting any share at all in my sacred property." We hold that the time for such a protest is past, and that all the preacher's claims have been disproved, even by the results of his own work.

The preacher's humility is thus a subtle and sinister form of pride—a claim to immeasurable superiority; but both the quality and the quantity of the work he succeeds in turning out show both the pride and its claim in a most ridiculous light. In all directions he is being found out and thoroughly discredited, and the curious thing is that he does his utmost to discredit himself. With one breath he assures us that God is supreme in this War, and that because our cause is just he will certainly give us the victory, and with the next he cries, "Enlist, enlist, enlist," as if all depended upon having an abundance of trained men at the Front. He says, "Pray for victory," as if God could easily give it us; but French's demand is for "Shells, shells, and still more shells," as if there were no God in the business at all, and the issue were to be determined by the might of arms well directed. The truth is that the talk about dependence and trust in God is the emptiest cant, and that the progress of the world is being seriously retarded by it. Let us shake ourselves free of all mock humility, and recognise that all needful reforms and reorganisations, all conflicts with tyranny and injustice, must be conducted by ourselves, and in our own strength alone, or not at all. We shall win the War only on condition that we possess and exercise the strength, skill, patience, and perseverance which so terrible a task requires. The law of battle is not "Trust in God and keep your powder dry," but "Keep your powder dry, and see to it that you have enough of it, as well as a sufficient number of well trained and strong-nerved men to use it."

J. T. LLOYD.

The Great Lying Church.

"It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
Their saints, their God, all they fear or hope
Are lies, and lies."
—ROBERT BROWNING.

UNTIL it was announced in the newspapers that the ban of excommunication had been withdrawn, few people remembered that the King of Bulgaria had been under the curse of the Papacy. Excommunication has lost all its terrors to-day, but it was formerly a sentence under which kings and queens quailed in terror. The freethinking Napoleon, it is true, laughed at it; the Protestant Queen Elizabeth was actually strengthened by it; whilst Victor Emmanuel II. of Italy, who was outcast from the Catholic Church for a decade, got fat on it.

The real power of the Pope's decree of spiritual outlawry was shown in the ages of faith. King John of England, knew what excommunication meant. When Innocent III. hurled his thunderbolt all worship ceased in the land; marriage was interdicted; the legitimacy of children born in wedlock was invalidated; there were no baptisms. Even the dead lay unburied on the ground. To remove the curse, John had to surrender his crown and take it again as a gift from "God's Viceregent," who retained Ireland as a fief.

The spread of Freethought was the great solvent of the Papal power. There was a time when the

Catholic Church was liberal. It once had its rationalists, its scholars and thinkers, who found her borrowed mummeries and stolen creeds susceptible of mystical interpretation. The ignorant, evangelical party gradually prevailed over these, and exterminated them by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving themselves more ignorant and bigoted than before. Gradually the whole Church was made over into their leprous likeness.

It required centuries to produce this result. The very triumphs of Liberty of Thought contributed to this end. Every Christian who became a Freethinker assisted the process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Church, the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven, and tend to flatten and harden down to a mere mass of ignorance and intolerance. What constitutes the obstructive character of the Catholic Church is the abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert intellect of science, and the more less stereotype of dogma.

There has been of late a revival of interest in the Catholic Church since the Romish party in the Church of England has become powerful. The Ritualists have not done all that was hoped by themselves and dreaded by the Evangelicals, but they have secured a firm hold, and the Archbishops and Bishops have not the will or the power to expel them. It is now quite certain that there is a strong body of the Anglican Church who play fast and loose with the authority of the Church. At this hour there are covered by the banner of the English Church men who hold the extremest doctrine of the freedom of the individual, and men who are willing to submit to the utmost doctrine of priestly control. How long will this divided house stand? That a large and increasing number of Anglican clergy are coquetting with Rome has caused a flatter in the dovescotes of Catholicism. The Pope has hopes of reconverting Great Britain, of reimposing the yoke which a previous generation threw off. The wish is father to the thought, and the Pope is a dreamer of dreams impossible of realisation. The great hopes of Catholics, so far as Great Britain is concerned, are stillborn.

The English people will never as a people submit themselves again to the tyranny of Rome. They will never as a people permit the cesspool of the confessional. They will never as a people submit to the poisoned weapons of priestcraft; its hypocritical affectations of a celibate life, its tyranny in the home; its officiousness in public affairs; its menace at the death-bed. Priestcraft had not a safe seat on English shoulders, even before the days of the Reformation. In the days of faith and ignorance the power of the Catholic Church was great; but it finished with the yellow glare of the fearful fires of Smithfield. It was never as unquestioned and unresisted as in Italy, Spain, and France. There is a wholesome tendency to rebellion in British blood. It shows itself whenever any especially arrogant claim on obedience is heard, as King Charles I. and James II. knew to their cost. The Catholic Church may do its worst. Her dreams, promises, and threats are idle, and this country will escape her clutches.

Knowledge expands in search of new light, and feels energetically after fresh truth. The most powerful Christian Church is still entombed within the covers of the Hebrew Scriptures, a salmagundi of riotous Oriental imagination. Men ask for the bread of knowledge; the Catholic Church offers but the stone of theological superstition. The Church's teaching is no longer of any practical use. The daily miracle of her altars is as unbelievable as witchcraft, and the passage of the years will make it less and less interesting. The Catholic Church represents but a backwash in the book of knowledge. The great river of human thought rolls on, and bears us further and further away from the spiritual bugbears of the past, further and further from the shadow of the cross.

MIMNERMUS.

Missionary Converts.—II.

(Continued from p. 267.)

"These spirits are all malignant, so he [the African] deals with them just as he would deal with a bad man whom he was desirous of managing..... Naturally he never feels sure of them; he sees that you may sacrifice to a god for years, you may wrap him up—or more properly speaking, the object in which he resides—in your only cloth on chilly nights while you shiver yourself; you and your children, and your mother, and your sister and her children, may be hungry that food may rot upon his shrine; and yet, in some hour of dire necessity, the power will not come and save you—because he has been lured away by some richer gifts than yours. You white men will say, 'Why go on believing in him them?' but that is an idea that does not enter the African mind. I might just as well say, 'Why do you go on believing in the existence of hansom cabs?' because one hansom cab-driver malignantly fails to take you where you want to go, or fails to arrive in time to catch a train you wished to catch. The African fully knows the liability of his fetish to fail, but he equally fully knows its power."—MISS MARY KINGSLEY, *Travels in West Africa* (1898), pp. 338-9.

"When the Norsemen accepted Jehovah they did not cease to believe in Thor and Odin, but they renounced them in favor of the higher new God and the preferred new religion. Thor and Odin continued to exist, becoming in the minds of the people the enemies of the new faith and of all who professed it. Just so the Eskimo still believe in all the spirits of the old faith and all its other facts, and they believe all the Christian teachings on top of that. They have not ceased to have faith in the heathen things, but they have ceased to practise them because they are wicked and lesser one's chances of salvation. The familiar spirits have been renounced, but they still exist, and are in general inimical to the new faith and angry with their former patrons who have renounced them."—VILHEJLMUR STEFANSSON, *My Life with the Eskimo* (1913), pp. 424-5.

RELIGIOUS people are so confident of the truth of the religious faith in which they have been trained that they are perplexed that people should differ from them—like the old lady who held that the Pope was not a Primitive Methodist because he had not been properly "argued with."

These people think that the missionary has only to go to the heathen and tell them how false and silly their beliefs are, and show them the "unsearchable riches of Christ"—to use their own canting term—for the heathen to straightway discard their old superstitions and adopt the new as easily as changing a suit of clothes.

As a matter of fact, it is no more easy to turn the savage from his ancestral beliefs than it is to alter the beliefs of those brought up in the (so-called) higher religions. For instance, the Eskimo believe that the shaman—or wizard priest, the intermediary between the spirits and the people—have the power of projecting themselves to a neighboring village, to a far country, to the sun or the moon or the bottom of the sea. This flight takes place in the presence of the people, but, says Stefansson, "usually at night in winter, and in the dark of the moon." It also takes place from a dark room. So that the audience are entirely dependent upon sound for what takes place; and the shaman sees to it that the appropriate sounds are produced to indicate he is rising in the air, and also when he is supposed to be returning. And, Stefansson observes,—

"every man and woman you meet can attest the genuineness of the spirit flight, for they have all been present when it was done. Besides that, such things are a matter of common knowledge among the people. You might as well try to convince an Englishman that balloon flights have never been taken in the British Isles as attempt to persuade an Eskimo that spirit flights have never occurred in the Mackenzie delta."

One day, when Stefansson was explaining to the Eskimo that there were mountains on the moon, and describing other characteristics of the moon's surface, the account did agree with the opinion held by his listeners, and they asked him how he knew these things were so? Stefansson says:—

"I explained that we had telescopes as long as the masts of ships, and that through them we could see the things on the moon's surface. 'But had any white man ever been to the moon?' I was asked, and when I replied that no one ever had, they said that while they

did not have any telescopes as long as ship's masts, yet they did have men, and truthful men, too, that had been to the moon, walked about there and seen everything, and they had come back and told them about it. With all due deference to the ingenuity of white men, they thought that under the circumstances the Eskimo ought to be better informed than white men as to the facts regarding the moon.

"It may seem to you that these we have described are extraordinary and untenable views, and that it ought to be an easy thing to undeceive the men who hold them; but if you have ever tried to change the religious views of one of your own countrymen so as to coincide with yours, you will know that the knowledge that comes through faith is not an easy thing to shake" (pp. 406-7).

Stefansson advises those who want to appreciate such an attitude of mind to read Mark Twain's *Englishman at the Court of King Arthur*. As he truly remarks—and it will come as a surprise to those who regard Mark Twain as merely a humorist—"he understood the minds of the intellectually primitive as few others have done—even of those who have made a study of such things." And he found the Eskimo of to-day thinking the same thoughts, and justifying them in the same manner, as the Englishmen of King Arthur's time, as described by Mark Twain. Moreover, he continues:—

"If you were to try to displace from the minds of the Eskimo such beliefs as we have described, you would find (as I have found upon occasion) that you would succeed no better than did Mark Twain's Yankee in his crusade against Merlin. But if you concern yourself not with unteaching of old beliefs but with the teaching of new ones, you will find an easy path before you. The Eskimo already believe many mutually contradictory things, and they will continue believing them while they gladly accept and devoutly believe everything you teach them. They will (as the Christianised Arctic Eskimo are in fact doing) continue believing all they used to believe, and will believe all the new things on top of that. The belief in the spirit flight is as strong at Point Barrow after more than ten years of Christianity as the belief in witchcraft was in England after more than ten centuries of Christianity" (p. 407).

Exactly the same thing is noticed by Miss Kingsley in West Africa, where the natives absorb the missionary teaching and combine it with Fetishism. "For the African, whose mind has been soaked in Fetish during his early, most impressionable years, the voice of Fetish is almost irresistible when affliction comes to him." And the convert, "when wearied and worn out by confronting things that he cannot reconcile, and disappointed by unanswered prayers, turns back to his old belief entirely, or modifies the religion he has been taught until it fits in with Fetish, and is gradually absorbed by it."*

As we have mentioned, when Stefansson left the district, in September, 1907, the people were still unconverted, in spite of several years of missionary effort. But when he returned in June, 1908, to his astonishment, they had been Christianised to the last man. Entering an Eskimo house, Stefansson says:—

"I asked my host from whence he got these prayers and these new ideas, and he said that they came over the mountains from Kotzebue Sound, brought by a man well versed in the new religion and the possessor of a great many efficient prayers. The best prayer of all which this man had brought and the most useful, our host told us, was one for caribou. The Colville people had used it the first year with such success that they killed as many caribou as they had any need for. This was three years ago, and last year the prayer had not worked so well, while this year it had seemed to be of no use at all. The hunting had been very poor indeed. By the gradually diminishing efficiency of this prayer our host had been led to suppose the prayers, like white men's rifles and other things which they bring, had their full efficiency only while new, and no doubt gradually wore out, and finally became useless. (This, by the way, can scarcely be said to be in the terms of the old religion, for it was believed that the older a charm was the greater its power. They had apparently transferred their experience with the white man's shoddy trade goods to the realm of his religion.) Now that

this prayer, after three years' use, had lost its power over game, our host inquired anxiously if we did not know a good one from the Mackenzie River missionary, of the general efficiency of whose prayers the Colville people had heard much. I knew no such prayer, and neither did Natkusiak, but Akpek announced he had a fairly good one. When this fact became known, the village lost interest in the two of us in large measure, and concentrated it on Akpek, who was fêted and invited about from house to house, always followed by a crowd of people eager to learn from him the new prayer, to have it ready for the caribou hunting in the spring" (p. 416).

Thus Christianity was accepted because its prayers were considered to be a new and powerful kind of magic, by the use of which they could exercise influence over the animals they hunted.

Again, the missionary teaching, says Stefansson,

"All our knowledge is from God,' they understand to mean that Christ, who represented God on earth, personally instructed us in all arts and crafts. Gunpowder and field-glasses are wonderful in their way, but the Eskimo does not see why he should be considered behind the white man just because Christ taught the white man how to make these things. He did not happen to teach it to the Eskimo, which is the misfortune of the Eskimo and not their fault" (p. 427).

An Eskimo named Ilavinirk remarked to Dr. Anderson that it was a pity they had killed Christ so young, and added:—

"Yes, it is a great pity; for the missionary has told us Christ came to all the people of the earth, and he never came to the Eskimo. I suppose that must have been because he visited the other countries first, and had not yet found time to visit the Eskimo before he was killed.' This shows pretty clearly what Ilavinirk's idea of Christ's having come as a messenger not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles also" (p. 423).

The missionary finds no difficulty in teaching the Eskimo the miraculous stories in the Bible. As Stefansson says, most things have a supernatural explanation, and this implies that few things have natural ones.

"It would surprise most of us to see miracles happening all around us. It is not so with the Eskimo. They expect them continually, and when anyone tells of having seen or heard of a miraculous thing there is only unquestioning belief, for it is but the narration of an expected occurrence and an ordinary one" (p. 403).

In another place he remarks: "The days of miracles are not yet past among any primitive people, and new miracles happen on the shores of the polar sea daily, but more especially in the dark of winter" (p. 891).

Stefansson says that there was a time when he thought he knew the meaning of the word "savage," but since then he has lived with people who dress in skins, live largely on raw meat, and never saw a white man until they saw him; and the net result is that the word "savage" quite lost its meaning for him, and he would prefer to describe them "as 'childlike,' because the word is truthfully descriptive, and not odious" (p. 890). Of the disastrous alterations in their mode of living, brought about by the missionaries, and the effect of the Sabbath taboo, we shall deal with in our next.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Famous Freethinkers I Have Known.

GEORGE WILLIAM FOOTE,
Thinker, Orator, and Leader.

THERE is a general impression among a certain section of the British public that nearly all the leaders of thought in this country, and men of distinction in advanced movements, come from the North of England. That, however, is a mistake. George Jacob Holyoake came from Birmingham, Charles Bradlaugh was born in London, and George William Foote, his distinguished successor in the position of President of the National Secular Society, made his first appearance on the stage of life at

* Miss Kingsley, *West African Studies* (1899), p. 126.

Plymouth, in the West of England, on January 11, 1850.

Mr. Foote was born of Christian parents, but early in his youth he began to doubt whether Christianity was true, and in a few years he satisfied himself that it was an old superstition, unworthy of credence. By careful study, wide reading, and independent thought, he soon developed into a pronounced Freethinker and took his place among the leaders of the Freethought movement.

When I first saw him he had undertaken, as a young lecturer, to answer an address that was delivered one Sunday evening at the Hall of Science, by Dr. Geo. Sexton, M.A., on "Spiritualism." This occurred in the year 1874, when Mr. Foote was only twenty-four years of age. Following this discussion, a debate was arranged between the two accomplished dialecticians, when Mr. Foote undertook to demonstrate, on his part, that "Spiritualism was unscientific, unphilosophic, and illusory." Dr. Sexton was an old hand as a debater; he had been a Freethought lecturer, and understood both sides of the question. Moreover, he was a very accomplished speaker, knew how to marshal his facts and arguments with skill; but I could not help noticing, young as I was, that in this debate he appealed very largely to the feelings of his audience, told them that there was not one among them that did *not hope to live again*, and so played upon their emotions that many of them quite forgot that they had come to the meeting to hear the question discussed. In his reply, Mr. Foote soon brought the audience to their senses by his masterly examination of all the arguments adduced, his splendid repartee, his caustic wit, and, above all, his powerful peroration at the close of the debate, were sufficient to convince me thus early in his career that Mr. Foote was destined to play a great and important part in the future of the Freethought movement.

A few weeks later, I made bold to introduce myself to the young lecturer, and from that moment down to the present, we have been associated as soldiers in "the best of all causes," the cause of the emancipation of the human mind from the thralldom of an old and cruel superstition. How many times I have heard Mr. Foote lecture in the course of my career, it would be impossible for me to say; but I can say this, that I always looked upon him as an ideal lecturer, and went as often as I could, as a young man, to hear him, study his methods, and to profit, as far as possible, by the instruction.

One of the finest lectures of an anti-theological character that I ever heard him deliver was given at the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, on "The Doom of the Gods." That night he seemed to be inspired. He traced the origin and the evolution of the God idea, showed that all the gods that men had ever believed in were but figments of the imagination, described the cruel characteristics of the Christian God, and then, in a passage of great passion and pathos, said that if there were a God who could look down on the earth and witness all the pain and suffering of mankind, could hear the groans of the oppressed, such a God would be driven to commit suicide out of sheer desperation at the horrors he would behold in the world of which he was said to be the creator and moral governor. It was also my privilege to hear him deliver some of his splendid lectures on "The Bible," soon after he came out of prison after serving twelve months' for the supposed crime of Blasphemy. Some Christians called these lectures vulgar and blasphemous; I always found them clever, smart, original, full of wit and wisdom, exposing the absurdities, the barbarities, and the puerilities of some of the passages of the Bible. But, of course, Mr. Foote as a lecturer, will always be remembered for his superb addresses on Freethought novelists and poets, and especially for those on Shakespeare.

On several occasions I have heard him in debate. I listened to his splendid defence of Secularism in his intellectual encounter with the Rev. Dr. McCann, also on "The God Problem" with the Rev. W. T.

Lee, again with the Rev. Hugh Chapman, and on several occasions in friendly discussion with the Rev. Fleming Williams; and I had the honor of presiding one evening during his four nights' debate with Mrs. Besant on "Socialism." In all the debates Mr. Foote demonstrated that he is a profound thinker, a wonderfully skilful dialectician, as well as a consummate orator.

The first trial of Mr. Foote and his *confreres*, Messrs. Ramsey and Kemp, for Blasphemy, came on at the Old Bailey in March 1883, before Mr. Justice North, and I remember on the Saturday evening before the trial travelling with Mr. Foote to the North of England, where we were due to lecture on the Sunday. During the journey we discussed the likelihood of the jury finding the defendants' guilty, and I remember how calmly and fearlessly Mr. Foote faced the issue. He said that somehow he felt sure he would be convicted, but he did not mind going to prison if he could advance the Cause.

Mr. Foote has told the story of his trial and imprisonment in some very interesting articles that appeared in *Progress*, entitled a "Prisoner for Blasphemy," which certainly deserve to be reprinted, if only to let the rising generation of Freethinkers know something of the manner in which Christians, through their cruel laws, treated Freethinkers only a little over thirty years ago.

We now know that the jury disagreed at the first trial; but old Judge North, who was a bigoted Roman Catholic, refused to discharge the prisoners, and had them tried again on March 5.

At the second trial, Sir Hardinge Gifford (now Lord Halsbury) implored the jury not to be led away by the eloquence of Mr. Foote; and the judge said that Mr. Foote "prostituted his talents to the service of the Devil"—all of which was a striking testimony to the extraordinary power displayed by Mr. Foote in the conduct of his defence. On April 23, 1883, Mr. Foote was brought from prison to be tried on another indictment for Blasphemy contained in the Christmas number of the *Freethinker*. This time the case came before Lord Coleridge, who was then the Lord Chief Justice. A splendid speech in defence by Mr. Foote, which occupied three hours in delivery, ended in the disagreement of the jury, and after further consideration, the prosecution entered a *Nolle Prosequi*, and the action, so far as this case was concerned, terminated. It is worthy of note that the Lord Chief Justice, at the close of Mr. Foote's address, adjourned the case till the following day, before commencing his summing-up, and, in doing so, he addressed the jury in the following terms: "Gentlemen, I should have been glad to have summed up this evening, but the truth is, I am not very strong, and I propose, therefore, to address you in the morning, and that will give you a full opportunity of reflecting calmly on the very striking and able speech you have just heard." This not only showed the fine judicial spirit of Lord Coleridge, but also how anxious he was that the jury should have an opportunity of "reflecting calmly" on one of the most powerful speeches ever delivered before a British jury on such a difficult subject as Religion and Blasphemy.

I was a contributor to the *Freethinker* before the prosecution. I also wrote frequently for the *Freethinker* while Mr. Foote was in gaol, when the journal was being edited by Dr. Aveling.

A few years later, when Mr. Bradlaugh, at a meeting at the Hall of Science, resigned the position of President of the National Secular Society, I had the honor of nominating Mr. Foote for the post, which he has held with great distinction ever since.

Mr. Foote is one of the best read men I have had the pleasure of knowing, and his splendid library contains some of the greatest gems of English literature.

It used to be a perfect delight for me, during my holidays, to meet Mr. Foote and our mutual friend, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, and walk along the cliffs from Ramsgate to Broadstairs with them on a beautiful summer's evening, discussing our favorite

authors, and, in friendly talks, gain some knowledge of the vast and varied reading of such students of literature as Mr. Foote and his old and valued colleague, the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler.

Finally, let me say a few words about Mr. Foote as a leader. In the first place, he always believed in having a good staff of workers to help him, and he always encouraged his lieutenants in their work. He gave every man his chance. At every Annual Conference, for years past, although he naturally held the place of honor as President, he gave all the lecturers who had worked loyally for the Cause the opportunity of displaying their talent and ability to advantage.

Personally, I have always served under his leadership with great pleasure. I may have differed from him on many points of policy, but he was always willing to hear my objections, carefully consider my arguments, and give them whatever value he considered they possessed, and, in the end, I was always prepared to bow to his decision. In concluding this article I should like to congratulate Mr. Foote on the decision of Mr. Justice Joyce in the Bowman Will case, which once and for all establishes the legality of the Secular Society, Limited, as an instrument for receiving the bequests of Freethinkers, and the wisdom of Mr. Foote in forming the Society and drawing up the Articles of Association. And let me also express the hope that he will soon recover his health and resume his old position as Editor of this journal, President of the National Secular Society, and Leader of the Freethought Party of Great Britain.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Acid Drops.

At least one of the religious weeklies thought the Bowman case of sufficient consequence to give a summarised report, and to add a lengthy paragraph on it. The editor notes that Mr. Justice Joyce decided that the objects of the Society are not contrary to morality, but adds, "The question, however, is whether they are contrary to Christianity." We submit that this is not the question at all, and we doubt whether any judge could be found to hold that a bequest to a society whose principles were contrary to Christianity was invalid. Such a decision would disallow a bequest to a Jewish synagogue, and we are quite sure that Lord Chief Justice Isaacs would not agree to that. Besides, the decision of every judge since 1883 has been that it is perfectly permissible and legal to attack Christianity, provided it is done in a becoming manner. And that decision is hardly likely to be reversed now.

Suppose that a bequest to a society whose principles were contrary to Christianity was decided to be illegal—What would such a decision involve? Obviously, the judge would have to decide what was Christianity—which by itself is a very pretty problem, and one we are sure no judge will be in a hurry to tackle. But the only form of Christianity known to the Constitution of this country is that represented by the Church of England. Other forms of Christianity are permitted, and they receive legal protection in the practice of their doctrines, but the law knows nothing of them. Constitutionally, therefore, "contrary to Christianity" means contrary to the Church of England; and if it were decided on that ground, then indeed the fat would be in the fire. This decision would, naturally, suit the *Church Times*, but would it suit Methodists, and Catholics, and Baptists, and all the other odds and ends of the Christian world? It was the establishment of religion by the State that made the attack on religion a criminal offence; and the State does not establish religion *in vacuo*, so to speak, but a particular form—and that, clearly, is represented by the State Church.

The *Church Times* is more in touch with actuality when it says, "It is now more ridiculous than ever to say that Christianity is part of the Common Law of England." Of course it is. How can Christianity be held to be part of the Common Law of England when it permits a Jew to be Lord Chief Justice; when it allows Atheists, Agnostics, and Jews to sit in Parliament and make the laws of the country; and when it makes specific arrangements—as in the Oaths Act of 1866—for all those who care to declare themselves as being without any religious belief whatever? There was a time when in actual fact—whatever the theory might have

been—Christianity was a part of the Common Law, and when an attack on it was treated as a crime. But that time has long since passed. The growth of all forms of religious and non-religious opinion simply forced the judges to come to a decision more in conformity with contemporary feeling and opinion. And we can confidently say that it is now next to an impossibility for that opinion to be reversed.

The newspapers have been full of eulogistic articles on Abraham Lincoln, whose death occurred half a century ago. They all forgot to mention that Lincoln was a Freethinker.

"The Church will join in the fight against the foreign enemy, but when will the Bench of Bishops lead a crusade against the social evils of our day which flourish at all times?" asks Mr. George Lansbury in the *Challenge*. Not whilst the Church is established, and bishops enjoy huge incomes, and have seats in the House of Lords.

Canon Pierce, of Westminster, writing in *Lloyd's Weekly News* says, "Thank God, in all ranks the differences between rich and poor are blotted out." This is news! Have the bishops relinquished their salaries? or, are Church organists to be paid a living wage?

The Bishop of Chester has put a ban upon men in holy orders carrying rifles. Probably his lordship thinks that if the clergy go to the Front there will be no men left in the Churches.

The attempts of the "unco' guid" to transform painful Sabbaths into pleasant Sundays, in order to trap the unwary and unthinking folk, are producing humorous results. At a Surbiton Church there is a mouth organ band, and at Southend-on-Sea a concertina mission band parades the streets. The Christian religion will soon be a perfect harlequinade.

Mr. Hall Caine has joined the ranks of the other popular novelists, who have been airing their views on the European War. Writing in the *Sunday Herald* on the dangers of a premature peace, Mr. Caine says that the world's verdict would be "Either that there is no God at all, or that if he allows such things to happen to his children he does not care." The sentence loses nothing by being incorporated in an open letter to the Pope.

Parsons have a queer way of proving the sanity of their "sacred" book. If what it says is obviously sensible, well and good. If, however, it is obviously nonsensical, then it must mean something else. It is a very convenient method, because it is bound to be right every time. The Sermon on the Mount, for instance, is, as it stands, clearly impracticable. A late Archbishop of York said so, others have repeated what he said, and Rev. R. C. Lemin, of Birmingham, delivers himself in this wise: "If the Sermon on the Mount were put on the Statute Book literally, it would mean the break-up of civilisation. The home would disappear, there would be no rights of private property, no law or order. Society would resolve itself into complete anarchy." One would expect that, this being so, Mr. Lemin would give up calling himself a Christian. Not a bit of it. He goes on his way cheerfully, preaching something which, on his own confession, if practised would mean the break-up of civilisation.

The Bishop of Carlisle says that Germany has been betrayed by her Prussian God, and Mr. Hilaire Belloc says that Germany is a nation of Atheists. The religious mind appears to be as elusive as a flea upon the warpath.

Admiral Sir George Hall, orating at the annual meeting of the Religious Tract Society, mentioned that a young naval officer in the conning-tower in the Heligoland fight called his men together and they had prayer before they fired the shot. The admiral did not tell the meeting whether the shot was a hit or a miss.

The Bishop of Hull says the State will have to do something for the "war babies." He did not suggest that Mother Church should abolish the christening fees.

An amusing quotation from the Church Army Handbook was quoted recently in *John Bull*. It ran as follows: "No work; no food; no bed: The Church Army offers all three."

That sunshine-soldier, Dr. Winnington Ingram, Bishop of London, has been appointed a Knight Commander of the

Royal Victorian Order. Is this for singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" in the rear of the fighting lines?

The Rev. J. W. Adams, Vicar of Wall, near Litchfield, is working in an ammunition factory. The newspaper report quaintly adds, "at ordinary hours and for ordinary pay." Is this meant to be a sarcasm on the usual clerical remuneration of extraordinary pay for extraordinary hours?

In the German air-raid on Kent and the East Coast a blackbird, an old hen, and three horses were among the victims. Such an answer to prayer is sufficient to make the two Kaisers turn Mohammedan.

There are different forms of censorship, although they are all alike in the fact of suppression. There is the official censorship, to which we have grown so accustomed that it would not be surprising if something of it were to linger on after "the period of the War"; and there is the unofficial press censorship, which watches carefully over all vested interests and prevents, so far as it can, the appearance of all unwelcome comment or criticism. The other day, for example, a letter appeared in the *Times* from a "Chaplain at the Front," which relates how he visited some Sikhs and explained to them that their God was the same God as the God of the Christians, and how gratified the Sikhs were at the news. On reading this, the following letter was sent by a retired military officer, a regular reader of the *Free-thinker*:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'TIMES.'

"SIR,—in your issue of to-day a 'Chaplain at the Front' states that he informed a party of Sikhs that both they and Christians worshiped 'one and the same God.'

"This being so, may I ask what then is the justification for the numerous missionary bodies in India, all doing their utmost to induce members of the various faiths in that country to abandon their God, and to join the banner of 'our God?'"

Needless to say, the letter was not inserted. There was plenty of space to spare for the perfectly fatuous letter of the Chaplain, with its picture of the Sikh as a cross between an infant and an idiot, but no room for a perfectly common-sense comment. Religious interests are in quite safe hands so far as our liberty-loving English press is concerned.

In an article on "War Babies" in that religious paper the *Daily Mail*, readers were asked not to send letters "to reaffirm moral maxims which have been stereotyped ever since Moses descended Mount Sinai." Some of those stereotyped "maxims" have long been in the melting-pot.

Snow in Hell is sufficiently novel to startle a case-hardened Christian, but it is a fact. In a recent issue of the *Sketch* there were reproduced some pictures of Hell, which is a railway junction in Norway, and one showed a snow scene. Anyone can go to Hell, and take a return ticket.

The Rev. Dinsdale Young, President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, says that "One of the many good results of this War will be that we shall hear much less of German theology." Before this can happen, the Kaiser must stop making pious speeches, or the newspapers must cease reporting that most Christian monarch.

Mr. George Lansbury, writing in the *Challenge* on "Religion and the Workers," says that "discussions carried on in religious newspapers concerning the attitude of the working class toward religion are always very perplexing reading. Two thousand years ago the common people heard the Gospel gladly." Does Mr. Lansbury really imagine that there is no educational difference between the working class of to-day and twenty centuries ago? The answer will explain the perplexity of religious newspapers.

A laborer was sentenced recently to six months' imprisonment for stealing some altar candles from a church. This could hardly be described as a light sentence.

In an amusing article on "The Super Sausage," the *Echo* (London) quotes Professor Desjames as saying: "The German god is shaped like a sausage, with a spiked helmet, and the brains of a Diesel engine." This is heated language, but if Christianity be true, the Professor will use hotter language—after death.

"The army chaplains' work in bivouac and camp is largely social," says *Lloyds' Weekly News*. What more

could be expected from such men? Cannot they all claim to be the heroes of a hundred tea-fights?

The nation's drink bill in 1914 was £164,463,000. We wonder how much of this was spent on "communion port." And how much on lemon-squash in bishops' palaces and country vicarages?

It's cheek that does it! And of all cheek religious cheek is the cheekiest. At the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the other day, a speaker before the audience, "Medical Missions are a part of the Gospel." What Gospel? Certainly they are no part of the New Testament. The medical treatment there consists of prayers, faith—and more prayers. The sick were to be treated by the elders, and they were to lay hands upon them and anoint them with oil and pray over them. That is all. We know that Christians do not practice these things—that is, none but a very few, and the majority call the fools, and sometimes imprison them. But to be told that the treatment of disease by modern scientific methods—for that is what medical missions come to—is "a part of the Gospel" is, as we said before, just cheek—cool, unapproachable religious cheek.

We need no other proof that religion is on its last legs in this country than the simple fact that Billy Sunday, the slangy evangelist of America, has been invited by Canada to come over to put new life into it. And Billy will do it, too—in a way—if he comes. He has a splendid knack of making things hum wherever he goes. For our part we would heartily welcome a mission conducted by him in his usual style. He would do our cause an enormous amount of benefit. The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, testifies that the Torrey-Alexander campaign "did harm to the kingdom of God in London"; and we are quite sure that Billy Sunday would do it much greater harm still. By his offensive vulgarity of his methods he would render it, to a higher degree than ever, an object of ridicule.

But we incline to the opinion that the Rev. William Sunday, D.D., ex-baseball champion, will not visit this island at present, because the War makes such heavy demands upon our financial resources. The Rev. William has within him the root of all evil—the love of money. Last year he spent seven weeks at Scranton, Pennsylvania, and received £600, as a reward for inducing 18,961 to "follow the trail." At Pittsburgh, in 1913, he reaped a harvest of £9200. Recently at Philadelphia, after an eleven weeks' mission, there were upwards of 20,000 "trail hitters," and Dr. Sunday was prevailed upon to accept the modest sum of £10,000. Evidently, soul-saving is immensely more profitable than baseball; and the reverend gentleman has been able to make up in the States to 1917, in the former remunerative game. During the last ten years he has been the recipient of £107,000.

Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain of the Forces, addressed a meeting of the Religious Tract Society at the Queen's Hall, London, said over a million cards containing a prayer list had been circulated among the British troops in France. This suggests the "Bread of Life" a la carte.

Mrs. Creighton, widow of the late Bishop of London, presided at a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, at Church House, London, on the 15th inst. Her address was "The strife among Christian nations must be a menace to the eyes of people who did not follow Christ. Christian lessons must be shown with greater clearness." If Christian teaching cannot be enforced with high explosives, bayonets, and bayonets, the clergy had better give the job up.

Like so many religious ceremonies, Primrose Day, which commemorates Lord Beaconsfield, who was not a simple flower-like character, was founded on a mistake. When Disraeli died, Queen Victoria sent a wreath of primrose with an inscription, "His favorite flower," referring, of course, to the Prince Consort. Her allusion was thought popularly, to apply to Disraeli. Hence the association of the politician with the primrose, and the founding of the Primrose League, one of whose objects is to disseminate Christianity.

Dr. Lyttelton, headmaster of Eton, has made an appeal concerning his views of Christian ethics. He says "The Greek word for love signifies the feeling of a schoolmaster for a boy, or of a father for a wrong-headed son, and perhaps severity sometimes." This is very like the favorite Christian conception of an Almighty Father who damns the majority of his children.

NOTICE.

The business of the "FREETHINKER" and of THE PIONEER PRESS, formerly of 2 Newcastle-st., has been transferred to 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £25 9s. 7d. Received since:— J. Sumner, £5 5s.; W. H. Deakin, £5.—Per Miss E. M. Vance —T. Sutcliffe, 2s. 6d.; "W. F.," 5s.; Thos. Stead, 2s.; Miss Harriet Baker, 10s. 6d.

G. F. TATCHEE (Hong Kong).—We quite share your view as to the good done by the work you name. But the Freethinker is the Freethinker, and it is our business to point out flaws when we see them, although, we hope, in all good faith and temper. Glad to receive your appreciation of this paper.

"PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL."—We hope that this will be recognised, but as you do not wish your real name published, and give no other, we are rather at a loss in the matter. We think you would find either Draper's History of the Conflict between Science and Religion or his Intellectual Development of Europe very suitable to your present state of mind. We can quite appreciate your hesitancy in exposing others to injury by a too open avowal of Freethought, but there are numerous ways in which one can quietly assist a cause one is interested in, and you appear to have found at least one such method. If every Freethinker did what they could to help, it would soon be impossible for Christians to exert the quiet terrorism they wield at present.

J. STUBBINGS.—You are not the only one who set out to correct Freethinkers and ended by becoming one of them. Given an open mind and an honest disposition, that result is almost inevitable. That is one reason why we welcome inquiry and the Churches dread it. We are pleased to know that the Freethinker played the part it has in your mental emancipation.

PRESSURE on our space compels us to hold over, among other matters, a further instalment of Abracadabra's highly interesting studies of Christian Evidences, and a number of replies to letters received. These latter will be dealt with next week.

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.

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.

Personal.

My doctor still warns me against anything like work, but I must embrace the opportunity of congratulating Mr. Cohen on his splendid and noble article last week, entitled, "A Great Victory." I thank him from the bottom of my heart, as I know he wrote it from the bottom of his. I also know, for it is allowed that I am something of a judge in these matters, that merely from a literary point of view, the conclusion of his panegyric would be hard to beat.

I have seen Mr. Cohen, and he tells me there is a good deal of dissonance going on with regard to my attendance at the N. S. S. Conference, and what the Executive would do in my absence. If they act legally, I should have no quarrel with anything they do, although I might have an opinion to express. I cannot say at this moment whether I can come to the Conference in person or not. It will entirely depend upon circumstances; that is to say, what I and my doctor think of the matter. I have not yet entered a train or a bus, and I do not know what the state of things may be on Whit Sunday. But I have hopes, and I shall do my best. For the rest, I leave myself to the indulgence of my

friends, who will hear from me again before Whit Sunday.

I am very much improved in health, but I know not yet whether I shall be able to risk it at the Conference or not, which is a serious question—at least, to me.

I leave the matter of the triumph of the Secular Society, Limited, to a future occasion, not feeling able to deal with it now.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

We are sorry to say that up to the present the Secretary of the N. S. S. has not received as many intimations as we should like to see from Branches of their intention to send delegates to the Conference. We quite realise that there are special difficulties for delegates attending the Conference this year, but that is only an additional reason why those who can do so should make a special effort to be present. The arrangements for the Conference are now practically complete. The meetings—business and public—will be held in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, W. There will be a luncheon arranged (at 2s. 6d. per head) for all those who give notice of their intention of being present, and it may be possible to arrange for a motor-bus excursion on the Whit-Monday. Visitors from the country who require hotel accommodation should write at once to the Secretary, stating the exact nature of their requirements. We hope to publish the names of speakers and other particulars in our next issue.

Mr. Ash, our shop-manager at 61 Farringdon-street, says he is receiving many congratulations on our behalf re the Bowman case by people calling and expressing great interest in the place.

Mr. Lloyd regards "Mr. Justice Joyce's judgment as simply grand, and the grandeur of it was enhanced when he added that he had absolutely no sympathy with the work of the N. S. S." We suppose the meaning is that it proved the judge's entire disinterestedness.

At a meeting of members of the Birmingham Branch N. S. S., held on April 22, it was unanimously resolved:—"That a vote of congratulation be sent to Mr. Foote on the successful issue in the case of the Secular Society, Ltd., and the Bowman bequest, noting at the same time that such result was largely due to his (Mr. Foote's) foresight and skill in the drawing up of the Articles of Association of the Secular Society, Ltd." Farther, the meeting hoped it would not be long before Mr. Foote's health enabled him to be at work as of old in the several positions he holds in the cause of Freethought.

The Literary Guide, the organ of the Rationalist Press, congratulates the Secular Society, Ltd., on maintaining its legal security, but it does not mention the name of anyone, not even Mr. Foote's, which is a clever stroke of journalism—in its way, and leaves nothing on our side to reciprocate.

Mr. J. Sumner, in enclosing subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes:—

"A Great Victory." Mr. Cohen so heads his article upon the result of the Bowman Case. A great victory it is indeed for Freethought, and as it is so entirely owing to your own forethought and sound judgment, allow me to congratulate you personally. Permit me to enclose cheque for the President's Fund, and to apologise that this has been overlooked until now. May I this time mark the 'great victory' and my appreciation of its author, by making the cheque five guineas instead of three, as last year."

The good wishes of Mr. Sumner and others, with their appreciation of what Mr. Foote has described as his legacy to the Freethought movement, will, we are sure, serve as the best of tonic to him in his forced inaction.

It may seem curious, but it is nevertheless a fact, that Mr. Foote's illness has prevented him from so much as seeing his new premises. When he is well enough to visit them, he will be the spectator of a novelty as much as any of his readers.

The London Branches of the N. S. S. appear to have been greatly affected by the War. All of them have some of their most active members away in either the Army or the Navy, and in the case of one Branch—Edmonton—more than half its members are away on active service. Still, they will nearly all be engaged with their outdoor propaganda to-day (May 2).

Finsbury Park starts at 11.15, Parliament Hill at 3.15, and Regent's Park at 3.15. The Camberwell Branch holds its meetings in Brockwell Park at 5.15, the Kingsland Branch at 7; West Ham, at Maryland Point, at 7; and Bethnal Green Branch, in Victoria Park, at 3.15 and 6. We hope that all these stations will receive adequate support from Freethinkers. Further particulars will be found under "Sunday Lecture Notices."

We are pleased to see that an attempt is to be made to continue Mr. F. J. Gould in a field that he has made peculiarly his own. A "Gould Committee," of which Rev. C. D. Thomas is chairman and Mr. C. A. Watts treasurer, has been formed for the purpose of "maintaining Mr. F. J. Gould in his efforts to commend to parents, teachers, and the general public a type of moral instruction which may be acceptable to all sections of thought and faith." We presume that the precise form these efforts take will be determined by the support received by the Committee. We sincerely hope that the response will be a hearty one. Mr. Gould is far too valuable a man to remain idle. He has a splendid record of educational work, and the Committee, in inviting help to further its object, cannot be accused of taking a leap in the dark. Subscriptions are invited, and needed. The secretary is Miss E. M. White, of 37 Park-crescent, Brighton.

In war-time many interests suffer, and, unfortunately, it is the more serious and more permanent aspects of life that are most affected. The distress amongst the more serious writers for the Press, we understand, has been very keen ever since the War began, and we are not surprised to learn that a Committee formed for the purpose of helping these cases, finds itself compelled to issue a public appeal for funds. Really good writing is never overpaid, and its authors consequently feel more quickly than any other professional class the consequences of any limitation of their markets. Of course, those writers who could turn their minds to writing War news—of a more or less sensational character—are all right, but it is those whose intellect is of a different order that suffer most. And these, we venture to say, are amongst the most valuable of the nation.

But for the War a rather large and, we think we may say, important work by Mr. Cohen would by now have been before the public. The book was quite ready for the market in, and was indeed dated for, September last, but the War compelled the publishers to hold its issue over for a while. It was then hoped to issue it in the spring, but the publishers now inform Mr. Cohen that the state of the book trade—as regards serious scientific work—is such that it would seriously prejudice the interests of the work to issue at the present juncture. Anyway, we hope to see it issued by the autumn.

From a Freethinker in the trenches we get the following:—

"We have a few Freethinkers here in my platoon.....Two or three others have assiduously taken up the *Freethinker*, and seem interested. Last night, in a huge barn, a man uttered the usual story of Bradlaugh's recantations. I put my spoke in effectively. It appeared to me I had the sympathy of the audience."

Too bad, this, after the Bishop of London had been and found everybody seething with religious fervor. Miss Vance is sending to this correspondent some leaflets that may prove useful and, in their way, may be as deadly as German bullets. But gaining new readers for the *Freethinker* while the guns are booming is "Business as usual" with a vengeance.

The Evolution of Mammalian Life.—II.

(Continued from p. 262.)

AT the period when the evolution of the horse was occurring, another family of herbivorous animals was developing length of limb and two-toed feet. The antelopes, oxen, and deer are salient instances of this transformation. And with these organisms, several, in addition to acquiring greater power of movement, also evolved further protection against their flesh-eating foes by arming themselves with antlers and horns. These weaponed animals are all descended from hornless ancestors who lived in later Eocene or Oligocene times. Step by step, the development of horns and antlers has been traced. These protective appendages in their primitive stage resembled little spikes, but when Pliocene

times were reached, they were beginning to branch into antlers. From pointed spikes, originally employed to ward off or wound carnivorous beasts, these horned weapons were slowly transformed into organs serviceable for adornment or for use in the combats between males of the same species for the possession of the females, and as instruments of offence or defence during struggles for supremacy within the family group. That this is the true explanation is evidenced by innumerable facts, not the least noteworthy of which is the circumstance that these appendages are more elaborate among the males, and are, indeed, sometimes entirely absent in the females. With the Oryx, however, an animal that utilises its horns to defend itself against the larger carnivora, each sex is furnished with offensive weapons. In some cases, utility was sacrificed for the sake of splendor. This is particularly true of the extinct Irish deer, as may be seen in the fine specimen in the South Kensington Museum. The antlers of the male attained a width of twelve feet, and, albeit extremely beautiful, this adornment must have seriously handicapped its wearer when attacked by man or by other carnivorous animals. This handi- some creature (*Cervus giganteus*) was at one time native to many European lands, but its last retreat was probably in the Emerald Isle, where it left many of its skeletons in the peat deposits.

The Irish deer is sometimes spoken of as an elk, but this description is certainly erroneous. As Dr. Smith Woodward remarks in his valuable *Palaontology*, the antlers of the animal, as well as the conformation of its nasal bones, demonstrate that the organism was a true deer and, unquestionably, not an elk:—

"The true elk (*Alces machlis*), however, was a contemporary of the Irish deer, and during the Pleistocene Period, it had a much wider geographical range than at present. In Britain, remains of this animal, the largest of the surviving Cervidae, are known from many localities, both north and south, and in Ireland; and there are indications of a still larger extinct species (*Alcelatifrons*) in the Cromer Forest Bed."

In company with the elk, the reindeer enjoyed a far greater range in Europe in Pleistocene times than at present. At that period it roamed as far south as the Alps and Pyrenees, and its fossil remains are plentiful in Pleistocene and even in more modern deposits throughout the British Isles. The reindeer lingered in Northern Scotland as late as the twelfth century, when its few remaining representatives became extinct in Britain. The animal is now strictly confined to its arctic and sub-arctic homes.

A further aspect of mammalian evolution is illustrated by another group of horned animals whose powers of resistance depended on their simple horns, their massive proportions, and the thickness and toughness of their integument. The swift-footed cattle and deer evolved organs of locomotion which enabled them to outrun their enemies, while the heavy-hoofed ungulate animals developed hides of such thickness that they could sometimes withstand the fiercest onslaught of fang and claw, while the weight of their bodies became sufficient to permit them to bowl over their assailants, and afterwards crush them to death. The rhinoceros is frequently chosen as the most striking example of these powerful ungulates. This mammal is descended from an Eocene ancestor who was related to the *Palaotherium*, the ancient forefather of the horse. The *Palaotherium* gave rise to a hornless descendant, the *Aceratherium*, which carried a rudimentary fourth toe, and from this animal, slowly and by degrees, proceeded the triple-toed rhinoceros of to-day.

While these events were occurring, another kind of man of the rhinoceros had appeared in Africa, and in the same Egyptian deposits which have given up the remains, an early elephant, the *Palaomastodon* has also been discovered. The fossil rhinoceros was a strange creature, which Mr. Beadnell, its discoverer, has entitled *Arsinotherium*, as it was unearthed near the tomb of Arsinoë, an Egyptian princess.

animal's skull was three feet in length, upon which it carried a couple of lateral horns. It bore five toes on its heavy feet, and its jaws were furnished with a large array of teeth. The Arsinotherium seems to have been born only to perish, as there is nothing to indicate that it left any descendants.

At about the same period, however, a similar creature was living in North America. This was a hideously ugly quadruped, whose head was adorned with six thick horns, and it must have proved a dangerous adversary to any carnivorous beast bold enough to attack it. This many-horned animal is termed Dinoceras and, despite its appendages, it more nearly resembled the extant rhinoceros, both in size and appearance, than the Egyptian Arsinotherium. A still closer approach to the modern rhinoceros is presented by the Titanotherium, and this defunct animal, although larger than the living ungulate, was characterised by horns of a similar structure. The remains of the Titanotherium were discovered in the Lower Miocene deposits of Dakota.

At a later period the true rhinoceros emerged into being. One species, the woolly rhinoceros, dwelt in Northern Europe and Asia during the Glacial Epoch, and its skeletons have been discovered in Siberian swamps. The teeth and bones of this extinct form are frequently gathered from the gravels of our own Thames valley. An allied organism, the Elasmotherium, was also an inhabitant of Siberia. This defunct rhinoceros was the proud possessor of a skull a yard long. Its single horn was situated on the forehead, whereas the modern animal bears his appendage on his snout.

The story of the evolution of the elephant has quite recently been worked out with a wealth of detail. Many of the obstacles which previously obstructed the Palæontological investigator in his endeavors to establish the pedigree of this most intelligent and docile of quadrupeds have been completely overcome by the researches of Dr. C. W. Andrews. These fruitful inquiries were conducted by this clever scientist in the Fayum deposits near Cairo in Egypt. There a large swine-like creature was brought to view, which Dr. Andrews named Mœritherium. It was a big-footed, five-toed, short-snouted animal, well provided with teeth. Its short proboscis constituted the primitive form of the new well-developed elephant's trunk, while the animal's curious molar teeth were strikingly similar to those of that very advanced elephant, the Mastodon.

The Mœritherium, or some nearly related organism, became the progenitor of the earliest Mastodons—the Palæomastodons. These ancient elephants were no bigger than a well-grown horse, but their jaws had become narrower and longer than those of the elephant-like animals previously referred to. The crushing teeth of the more primitive Mœritherium had now been reduced in number, while its canine teeth had disappeared, and its incisors had dwindled to two in each jaw. The couple of incisors retained by the Palæomastodon in its upper jaw were prolonged, so as to form tusks. All these modifications may be regarded as decidedly progressive in character.

At a subsequent stage, although the Mediterranean Sea had for some time been encroaching on the earlier land areas of that region, Europe was still united by terrestrial bridges with Africa. The Palæomastodon's descendants travelled over these connections into Europe from the Southern continent, and have left the records of their existence in Miocene times in the South of France. Farther changes now set in. The animal's crushing teeth were reduced in number, but increased in efficiency, while its extremely useful trunk reached a higher stage of evolution.

The Mœritherium developed into Palæomastodon, and now Tetrabeledon, the four-tusked, long-jawed elephant appeared on the scene. The transformation of Tetrabeledon into the modern elephants was accomplished by three chief changes:—

"First, the lower jaw was shortened, the lower front teeth were lost, and, with their disappearance, the pro-

jection of the lower jaw disappeared, and left it as the short jaw of the elephant; second, the tusks on the upper jaw were greatly increased in size and strength, and pointed outward, and thus became of increased use to the animal, by enabling it, like the modern elephant, to dig up the dry river-beds during times of drought, and thus obtain water; and, at the same time, as the tusks grew longer, the bones of the face were shortened, giving the skull the flat-faced form of the elephant."

The final modifications which completed the development of the elephant were dental in character. The Mastodon had fewer teeth than his predecessors, but it was reserved to the living African and Indian elephants to carry one molar tooth only in each jaw, and these two teeth are the most efficient crushing organs the order has ever possessed.

The Mastodon is the parent of the Oriental elephant, while that extinct hairy elephant, the Mammoth, is a near relative, as the marked similarity in their dental structures clearly shows. In pre-historic times, the now departed Mammoth lived in great numbers in Northern America, Europe, and Northern Asia. It abounded in the valley of the Thames, while immense herds of these animals dwelt in the countries which are now covered by the North Sea.

The teeth of these organisms constantly become entangled in the trawler's nets in these waters, and very much to their detriment, if the swearing fishermen are to be trusted. The Mammoth, as it was well protected from the elements by its hairy coat, inhabited England when the Ice Age had given way to less frigid, but still intensely cold conditions. Early man in France and Switzerland was acquainted with it, as the celebrated Mammoth tusks, with designs of the animal upon them, sufficiently prove. One of these drawings is so life-like that its reference to the Mammoth is apparent at a glance.

Thus the pedigree of the elephant has been completely established. And we now possess the further knowledge that certain side-branches of the main stock failed to adapt themselves to their surroundings, and were, in consequence, incontinently eliminated from the roll of life. These unsuccessful efforts to create a kingdom were shown by the evolution of several elephant-like organisms that proved barren to posterity. For example, the Dinotherium of the Miocene Period appears to have been developed from the Palæomastodon, but it was unable to surmount the struggle for life.

The line of descent which ultimately evolved the contemporary elephants proves that the animals gradually increased in size. On the other hand, the members of a group which varied from their more progressive relatives dwindled in size to such a degree that they deteriorated into mere baby-elephants no bigger than dogs. These diminutive ungulates have been found fossil at Malta. Other Mediterranean Islands, which at this period were being more and more encroached upon by the sea, have yielded similar skeletons. The remains of pigmy hippopotami are from time to time unearthed in Cyprus and in Crete. It is contended that these African animals were originally stranded on the islands of the Mediterranean, as these were severed from the continental areas by the constantly increasing power of the waves. As the islands became more and more circumscribed, inbreeding, in conjunction with the ever decreasing food supply necessitated the lowering of the standard of size.

These examples serve to illustrate the part played by the changes in the distribution of land and water in the evolution of life. And the more our knowledge increases concerning the areas occupied by floral and faunal organisms, both of the present and the past, the more do we realise the immense modifications which our oceans and continents have undergone throughout the various geological periods which embrace the genesis and development of organic nature. So far-reaching have been these changes of land and sea, that great land surfaces now separated by wide oceans have in times past possessed "constant or repeated opportunities for the commingling of their faunas." Nevertheless, this partial reservation must be made, that South America, and, above all,

Australia, have been subject to greater isolation than the remaining land masses.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Religion and the Masses.—III.

(Concluded from p. 268.)

THE following conversation occurred two years before Shaw wrote *Pygmalion*, between the writer and some railway shunters:—

"You have a new foreman in your yard?"

"Ay."

"What's he like?"

"Oh, he's no damn good."

"Why, what's wrong with him?"

"Everything. He's a ——— Christian, that's what he is," and the speaker looked at the questioner as much as to say: that sums up the whole matter; I can't say more; whilst the other men granted assent.

The exponents of Christianity themselves, driven reluctantly onward by advancing ideas, are largely responsible for the decline of faith. The controversies over the Bible, the doubts cast on parts, the views of advanced theologians, the discussions on interpolations and forgeries, the battles raged among scientists, rationalists, modern Christians, and old-fashioned Christians, rumors and echoes of these, daily increasing more and more, reach the working classes. The old, plain, dogmatic statements are abandoned, and replaced by disquisition and metaphysics. Heaven is no longer up above the sky, nor Hell underneath the earth. Then where is it? asks the plain man. Christ did not descend into hell; he went to the place of departed spirits. He did not ascend into heaven; he departed we know not whither, and his spirit is somewhere. All this sort of thing perplexes working men. They like plain understandable statements. It must be all or nothing. It is rapidly becoming nothing. Metaphysics and theological philosophy are incomprehensible to the man in the cloth cap, so he cuts the Gordian knot by disbelieving altogether. Professor This or the Reverend That has doubts of some doctrine, or reinterprets it; the majority abandon it entirely. The modernising and so-called rationalising of Christianity have rendered it unintelligible to working people, and they leave it strictly alone.

Many religious people blame men like Robert Blatchford and agencies like the Secular Societies and the Rationalist Press Association for the subversion of faith. But the workers are very pronounced in their tastes. They would not read and believe Robert Blatchford unless he appealed to them. *God and My Neighbor* alone has sold in hundreds of thousands. The masses do not read under compulsion, nor for fashion. They read what they like, and what they do not like is taboo. Hence the works of the Blatchford school and the Rationalist Press Association are read in millions, whilst volumes of apologetics and theology rot on the shelves, and make moan amongst the booksellers. Such a huge output and consumption of anti-Christian literature is bound to make a difference to working class thought and belief. But do not forget that *Everyman*, the *Home University Library*, and other excellent and cheap series of good books have sold in millions among the people. The toiling millions may be rough and blunt and plain-spoken, but they are not ignorant or foolish. They are shrewd and cautious, they are beginning to think, they are struggling for knowledge, education, and truth, and will get them, and woe to them who stand in the way of their getting the light. And the workers suspect that the Churches help to stand in the way.

"By their fruits shall ye know them" is a Biblical injunction much observed by the working class. Amongst them there is a belief that they are not fairly treated. They hear of increased wealth, and they want some of it. They see luxury, opulence, and extravagant living. They notice also idle and

licentious pleasures pursued unchecked and unbuked. They are conscious also of wrongs and injustices, of conditions which bear heavily upon the workers. Then they see vicious livers, inebriate employers, and sweating masters, and the devotees of ease and idleness prominent in religion, pillars of the Churches, occupying the best pews, and hobnobbing with the parson, and they say: Look at religion, it's hand in glove with the sweaters and the upholders of long hours and low wages; so those who have reason to hate our present social system often couple with it established religion, and vilify both as being enemies of progress. Rightly or wrongly, this is the reasoning; that aristocracy, plutocracy, and religion are partners.

One often hears complaints of the money wasted on religion, the item which arouses most objection being foreign missions.

The parson is not held in high esteem. Men think, and do not hesitate to say it, that a man becomes a parson for one, or both, of two reasons: either incapacity to do anything else, or for love of an easy life. Such views naturally react unfavorably upon religion.

Even in politics there are indications that religion no longer influences people. For two or three years the Anglican Church has tried to work up indignation against the Welsh Church Bill. She aimed at a Crusade, and failed. Neither the Bill nor the agitation against it has lost the Government a single popular vote, nor has it gained them one.

Some numerous aspects of the Home Rule question have been put before the electors, but the religious one has been dropped. Whatever else may shake people, the cry that Home Rule means Rome does not. To try and create feeling on grounds of Roman Catholics *versus* Protestants is a glaring failure, and is now rarely heard of, save from a few ultra-bigots.

This is a praiseworthy improvement of the controversy over Home Rule, and redeems that debate from the highly objectionable weakness of sectarian wrangling.

This absence of religious rancor is especially a subject for congratulation when we remember how persistently religious the politics of this country have been. Politicians have usually been men of strong religious convictions, and some are inclined that way now. But the general trend is towards a very wide tolerance of religious views, and an avoidance of denominational weapons in political fighting. Politics are politics now, with religion and economics as the principal factors, not religion.

Sectarianism is so rapidly disappearing from public life that there are indications that even the theological question will be settled independently of the theologian. It is largely settling itself, by the simple process of administration being gradually transferred from the religious bodies to the State and municipal palities. The working classes never object to a Council School replacing a denominational school. Once they were indifferent or hostile to education, now they are getting interested and favorable. Mother interest is entirely in the secular subjects. Mothers and father never take any interest in their children's progress in Scripture lessons, but they are very keen on Johnny and Mollie doing well in arithmetic, and Only a few years ago a President of the National Union of Teachers exclaimed in despair: "The theologian blocks the way." Educationists thought of knocking him, the theologian, clean over the top, trampling on him, but failed to do so. To-day education goes steadily on, leaving the theologian high and dry. New interests and methods have circumvented him. The teacher, the doctor, and the scientist have quite superseded the theologian. Psychology has replaced theology. We are now on what the child can do, not what he believes. Yet no one objects. Religion is becoming an uninteresting thing in the world.

It is marvellous how far the people of this country have gone away from the organised formal aspects of

the Christian belief. When we consider the hold that the Churches had on education, on politics, on local government, on literature, on philosophy, on every manifestation of human thought and national life, our shaking off of the ecclesiastical trammels has been wonderfully rapid, and we are advancing speedily towards a completely secular state.

But, stay! cry the despairing defenders of supernatural dogma and priestly privilege, what have you to offer the people if you take away Christianity?

There are three answers to that, each complete in itself. First, nothing ghostly or supernatural. Second, Christianity is not being taken off the people. They are throwing it away. It has been offered them, and they will not have it. Third, everything else, all that centuries of man's endeavor has achieved. The immense and increasing discoveries of science, the beauties of art, and the results of organised effort for the good of all, instead of selfish, grabbing contention.

Science, literature, music, art, philosophy: beauty and truth in all their many excellent forms are waiting for man to take and enjoy, ten thousand times a better heritage than his present unhappy state of struggle and uncertainty, coupled with a shadowy belief in something, he knows not what, and on which no one seems to be able to cast any enlightenment.

ALFRED ROWBERRY WILLIAMS.

The Kaiser in Heaven.

It was inevitable that the secret of the Kaiser's presence in heaven should not remain a secret for long. When it leaked out, two consequences of course followed. One was that it naturally became necessary for the Almighty to receive in state such an important guest. This had to be done fairly soon, by the standards of reckoning time used in heaven, for though the stay of the Kaiser in heaven was to be eternal, yet we must bear in mind that a thousand ages in the Almighty's sight passed like an evening, and some touchy people would be annoyed if a social politeness were postponed for three or four thousand ages.

The other consequence was that the archangel, Michael, was seriously annoyed with St. Peter for disobeying his express orders not to let any more Germans into heaven. In fact, so great was Michael's displeasure that poor St. Peter was relieved—for a time, at least—of his honorable position as gatekeeper of heaven.

(One fine day—the days being obviously always fine in heaven—a cherub delivered a celestial command to the Kaiser to present himself before the Almighty. The Kaiser at first was rather nettled; it would have been so much more respectful were the good Lord to come to him. However, the Kaiser could not help being a little flattered by the implied acknowledgment of his importance, and having ascertained from the cherub that he would be conducted to the presence of the Almighty by a large and imposing guard of cherubim and seraphim, signified his willingness to go.

There was something theatrical and meretricious about the chamber of the Most High, and so the Kaiser at once felt at home. The Almighty sat on a throne approached by a long flight of steps and thus raised high above the floor and surrounded by an imitation sea only too palpably made of glass, on which four-and-twenty elders were continually and carefully casting their golden crowns. Owing to the care there were very few cracks in the glass.

As the Kaiser entered, the perpetual hymn of praise to the Lord ceased. The Almighty, who had a light brown beard and a very bored expression, seemed to regard this interruption with some pleasure. In spite of his *blasé* appearance, the Lord looked remarkably young for his age, and considering that the world must have been a sad disappointment to him. You will remember that just after the creation, God said that the world was good. Well, *nous avons changé tout cela*; and from the fact that God seemed to bear his cares so lightly on the whole, there almost seemed to be some grounds for thinking that, after all, he had not much to do with the running of the world.

A tall person with auburn hair whispered into the Kaiser's ear that he must prostrate himself. The Kaiser protested with just indignation, and a hot argument was beginning when the Almighty lifted his hand for silence and beckoned the Kaiser to come closer.

The Kaiser took two steps forward, raised his hand in a military salute, and said in a loud and resonant voice,

"Guten Tag, Kamerad!" The Almighty smiled and nodded. "It gives me great pleasure to see you here," he said politely; and then added, after a pause, "Well, you seem to have been the cause of rather an uproar down there. I have had some Belgian refugees here who seem to be rather indignant about something."

"My army," said the Kaiser, "had to violate the neutrality of Belgium because we had it on absolutely unimpeachable authority that the French were about to attack us across Belgium."

The Kaiser broke off, for a sudden darkness seemed to fall on the whole room. But it was not dark long. A bright ray of light thrown, it seemed, by some celestial limelight, fell across the scene from the neighborhood of the Almighty's head.

The Kaiser naturally stepped forward into the limelight, but a strong hand shot out and pulled him back. The room quickly got light and the limelight ceased to fizzle. The Kaiser turned a puzzled and angry look on the owner of the restraining hand, the man with the auburn hair. Under cover of the angelic chorus which suddenly broke out in praise of God's infinite wisdom, the archangel Michael—for the owner of the auburn hair was he—whispered testily into the Kaiser's ear, "Don't you see that God winked!"

"But I heard that the French army was quite unprepared," continued God, when the angelic chorus had at last ceased.

"It is the duty of a great and warlike nation to be prepared lest neighboring nations fall upon it," said the Kaiser in a pulpit-like voice.

"That sounds like Bernhardt—or the Bible," remarked the Lord thoughtfully. "So you were prepared?"

"Yes, thank God, we were!"

"Don't trouble to thank me," said God lightly; I hadn't anything to do with it. And the French were unprepared?"

"Unprepared, as a degenerate nation would be!"

"And yet they fell upon you! What fools these mortals are," mused God.

There was a long pause, which allowed the Kaiser to miss the point of the Almighty's remark. Having done so, he confidently expressed a wish, which always has, in his case, the force of a command, that God would crown the German arms with success.

"I always have, and always will, foreordain that victory shall rest with the victorious," pronounced God, *ex cathedra*.

And surely anybody can see that *ex cathedra* pronouncements like that are infallible.

On his way out, the Kaiser, who was unescorted now, came across St. Peter sitting at the corner of one of the golden streets studying a three-months-old *Daily Mail*. St. Peter smiled weakly at the Kaiser: "I have nothing else to do now so I am reading this," he said.

The Kaiser seemed anxious to talk, so St. Peter politely laid down his paper.

"It's a very old paper," he began, in a deprecatory tone of voice, "but, you see, things are not very punctual here. It's a case of a thousand ages ago down there being as yesterday up here. But you seem as though you wanted to ask something."

The Kaiser felt almost human when St. Peter talked to him, and in a confidential tone of voice he began to ask about the wink, and other things that puzzled him about the Almighty. St. Peter looked well around him before replying, and then he dropped his voice. "I feel I can be frank with you," he said; "the truth is, that we have long recognised that God is not omnipotent, and yet still appearances must be kept up. That wink, for instance, has to be stage-managed. It impresses some people; but, of course, you are on a different plane altogether."

The look of reverence in St. Peter's simple face was so obvious that the Kaiser felt a glow of satisfaction stealing over him. "True; did you find that out at once?" he said, in a pleased tone of voice and with an indulgent smile.

St. Peter, by way of reply, took up the paper and read an account of the bombardment of Scarborough and Whitby. "So soon as I read that," he said with enthusiasm, "I knew!"

The Kaiser looked somewhat uneasy, as if he were afraid that St. Peter was going to taunt him with allowing his ships to fire on non-combatants. At the bottom of the Kaiser's heart there was a little human feeling of regret that he was going to lose the friendliness of the only friendly person he had met in heaven. He had grown almost to like St. Peter. But St. Peter went on: "It was just like what lawyers call 'Acts of God.' The innocent were destroyed instead of the guilty. Anybody could tell you were a God after that!"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, L. B. Gallagher, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: 7.30, J. W. Marshall, "Precept and Practice."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, F. Schaller, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture. Regent's Park: 3.15, F. Schaller, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. Burke, a Lecture.

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