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As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Working a Miracle.

ALL things considered, Christianity has not made much profit out of the War. First of all, the mere presence of Christian nations at war needed explaining—then to the faithful. Then the expected boom in religion failed to materialise. Next, opportunities for a religious interpretation of events have not been plentiful in a war that is more a war of machinery than ought else. Even the saving of lives by the intervention of a Bible or prayer-book between a bullet and its intended victim has been pushed on one side by tobacco tins, novels, note-books, and other worldly objects. Finally, the leaders of the Army and of the nation have been forced by the pressure of facts to neglect appeals to religion, and to cry out for assistance of a purely mundane character. If the world had been made up of Freethinkers, religion could not have been treated in a more contemptuous manner—only if the world had been made up of Freethinkers there would most probably have been no war at all.

But one must not expect the clergy to submit tamely to this state of affairs. Somehow or other some evidence in support of religion must be found, is, obviously, the business of the clergy to provide this evidence, and some have risen to the occasion. In this matter first place must be given to Dr. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead. Dr. Horton does not possess the natural and irredeemable stupidity of a man such as the Bishop of London; on the contrary, he possesses considerable native ability. But where purely religious matters are concerned he possesses an almost miraculous capacity for believing things that to all other anyone else would fail to command consideration for a moment. Thus, in a recent sermon at Manchester, he told his audience that "now and again a wounded man on the field is conscious of a comrade in white coming with help, and even delivering him." And then, becoming more precise:—

"I had news from the Dardanelles last week but one. A sailor on one of our transport ships told me in the simplest language how airships of the enemy came over the troopship dropping bombs. The captain, who is a man of God, gave the order to the men to pray. They knelt on the deck and prayed, and the Lord delivered them. The eighteen bombs, which seemed to be falling from overhead, fell harmlessly into the sea."

It is very regrettable that this incident escaped notice in the official despatches. A shipload of troops ordered on their knees to pray while bombs were being dropped, and the bombs being miraculously deflected on account of their prayers, must have formed a striking tableau. And it is precise enough. Even the number of bombs were counted. That, as Pook-Bab says, gives an air of verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. The wonder is that it escaped notice, or that other captains did not adopt the same precautions. This inattention is more than surprising, it is criminal. If

the landing of the troops had been covered by prayers instead of by battleships, our terrible losses might have been avoided. One even feels that this unnamed captain, "who is a man of God," deserves censure for not praying for the safety of the rest of the vessels engaged. It would be as easy for prayer to deflect shells as to deflect bombs. At any rate, it is the plain duty of Dr. Horton to report the matter to the Admiralty, so that all the captains when they see the enemy will fall on their knees and pray, and so avoid future casualties.

There is another story of miraculous intervention afloat, not originated by Dr. Horton, although he stands sponsor for its truth. This other story, he says, has been "repeated by so many witnesses that if anything can be established by contemporary evidence, it is established," and he adopts it without further parley. For several reasons this story deserves more detailed treatment. It has been circumstantially related in a parish magazine published at Clifton, and republished in religious newspapers. The Vicar of Clifton reports that it has made his magazine quite famous. And now the whole thing has Dr. Horton's endorsement, who believes it to be thoroughly established by contemporary evidence.

This story—very briefly put—runs that during the retreat from Mons our left wing was in danger of annihilation. This we already knew, but the public has been under the impression that this danger was averted by the dogged fighting of our "Tommies." That, however, is untrue. The Germans were within reach of a crushing victory. Our men "expected annihilation, as they were almost helpless," when, to their amazement, the Germans "stood like dazed men, never so much as touched their guns, nor stirred till we had turned and escaped by some crossroads." What had saved them? Nothing less than a troop of angels! The British, the Germans, even the horses saw them. There is no doubt of it. One man might be deceived, but two whole armies—including the horses! Deception is clearly impossible.

And here is the contemporary evidence. "Miss M." (it is probably modesty that conceals the name) knew two officers, both of whom had seen the angels. One of these men was not religious, but "he has been a changed man ever since." That I can easily believe. If I saw a troop of angels it would change me—the sight of even one might do it. The other man Miss M. met in London. She asked him had he heard the story of the angels? He replied that he had himself seen them, and that they saved the left wing.

Miss M. repeats the story told her by friends. The Vicar of All Saints, who issues the magazine, says the story appears to him quite probable, and gives what he says is "an extract from an officer's letter"—the officer being, as usual, unnamed:—

"I myself saw the angels who saved our left wing from the Germans during the retreat from Mons. We heard the German cavalry tearing after us, and ran for a place where we thought a stand could be made with some hope of safety, but before we could reach it they were upon us. We turned and faced the enemy, expecting instant death. When to our wonder we saw between us and the enemy a whole troop of angels; the horses of the Germans turned round, frightened out of their senses; they regularly stampeded, the men tugging at their bridles, while the horses tore away in every direction from our men. Evidently the horses

saw the angels as plainly as we did, and the delay gave us time to reach a place of safety."

Another piece of evidence is from "a more unexpected source." A captain in charge of German prisoners states that the Germans say it is no use to fight the English, for at Mons "there were people fighting for them, that they saw angels above and in front of the lines, also that it is happening at Ypres."

This is the only evidence offered—two men unnamed, the stories first told to an unknown "Miss M.," afterwards made to appear as *written* statements, and then, with Dr. Horton, repeated by "many witnesses," and seen by "our men." That is a very suggestive elaboration, and there are aspects of it which I reserve for future treatment; for, ridiculous as the whole thing is, it is interesting, and even valuable, as a contribution to religious psychology. Thousands of simple Christians will have read Dr. Horton's statement that the "angelic guard" is a proven fact, and will accept it on his authority, without knowing that it rests on no better evidence than the alleged statements of two unknown officers to an equally unknown young lady. And not knowing this, they will hardly realise that Dr. Horton's story of information received by him from an anonymous sailor concerning a similar miracle in the Dardanelles is a piece of sheer invention. If Dr. Horton had not read the one story, he would never have told the other.

And now comes the cream of the joke, the climax of the story. In the *Evening News* of June 17, that well known writer, Mr. Arthur Machen, gives his account of the "angelic guard." Mr. Machen very plainly, very definitely, claims the authorship. He wrote the account as early as last September. He did not get it from two officers; he was not told of it by "Miss M."; he never heard German prisoners relating it with trembling lips; he didn't even get it from the horses. He had, he says, heard no kind or sort of rumor of any "spiritual intervention during the retreat from Mons." He simply *invented* it. Mr. Machen took an idea that is as old as superstition itself, and fitted it to the new circumstances. He imagined the British troops in sore distress, and one of our soldiers praying to St. George for help. And St. George brings up the ghosts of the archers at Agincourt, and annihilates the Germans with their ghostly arrows. Mr. Machen wrote it as a legend; it was "invention as much as any story can be invention." And he never expected anyone to take it seriously.

But Mr. Machen reckoned without the Vicar of All Saints and Dr. Horton, and the inventiveness of the clergy generally. It was too good a chance to be lost. The story sounded all right—to religious ears—and it was quite easy to supply the "evidence." It is so easy to cite communications from "an officer," or a "soldier," or a "sailor," or a "correspondent." We have seen the same kind of thing brought forward in support of death-bed conversion to Christianity and the like. Nothing seems to stop these people playing the same game over and over again, and of course nothing ever induces them to say they are wrong. Dr. Horton will not publicly recant—all he said when taxed by Mr. Machen was that such a story was "eminently credible." And the Vicar of Clifton says the same. Neither faced the fact that this particular story was a *lie*; that the angel-observing officers and German prisoners were pure myths—so were the horses who tugged frantically at their bridles to escape. Mr. Machen invented the story, and never intended that it should be accepted as anything but an invention. But then came the turn of the clergy. They invented all the evidence for it, and never intended that people should find out it was not the truth. They have not said they are sorry they circulated the falsehood; probably they don't feel sorry either. Their only regret is at being found out.

Both the Vicar of Clifton and Dr. Horton offer a sort of an apology for the story, and with this I will deal next week.

C. COHEN.

Christian Hypocrisy.

ACCORDING to the teaching of the Christian Church there are two types of man, of wisdom, and knowledge, namely, the lower and the higher, the natural and the spiritual. The chief characteristic of the natural man is that the spiritual man is wholly unintelligible to him because he lacks the higher wisdom and knowledge. The apostle Paul claimed to be a spiritual man, and regarded all who could not make that claim as beings belonging to a totally different category. His words are delightfully void of ambiguity:—

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The expression "receiveth not" is equivalent to "rejecteth," and the rejection is due to utter inability to receive. If the apostle's words mean anything, then, they clearly convey, or at least imply, the idea that the natural man is not in the least blameworthy for his denial of spiritual things, because for him, in his present state, they are non-existent. Paul knew them because they had been revealed to him through the Spirit. So far as the natural man was concerned, he spoke an unknown tongue. Even the very words he employed had been taught him, not by man's wisdom, but by the wisdom that cometh from above. He had received, "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God," in consequence of which reception he knew "the things that have been freely given to us by God." To the carnal-minded, such as most of the Corinthians were, they seemed absurd, being unintelligible. The inevitable inference from Paul's language is that the spiritual man occupies a higher plane of existence—is, in fact, a sort of Superman who sits in judgment upon all alike, but denies the right of anybody to pronounce judgment upon him.

Now, it was to the spiritual man that the Gospel Jesus made his supreme appeal. He adopted the parabolical form of teaching on purpose to prevent the natural man from understanding him. His words of spiritual wisdom were intended alone for the supernaturally initiated. His teaching was addressed to the twelve disciples, to whom he said:—

"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the crowd outside] it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt. xiii. 11-13).

The Sermon on the Mount, as given in Matthew's Gospel, was delivered to a chosen few. Bishop Grosvenor admits this when he says: "Our Lord went up into the mountain to get away from the multitudes, and thither he was followed by his chosen disciples, and it is to them that the Sermon is uttered." In other words, the Sermon on the Mount enunciates the moral law of the kingdom of heaven, or the rules by which Christians are expected to live. Bishop Grosvenor flatly contradicts Bernhardt when he declares that "it is a law not for individual consciences, but for the society—a law which, recognised and accepted by the individual conscience, is to be applied in order to establish a new social order" (*The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 3). Let us now take two remarkable sayings found in this unique discourse, the first being "Resist not evil," and the second, "Love your enemies." As we are aware, the Friends take these sayings as they stand, and treat them as authoritative. Count Tolstoy so regarded them, and retired from the Russian Army and was excommunicated from the Russian Church. A few clergymen belonging to different denominations, accept them in their plain, uninterpreted meaning, and have had to resign their respective pastorates. But the overwhelming majority of divines decline to take these

as they stand, or to regard them as applicable to life under existing conditions. The Rev. Arthur Pringle, in an article in the *Christian World* for June 17, admits that "love and mercy are the essence of Christianity," and that "they are, as commonly understood, the negation of war"; but he maintains that "there, at the moment, is for Christians the problem of problems." The problem is introduced, however, by the natural man, by his very discussion of which he seeks to perplex and confuse the spiritual man. The essence of discipleship is unquestioning, absolute submission to the Master. "If a man love me," says the Gospel Jesus, "he will keep my word." Consulting the dictionary, we find that Christendom is that portion of the world in which Christianity prevails, or which is governed under Christian institutions, in distinction from Heathen or Mohammedan lands. In other words, Christendom is the abode of spiritual men and women, whose one duty is to render unqualified obedience to Christ. With one exception, all the Powers directly concerned in the War are professedly Christian, to which the laws of the kingdom of heaven are most truly applicable. The inhabitants of Christendom are brothers and sisters in Christ, who are called upon to love one another as Christ is said to have loved all mankind when he died for their salvation. Unfortunately, however, Christendom is engaged upon the bloodiest war in all history, and Mr. Pringle wants us to believe that "love and mercy, in the distinctive Christian sense mark well the clause in italics], are by no means incompatible with righteous war." That is one of the most sophistical sentences ever written. If we believe the New Testament, love and mercy, "in the distinctive Christian sense," indicate a disposition to sacrifice self for the good of the world, to sink the individual in the service of the community, to lose the life of a part in order to find it enriched and glorified in that of the whole.

Is there, has there ever been, such a thing as "righteous war"? If we consider the question in the light of the New Testament, the answer must be emphatically in the negative. All war between brothers is a gross violation of justice. Loyalty to their common Lord and Master binds them to a life of love and harmony among themselves, and necessitates their appealing to him to guide them to a peaceful disposition of any disputes that may arise between them. But Mr. Pringle argues that if we really love the Germans we must fight them, that the faults of their character may be washed out in blood. In the present crisis, he tells us, an attitude of "non-resistance would be essentially unchristian, because it would, in the deepest sense, be disastrous to Germany herself." The reverend gentleman is nervously concerned about the probable consequences of non-resistance, forgetting that for genuine disciples of the Lamb the question of consequences has no legitimate meaning. "Their's not to make reply, their's not to reason why," their's but to obey and scorn the consequences, their's but to put their trust in their Lord, confident that he is ever mindful of his own.

Mr. Pringle writes exactly as if God had nothing to do or say in the War. It never occurs to him to mention even the possibility of supernatural intervention. He takes two things for granted, namely, that Germany is hopelessly in the wrong, and that the Allies must conquer her by force of arms. Listen:—

"The Christian must first ask himself whether it is right to fight at all; but, that once settled, there is nothing for it but the whole heart and every ounce of strength. That is the real mercy to Germany, for only so can come her awakening and the recovery of her truer self."

Here is a Christian minister arguing like an Atheist, while ignoring all the great principles which are dearer than life to a genuine Atheist's heart. Mr. Pringle leaves God completely out of the account, and speaks as if the result depended entirely upon the numbers, enthusiasm, and skill of the fighters. Though certain kinds of retaliation are unthinkable

on our part, yet the men of God will not, "in the name of Christ, convey to our fighting men any kind of disabling hesitancy, suggesting that it is religious to go into battle with kid gloves on." That is to say, the soldiers are to strip themselves of their Christianity, hang it on the nearest peg, and go forth to battle with the sole determination to crush their enemies at whatever cost. That is the only way, Mr. Pringle tells us, by which the Christian duty of mercy can be related to the present situation, and that is the only way by which the Allies can hope to be victorious. Sir William Robertson Nicoll wrote in precisely the same spirit in his leading article, entitled "The Next Three Months," in the *British Weekly*. Sir William professes to be a strong believer in the efficacy of prayer, and has been sedulously urging his readers to ask God for a speedy victory to our cause, which he claims is just; but in the article just mentioned his attitude is one of absolute faith in high explosive shells, and of no faith at all in Heaven's intervention on behalf of the right. He does not say in so many words, like Bernhardt, that might is right, but he does most effectively produce the impression that right can only be established by might.

The only possible conclusion is that Christian hypocrisy has been brought into greater prominence by the War than by any other event for many generations. In theory, God is King for ever, Christendom is Christ's proudest possession, and the Cross is everywhere triumphant; but in practice, God has been superseded by the Devil, Christendom is at the mercy of the powers of darkness, and the triumph of the Cross is merely an object of hope. This is hypocrisy in the plenitude of its shameless audacity. On their knees Christians repeat with fervor the exploded myth, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"; but on their feet, face to face with stupendous danger, their cry is for shells, unlimited high explosive shells, or in three months we perish. Being at war, we agree with what they now say on their feet, and can only laugh to scorn what they used to say on their knees eight and nine months ago. Prayer does absolutely nothing, while might, power, rightly guided and in sufficient quantity, does everything. And, alas, during this War between Christian nations, the voice of reason and humanity is being persistently stifled.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Villain of the Piece.

"He stalks up and down like a peacock."—TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

"And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With old odd ends stolen forth of Holy Writ;
And seem a saint when most I play the devil."

—KING RICHARD III.

THE Kaiser is easily the best-hated man in the world. He is a king after Charles the First's own heart, the last that is left, the residuary legatee of the divine right. He is an autocrat struggling against democracy. The divinity of the White Tsar has been limited by the Nihilists, but the Kaiser still associates Providence with his rule, still invokes God as the witness of his authority. Democracy, which has frightened all the rest of the monarchs, crouches quietly at the base of his throne. Some day the divine right will no longer avail, and either he or a successor will unpack sadly, in a foreign hotel, from an exile's handbag, the battered crown of Germany.

A country which builds upon a nonsensical superstition will rue it, sooner or later. If there is one thing certain about Germany it is that it acquiesces in this divine right of kings. Near a hundred years ago, Shelley pointed the finger of scorn at "King deluded Germany," and to-day that country is involved in a world-war by a neurotic monarch who holds himself as an instrument of God divinely appointed to the task of establishing Teutonic supremacy throughout the world. "There is only one master in this country. That is I," he said arro-

gantly, "who opposes me I shall crush in pieces." It is the language of Tamerlane—or that of a megalomaniac obsessed to the point of self-deification.

The Kaiser is fond of referring to his great ancestor, Frederic the Great. William II. is the ninth King of Prussia, and Frederic II. was the third. There the resemblance ends. Dining with Queen Victoria, after the publication of his history, Macaulay said, "the Queen talked about her poor ancestor, James the Second." "Not your Majesty's ancestor," replied Macaulay, "but your predecessor." William the Second does not descend directly from Frederic, but from the great King's nephew, Frederic William, surnamed "the fat," who succeeded him, and allowed the Prussian Army to fall into such a bad state as afterwards to become an easy prey to Napoleon at Jena.

As for William's "sainted grandsire," he was, to use Bismarck's caustic phrase, "a lathe painted to look like iron." His mental processes were slow, and not in the least bit clever, like so many present-day politicians. It is said that, whereas Bismarck required the largest sized hat, his Imperial master was accommodated with one that would have fitted a schoolboy. The present Kaiser's versatility came to him through his mother, the Princess Royal of England, and the daughter of Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, the consort of Queen Victoria, and one of the most cultured men of his time.

There is often a fly in the ointment, and it has always been the Kaiser's wish to be not German Emperor, but the Emperor of Germany. But he found the other Teuton princes less amenable than the democracy of his nation, and he remains to-day the uncrowned German Emperor, not the crowned Emperor of Germany. When the subject was discussed in the presence of Bismarck, the statesman said, "Sausage is sausage, whatever the name." He had made a nation in twenty years, and was indifferent to titles.

Naturally, such a man as the Kaiser brooks no rivals. When he ascended the throne, the mighty figure of Bismarck dwarfed him, and the great statesman had to go back sadly to the fields and woodlands of Friedrichsruhe. Yet the revelations of the Moltke-Harden trial showed that the "God-inspired" Emperor was the puppet of the subtlest and most insidious of influences.

Maybe this terrible European War will awaken the intellectual conscience of Germany. It is inconceivable that all Germans actually share in the mediæval superstitions of their Kaiser. The Socialists claim to command three and a-half million votes, and even the millions of Roman Catholics can scarcely believe in the divine calling and election of a heretic Hohenzollern. Sooner or later the delusion must pass. There was once a people that proclaimed themselves the elect of God, but the logic of events has proved that God has not elected them, nor preferred them, seeing that they were forsaken, dispersed throughout the world, penned in ghettos like wild animals, their houses marked as of those infected with a plague. At a great disaster, whether it be inflicted by the allied armies in Europe, or by the people in the streets of Berlin, Germans may see that this much-vaunted alliance with God was but the trick of a wily despot.

However much of a king he may be, the Kaiser has proved himself an infamous man. He might have spoken the word that would have saved Belgium from martyrdom; he might have spared the innocent children on the *Lusitania*, and in the coast-towns of England. He might have conducted the War in such a spirit that his name should not have become a hiss and byword throughout the civilised world. Even the splendor of victory cannot comfort a man overshadowed with the crowning dishonors of his soldiers.

Napoleon passed through Europe like a tempest, but wherever he passed the political and social air was left cleaner and better. For many years he was our incessant and untiring foe, but he fought us in such a way that Englishmen can hang his portrait in

their houses, and stand with reverence by the tomb in the Invalides. The Kaiser has notoriously failed in character; witness his petulant fury, which he had such hideously tragic results. Germany would be immeasurably better without such a monarch—

"Beneath whose ignorant reign
Arts, culture, reverence, honor, all things fade,
Save treason and the dagger of her trade,
And murder with his silent bloody feet."

MIMNERMOS

Science and the Bible.—IV.

(Continued from p. 395.)

"There have been *Aids to Faith* produced lately, and *Replies to the Seven Essayists, Answers to Colenso*, and many else of the kind. We regret to say that they have done little for us. The very life of our souls is at issue in the questions which have been raised, and we are fed with the professional commonplaces of the members of a close guild, men holding high office in the Church, or expecting to hold high office there; in either case with a strong temporal interest in the defence of the institution which they represent. We desire to know what those of the clergy think whose love of truth is unconnected with their prospects in life; we desire to know what the educated laymen, the lawyers, the historians, the men of science, the statesmen think; and these are for the most part silent, or confess themselves modestly uncertain. The professional theologians alone are loud and confident; but they speak in the old angry tone which usually accompanies deep and wise convictions. They do not claim victories over adversaries with whom they have crossed swords, and leap to conclusions with a precipitancy at which we can only smile. It has been the unhappy manner of their class from immemorial time; they call zeal for the Lord, as if it were beyond all doubt that they were on God's side—as if serious inquiry after truth were something which they were entitled to resent. They treat intellectual difficulties as if they deserved rather to be condemned and punished than considered and weighed, and rather stop their ears and run with one accord upon anyone who disagrees with them than listen patiently to what he has to say."—A. J. FROUDE, *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (1867), vol. i., pp. 210-11.

A MULTITUDE of works now appeared attacking and condemning the science of geology as a whole, and the "Uniformitarian" theory in particular. The Rev. Mellor Brown, in his *Reflections on Geology*, for instance, declared that geological investigations were not "subjects of lawful inquiry,—shrouded from us by a higher power," to be reckoned "a dark and dangerous and disreputable," and that "events which took place before the birth of man, or the date of revelation, belong to a forbidden province." We have already noticed the diatribe against the geologists of the Rev. Henry Cole. Other works of a similar kind were *Strictures on Geology and Astronomy*, by the Rev. R. Wilson; *Scriptural Geology*, by Mr. Young; *Scripture and Geology*, by Fairholme; *Mosaic and Mosaic Geologies*, by Granville Penn; and a host of others.

As Sir Archibald Geikie, the Director-General of the Geological Survey, well says:—

"For many long centuries the advance of inquiry into such matters was arrested by the paramount influence of orthodox theology. It was not merely that the Church opposed itself to the simple and obvious interpretation of these natural phenomena. So implicit was faith become in the accepted views of the earth's age and of the history of creation, that even laymen of intelligence and learning set themselves unbidden and in perfect good faith to explain away the difficulties which Nature so persistently raised up, and to reconcile her teachings with those of the theologians. In the various theories thus originating, the amount of knowledge of natural law usually stood in inverse ratio to the share played in them by an uncontrolled imagination. The speculations, for example, of Burnet, Whitehurst, and others in this country, cannot be read now without a smile. In no sense were they scientific researches; they can only be looked upon as essential manifestations of learned ignorance. Springing mainly out of a laudable desire to promote what was believed to be the cause of true religion, they helped to retard inquiry and exercised in that respect a baneful influence on intellectual progress."†

* Cited by J. P. Smith, *Scripture and Geology* (1890), p. 106.
† Sir A. Geikie, Presidential Address to the British Association, 1892. *Nature*, Aug. 4, 1892; p. 319.

Although a lecturer had been appointed at Cambridge, out of the funds provided by the will of Dr. John Woodward, dated 1727, no systematic courses in geology were given before 1818, when Sedgwick was chosen as Professor. "At that time," says H. B. Woodward, in his *History of Geology*, "the science of geology was looked upon as dangerous and suspicious" (p. 12).

Hutton, the founder of the "Uniformitarian" theory, died in 1797. As we have seen, his views were condemned because they did not agree with the Bible; added to which, like many other men of genius, he possessed a literary style "which," says Sir Archibald Geikie, "it must be admitted was singularly unattractive," and many years might have elapsed before his work obtained recognition but for his friend and disciple, John Playfair, a man of genius in no way inferior to Hutton himself, who at once set about drawing up an exposition of Hutton's views. After five years' labor he published it, in 1802, under the title, *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth*—"a work," says Sir Archibald Geikie, "which, for luminous treatment and graceful exposition, stands still without a rival in English geological literature."* The doctrines of Hutton were strongly supported by Sir James Hall, who has been regarded as the founder of experimental geology; and when Robert Jameson, who upheld the doctrines of Werner, and founded the Wernerian Society, went over to Hutton's views, the tide began to turn, and the "Catastrophic" theory of Werner began to decline.

All the while the science of geology was growing, the strata of the earth were being examined in all parts of the world; and as the facts were recorded, it soon became evident that by no manipulation could the new discoveries be made to harmonise with Genesis if that book was read in its plain and natural sense. The discrepancies were so glaring that the wiser heads saw that to continue to insist on the scientific accuracy of Genesis, and to demand that scientists should adjust their facts and theories to fit that antique fable, was simply to court disaster. So the conflict started on a new phase.

Instead of insisting that geologists should alter their facts to suit the Bible, the meaning of the Bible was altered to suit the facts. This was the work of the reconcilers, and may be said, roughly, to have lasted from the beginning to the middle of the nineteenth century. There are a few belated reconcilers to be met with to-day, as there are even now men who believe the earth to be flat, but they have no influence, and are regarded by the educated as cranks.

However, the first reconcilers were by no means fools or cranks; there were some really able men among them like Dr. John Pye Smith; Professor Edward Hitchcock, who was a Professor of Theology and Geology; Hugh Miller, himself a geologist, who made valuable contributions to the science itself; Joseph Le Conte, Chalmers and Buckland, and a host of lesser men. The fact is that the belief in the Bible as the Word of God had been so drilled into them during their youth that they were incapable of liberating themselves from its influence when confronted with the new facts of the growing science, and, rather than give it up, they began to play fast and loose with the meaning of the words. The value of their contributions may be judged by the fact that not one of this host of books has survived to circulate in our time. No sane man would attempt to reprint any of them. They moulder on library walls—on the top shelves—and eventually find their way into the twopenny-box of the second-hand bookshop. Professor Huxley reserved a corner of his library for these and similar theological works, which, with grim humor, he named "the condemned cell."

It is pitiful to see the expedients to which these reconcilers are reduced in their struggles to overcome the contradictions between the Bible and

Science. If similar methods of interpretation were applied to mercantile transactions, there would be an end to all morality; business would come to a standstill, for no one could tell what interpretation another would put on the words of any bond or document signed in any transaction.

More deplorable still is the waste of valuable time involved in the attempt to accommodate fact to fiction. Professor Hitchcock, for instance, in his attempted reconciliation of geology and the Bible, *Religion of Geology*, after pointing out that "All plants," even "the most perfect, are represented as created a day before the sun," observes:—

"Our physiology cannot see how they could flourish without that luminary..... Besides, we know that the most perfect plants were not introduced, save very sparingly, till quite recent geological periods. Again, reptiles are represented as appearing not till the fifth day, whereas geology teaches us that they were on the globe as early as the Devonian period. Once more, no animals, according to Genesis, were created till the fifth day; whereas geology shows us their remains mixed with the oldest plants" (p. 330).

And he frankly confesses, "Now, I know not how to reconcile these facts with the doctrine that Moses intended in these events to follow a precise, chronological order." For, as he further remarks, "I cannot believe that any man of unbiassed judgment can read that account [in Genesis] and not feel that Moses is writing a literal history," and "to be told that he understood the word *day* to be a period of indefinite length, and meant his readers so to understand it, seems so discrepant to the whole character of the record, that it greatly troubles the honest inquirer." He thinks the best way is to treat the statement as symbolical—

"That is, we may take the terms in a literal sense, until science shows us that they are insufficient, and then we are allowed to expand them as far as is necessary. It may be doubtful whether Moses had any idea beyond the literal sense, just as was probably sometimes the case with the prophets. Yet subsequent discoveries make a wide expansion of the term *day* quite natural. Moreover, by regarding the account as a literal one, and the days natural ones, the sanction of the Sabbath is preserved in all its force to those unacquainted with geology, and retained symbolically to those acquainted with it. If the literal day in the Mosaic account may symbolise one ten years long, it may one ten millions of years. Here, then, is a field wide enough for the amplest demands of geology" (p. 331).

That is to say, we may take the account in Genesis in a literal sense, as meaning exactly what it says, when it can be made to agree with science; but when science contradicts it, and proves it false, then it may be read symbolically, and we may attach any meaning we like to the words. So that those unacquainted with geology can go on believing in the old way, and by those better instructed it may be retained symbolically. And yet Protestants are never tired of denouncing the Jesuits for using language in the same manner. It is yet another example of how religion warps and degrades even the finest natures.

Further on, the same writer notices a most "formidable geological objection" to expanding the days into long periods; for the second chapter of Genesis "teaches that it had not rained on the earth till the third day; a statement not very improbable if the days were twenty-four hours, but incredible if they were each tens of thousands of years" (p. 333), but concludes that, on the whole, the symbolical theory "comes nearer to what I have been groping after for the last twenty years, than anything I have seen. It does not, indeed, form a perfect system; and this, with many scientific minds, will be a sufficient reason for its rejection" (p. 334). What a confession! After twenty years of struggling to reconcile Genesis and Geology, that is the pitiful result!

Hugh Miller was another who wasted his intellect and sacrificed his life—for he shot himself with a pistol—in the same vain endeavor.

Hugh Miller, originally a stonemason, educated himself, acquired an admirable command of the

* *Nature*, Aug. 4, 1862; p. 317.

English language, distinguished himself as a scientific geologist, and became the editor of the *Witness* newspaper as the organ of the Free Church. The great work of his life, according to the obituary notice that appeared in the *Witness*, December 27, 1856, from the pen of his reverend biographer, was "to illustrate the perfect harmony of all that science tells us of the physical history and structure of our globe, with all that the Bible tells us of the creation and government of this earth by and through Jesus Christ our Lord." We are told—

"that he wrought at a work, entitled *The Testimony of the Rocks*, too eagerly. Hours after midnight the light was seen to glimmer through the window of that room which, within the same eventful week, was to witness the close of the volume, and the close of the writer's life. This overworking of the brain began to tell upon his mental health."

He said to his medical adviser, "My brain is giving way; I cannot put two thoughts together to-day: I have had a dreadful night of it." After leaving a short note for his wife, he shot himself through the chest with a pistol. His reverend biographer observes:—

"His very intellect, his reason,—God's most precious gift,—a gift dearer than life,—perished in the great endeavor to harmonise the works and word of the Eternal. A most inscrutable event, that such an intellect should have been suffered to go to wreck through too eager a prosecution of such a work!"*

Did Hugh Miller, in despair at the impossibility of making the geological record and the Bible agree, seek refuge in a suicide's grave?

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Wild Poppies.

I SEE it suddenly among the slag and coltsfoot weeds this simple, fragile flower of June, this poetry and enchantment of the fields of corn, this most essential sweetness and beauty of the earth; red but not for war, regal but not for rule; a note of calm, quiet, modest splendor in the dusk and breathless morning air, the very atmosphere and smile of love. Roughness is all around, and force and rudeness shake the world, agonising in the shock of mental and material conflict. But beauty is stronger, peace is powerful, hope is eternal, love immortal. The great machinery of nature moves ever onward as before, from all time to all time; the millennium is a dream, a folly, a superstition, an impossible armistice that nature, time, and eternity can never know. The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they must ever grind, and all that live must die; but all should, and all might, taste the exquisite happiness of life in the eternal Here and Now. It lies with us all to learn the lesson of the leaves from joyous whispers of the leafy month of June. The shadows fall, 'tis but the tranquil setting of the sun. The season ends, 'tis but the ripe August of existence.

Death gives the value to life. Were there no death there would be no life, no contrast, light and shade; only eternal, intolerable monotony. And so life is sweet, precious, real, and earnest; infinitely richer than man in general has yet realised. Our heaven is here, if anywhere. Let's take the cash and let the credit go. And when the sick world groans in travail be thou its comforter. First heal thyself, oh, man! and then, like the all-glorious sun, thou canst not fail to light and lead the world. Thou sittest in some rustic seat, some summer twilight eve, the soft, soothing arms of the Great Mother all about thee, thou art soothed, thou art healed:—

The breathing boughs above thee sway and nod,
And fading fears reveal a kindly God—
Or none at all; still sacred is the sod—
From thy hurt mind falls superstition's load.

This also is faith. This is the "unfaltering trust." Natural religion if you like. The religion of life and love. And it is sufficient.

I wish our chief could come out again and see the poppies bloom, the children play. How well he loved these simple things in fugitive glimpses of his more strenuous toil. We have written to salute him in his sickbed or his convalescent chair. Life goes not too smoothly, especially with the best. The contemporary world at large is cold, indifferent,

* The particulars concerning Hugh Miller, including the extracts from the *Witness*, are taken from *Religion and Science*, by George Combe; 1872.

or ungrateful to those who love it best and help it most. Our hero oft may long for rest, but we might say to him: Hamlet's phrase:—

"Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell our story."

And to him who, in the leader's absence, directs the less of reason, we would say, be of good cheer; the stream of progress is but stemmed, diverted for a moment. Such a principle is flowing deep and strong—never stronger, deeper than at the present moment. The poppies will go, but ere the poppies will return. There is beauty in the heart of humanity, and the worst is but the popped sleep.

A. MILLAR.

Correspondence.

BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—One can intelligently confirm the statement made in "Acid Drops" of June 6, "Belief in the supernatural is slowly dying out everywhere." Will you permit me to amplify the next statement?—"Spiritualism is not necessarily a form of that belief, many Spiritualists being avowed disbelievers in the Christian religion."

I know many Spiritualists, some intimately. These so-called spiritualistic phenomena are really and truly natural, not "supernatural." My friends say all "happenings" are due to the operations of "little-known laws."

With a few exceptions, the so-called founder of the Christian religion is looked upon as a mystic and as a religious reformer. The miracles are generally regarded as religious events. Jesus is considered by my friends to have obtained a special education among the Essenes, who well understood these "little-known laws." Hence the miracles of Jesus are natural, not supernatural.

Personally, I have as good a reason to believe in the existence of psychics as I have of physics. But I have not the slightest reason for calling such supernatural.

W. H. SHARPLES.

MRS. HARRIET LAW.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was very much pleased to see such an appreciative account of Mrs. Law, from the pen of Mr. Moss, in the *Freethinker* the other week. In the *Dictionary of Freethinkers* she is accorded something less than three lines, which is out of all proportion to the vast amount of work she did—at a time, too, when the pathway of Freethought propaganda was much rougher than it is to-day. Mr. Moss is evidently wrong in his dates respecting the *Secular Chronicle*. The first number appeared in August, 1872, and was edited for the first few years of its existence by Mr. Reddalls, of Birmingham. I never had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Reddalls, but I have heard the old Northampton Freethinkers speak most affectionately of him. It appears he frequently visited Northampton for lecturing purposes. He was a most able and earnest advocate of Freethought. I have been told that it was the hard work he put into the movement brought about his early death. He died not long soon, when he was but about twenty-eight years of age. Mrs. Law then took charge of the *Secular Chronicle*, which existed till about 1879. I heard her lecture two or three times, and the thought of them even now is a pleasant memory. She also compiled a small volume of Freethought songs and readings, of which I am proud to possess a copy. Many times have I wondered whether she were still alive. Now I hear she is dead, I am curious to know the date of her decease.

A. G. B.

The Moors in Spain, who conferred priceless benefits on the modern world, and kept the torch of civilisation alive in Europe in the blackest depths of the Dark Ages, have received no thanks from Western men. What schooling has ever heard of the Kalif Chakam, patron of letters, zealous education, founder of schools, universities, libraries, Moslem though he was, anticipator by eight centuries of the ideas of toleration and intellectual freedom which Europe won eventually by blood and tears? It is the irony of fate that not one of the countless numbers of students and learned men who flocked to his Court and repaid their debt by saving his name from oblivion.

Comments of Bagshot (Wayfarers' Library).

Acid Drops.

The Archbishop of Canterbury thinks that when the War is over people will view life from a new and altogether different angle. This is probable; but we do not see on what grounds the Archbishop assumes that this angle will be favorable to Christianity. This is not the war of a Christian country against a non-Christian Power. Were that the case, it would be easy for the clergy to turn the attention to their own advantage, as was done when the Balkan States were fighting Turkey. But in the present instance it is a Christian quarrel, and not alone were Christian influences unable to prevent the War, but since it commenced the Christian Churches have shown themselves absolutely powerless to exert any influence for good or in favor of peace. Protestants have complained that the Pope, as head of one of the greatest of the Christian Churches, has failed to induce his followers to even play the game within the limits of certain recognised rules. This is quite true; but it is none the less true of all the other Christian Churches. Not one of them can be said to have exerted any restraining or beneficent influence over the belligerents. And more striking still is the undeniable fact that nowhere has any large section of the public expected the Churches to exercise influence. When war became a fact—as in the case of other great crises—the Churches were by common consent brushed on one side as being of no consequence whatsoever. Ministers of religion might continue to mouth their abboleths, and from long practice people might listen and approve, but that was all. As a vital power for good in national life, the Churches have shown not the slightest influence. And, most significant of all, nobody appears surprised at their impotence.

How, then, can the War change the angle of men's vision in such a manner as to make it more favorable to Christianity? With all the slowness of the public to master the obvious, some must realise that a war such as this, between peoples nurtured in the same faith, demonstrates the powerlessness of that religion for peaceful progress. And however small this number may be, that number will represent a loss to Christianity. And a lesson that a large number is likely to learn will be that of the necessity for effective social organisation. That, indeed, is the secret of Germany's strength. It is not mere militarism that makes Germany a danger to Europe. It is the social organisation of Europe devoted to a military purpose that makes it a danger to civilisation. And the great problem before the world when the War is over will be that of securing the same efficiency of social organisation through the military control or the militarist inspiration. What once seen, militarism is not the only thing that bids to suffer. Its age-long and organic ally, religion, will be bound to suffer likewise. Religion and militarism, if not born together, have always lived together, and one is not likely to long survive the other.

For our part, we look forward to but few benefits following this War, or, indeed, any war. There may be a worse thing than even war, but it is tolerably certain that war brings little but evil in its train, even though by making war we avoid greater evils. Every war is more or less fatal to progressive ideas, and every war leaves the conservative elements in a country more firmly entrenched than it found them. Peterloo followed Waterloo, and fear of France was the most powerful ally that tyranny and stupidity had in the country in the repressive and retrogressive legislation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And it is evidence of the real value of Christianity that it is left for Freethinkers to point out that you cannot end war by the whip.

Further, the price that the world is paying for this War is a peculiarly heavy one. A great deal has been written—with full justification—about the wastage of this War. But these calculations appear to have been exclusively concerned with the loss of lives, or of trade, or of wage-earning capacity—all things that could be placed before us in tables of figures more or less imposing. But, indeed, it is not the loss of trade, or of wages, or even of life that is the most serious feature of this War. Trade will soon recover, loss of wages will soon be made good, and human fecundity will soon fill the gaps made by war, and so gladden the hearts of those who count the quantity of more importance than quality. The world's most important loss is in quite another direction.

Consider that in this country we have under arms the largest body of men that we have ever sent to war. We are

not referring to physical fitness, but to mental and moral fitness. The call of this War has been such that it has brought into the Army some of the best of the nation's brains and character. A large number of those enlisting hate war and all that war implies. They have been moved to enlist from a sheer sense of duty. For the first time war may be said to have captured, not only those who love it or who have no great objection to it, but also those who hate it. It has captured a large proportion of the youthful thinkers of the nation. The same is true even of conscript countries, for the size of the armies engaged has prevented anybody escaping. The present War is not a war of armies, it is a war of nations.

Now, these men—the scientists, the men of letters, the artists,—in a word, the thinkers of France, of Britain, of Germany, and of elsewhere—represent an environmental influence the value of which cannot be calculated, but which it would be difficult to overestimate. They are an important part of the environmental influence of the rising generation, and, above all, that part which makes for progress and genuine civilisation. And just so many as are killed during the War represents a weakening of the forces that make for a genuinely higher life. Other wars have had a weakening effect on the progressive life of a nation, but the world has never yet seen a war that threatens to exact so heavy a penalty as this one. The tendency of war is always to eliminate the physically fit. This War threatens the existence of the mentally fit likewise.

According to Mr. Henry Newbolt, killing a man is no crime, if you do not hate him. British Christians are perfectly justified in putting to violent death as many Germans as they possibly can, so long as there is no rancor, treachery, or selfishness in their hearts. Slaying is a physical act, affecting only the material body; while hating is a spiritual act, injuring the soul. To kill the body is really to release the spirit from its prison-house, thus providing for it a speedier return to the ideal realm from which it originally came. And this fallacious reasoning is utilised for the purpose of palliating the evils of the War, if not of justifying the War itself as an essential element in the working out of the Divine plan of the world's development.

The *Catholic Herald* expresses great indignation at the action of the French Parliament in appointing "a day for a national collection in aid of a new lay orphanage for children of fallen heroes of the War." The head and front of the Republic's offence is that it has passed over the Catholic Orphanage Association and other philanthropic organisations; but our contemporary forgets that France is no longer an obedient daughter of the Church of Rome, but has cast off the yoke of servile submission to a priestly order, and become a practical subscriber to a Secularist creed. Her intellectual enlightenment has resulted in her ethical and social emancipation; and the War is not at all likely to result in her return to the bosom of her ancient oppressor.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll, minister of the meek and lowly Jesus, and editor of the *British Weekly*, has turned politician. For the time being he has given faith in God and prayer the go-by, and is advocating the adoption of "strong plans," and the necessity of being "on a level with the situation." But what is the explanation of so drastic a change of front? Is it possible that the reverend knight has realised that prayer is, after all, utterly useless, and that now, our danger being most serious, our only hope of victory must be fixed upon a strong Army and Navy adequately equipped? The change is most sensible, but one that strikes a fatal blow at the very heart of the Christian faith.

A prayer has been drawn up for the use of Italian soldiers in time of war. It is much the same pattern as that used by other nationalities, and, presumably, the reply will be the same.

"This great conflict for God against the Devil," is the sober and scholarly description applied to the European War by Dr. Furse, Bishop of Pretoria. Native medicine-men in the Bishop's diocese would use, doubtless, the same cultured forms of speech.

Prebendary Carlile has received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Oxford University. Some years ago the late General Booth received a similar honor, so two armies have been recognised—the Church and the Salvation Armies.

Dr. Campbell Morgan accepts Paley's argument from design as absolutely true, and claims that it has never been refuted.

Evidently the reverend gentleman's views are as much behind the times as those contained in Paley's *Natural Theology*. The watch argument is fundamentally fallacious, because there is no evidence whatever that the universe was ever made at all. Its history, as revealed by science, unmistakably leads to the conclusion that, in one form or another, it has always existed. Had its phenomena been designed, there would have been no possible escape from the inference that the designer was at once benevolent and malevolent, good and bad, moral and immoral.

We are not without our Bernhardt's—even in the pulpit. Amongst these must be counted Rev. J. Day Thompson, who at the Primitive Methodist Church Conference pointed out that "War was commanded in the Old Testament and not condemned in the New. The Old Testament looked on war as a school of the virtues." So that war is not only a biological necessity, it is evidently a moral necessity as well. That people should preach this kind of thing and then denounce German militarism is just a proof of how little regard for logic the majority possess.

The War has doubtless several aspects, such as political, international, and sociological; but the President of the Primitive Methodist Conference entitled his address from the chair, "The War in its Religious Aspects." Upon reading the report of the address in the *British Weekly*, we find that Mr. Thompson boldly claims for war the sanction even of the New Testament, and has no difficulty whatever in explaining away any passages which seem condemnatory of the appeal to brute force. What an amazing book the Bible is, and with what marvellous ease divines of mutually destructive schools base their views upon it, and interpret all its statements in their own favor!

We are assured that President Thompson "has not a shadow of doubt about Britain being right in this crisis"; but is it not possible that the reverend gentleman is mistaken? His German brethren in the Lord are equally confident that it is their country and those of its Allies which are wholly right. Now, they all alike profess to be representatives of the one God who is said to sit as King for ever on the throne of the Universe; but the curious fact is that, while solemnly speaking in his name, they contradict one another. Be it observed that Mr. Thompson spoke from the standpoint of a Christian minister, not from that of a politician; and we fail to see that the policy of either Germany or Britain can be shown to be compatible with the teaching of the New Testament. Surely, Mr. Thompson has forgotten that his Master is the Prince of Peace, whose alleged legacy to the world was, not war, but all-conquering love and goodwill.

That the British Empire is very different from the little England of years ago is emphasised by the fact that the Begum of Bhopal has supplied the Indian soldiers in the fighting lines in France with some thousands of copies of the Koran. They are being delivered under the auspices of the All-India Moslem League. If the British and Foreign Bible Society is equally active with the Hebrew Scriptures, these Oriental warriors should each have the foundations of a theological library.

According to a notice of a Church Parade in a provincial paper, "caps only may be worn by non-commissioned officers and men." This almost suggests a Church Parade at the Gold Coast, or a bathing parade "somewhere in France."

The Bishop of Chelmsford wishes that "Gladstone's trumpet-call could arouse the nation to the seriousness of the present situation." As Gladstone was a Christian, the Bishop ought to know that Gladstone is trumpeting in another place.

The Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society happens to be a clergyman—the Rev. W. Wilks. To a *Daily News* representative this gentleman said the other day that if he could command it he would order a six days' rain to save the fruit and the flowers. We can understand the need and the desire for rain; but as a clergyman, Mr. Wilks should know that the proper course during a drought is to pray. It is such callous neglect of a plain duty that makes the ungodly scoff.

"While I was at the Front," says the Bishop of London, "my first service was for airmen, one of whom has wrought that marvellous piece of courage and bravery which has earned the reward of his Sovereign." We imagine that only natural modesty prevented the Bishop from pointing out that it was the influence of his preaching that roused

the airman to "courage and bravery." Therefore we do it for him. And we can quite conceive that a course of the Bishop's sermons would make a man quite careless of death—he might even welcome it.

Freethinkers are often asked what they can offer as a substitute for the Bible. For one purpose, they might reply, Anything. A soldier's life was saved the other day by his having six shillingworth of coins in his pocket. A change of shrapnel drove the coins into his thigh, and the coins are now in the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Once upon a time this kind of thing only occurred with the Bible. Now any thing does.

"God," says Dean Inge, "is not fighting for his existence." We beg to differ. He has been doing this for a long while and although the struggle is a protracted one, the end is pretty certain. For centuries every discovery and every invention has meant disaster to some god, somewhere. The truth is, there is not room for a fully developed man and a god in the same planet. Gods are great when man is little. One can only grow at the expense of the other.

Most clergymen vainly imagine that when the War is over there will occur such a revival of religion as the world has hitherto never experienced. They paint fascinating pictures of a world transformed into a paradise as the happy outcome of the present dreadful crisis. The Rev. John A. Houston of Glasgow, is much nearer the mark when he foresees "a horrible return to Paganism, something like the reaction of the Restoration after the Puritan domination." All prophecies are worthless, because based upon prejudice, and yet we venture to predict that the War will be followed not by a return to any form of superstition, but by a general advance towards an Atheistic conception of life and conduct. This prediction is suggested by the signs of the times, both in Germany and in our own land. The whole current of things is distinctly away from supernaturalism.

The *Salt Lake Telegram*, U.S.A., reports that since September, 1914, the notorious Billy Sunday has received no less than six hundred and fifteen thousand dollars for his evangelistic labors. Evidently the Gospel is a much more profitable occupation than playing baseball.

In his latest novel, Mr. H. G. Wells has been letting himself go. Here is a sample of his exuberance: "Ordinary people smuggle up to God as a lost leveret in a freezing wilderness might smuggle up to a Siberian tiger." The natural history seems to be as weak as the theology, but "All's Wells that ends Wells."

There is trouble in the domestic dovecots, owing to military regulations. The schoolboy who keeps the playful pigeon will have to get a permit or wring his pet's neck. Let us hope, prayerfully, that the Third Person of the Christian Trinity will not have an anxious time.

How religion is used as a test, even in the Field Ambulance Hospitals, is shown by a letter printed in the *Westminster Gazette*, and written by a Catholic priest to a soldier's parents: "As he (the soldier) showed me his testament and prayer-book, I could see he was a good fellow."

"Men are just as great gossips as women," says the Bishop of Birmingham. Was his Lordship thinking of the many tea-fights that he had attended?

A book has been published with the title, *The Devil in a Nunnery*. The subject is not so new as the title.

After months of waiting, the Vatican has made a belated protest against bomb attacks on unprotected towns, and warned the Austrians against damaging "ecclesiastical buildings" in Rome. Ay, there's the rub! Be it never so humble, there's no place like Rome.

The Auxiliary Committee of the Y.M.C.A. are asking for footballs, draughts, dominoes, cricket materials, gramophones and records for the base camps in France. Was Christ crucified that soldiers should be supplied with gramophones and records?

"Ain't you coming to hear the meeting?" said the ardent Salvationist. "Not me; I ain't got my respirator," murmured the working man.

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, £71 9s. 7d. Received since:— W. R. Manton, £5; A. Brooks, £1 1s.; G. B. Taylor, £2; R. Barnard 5s.; R. Wood, 5s.; J. E. Cockeroff, 2s. 6d.; J. Taylor 2s. 6d.; W. Davidson, 2s.; C. E. Bouchier, 10s.; A. E. Smith, 10s.; J. McCartney, 2s. 6d.; X., 5s.; A Few Friends (per F. Cawley), 3s.; J. Parrish, 5s. Mr. Foote acknowledges: E. Raggett, 10s.; Helena Parsons, £2 10s.

EDMUND BURKE.—We cannot say at the moment in which poem of Robert Buchanan's the lines cited in last week's Freethinker occur, but there is a collected edition of his poems in one volume, and they will most probably be found there. We do not publish any of Buchanan's writings.

BOLTON.—Mr. Cohen is writing you.

M. MARSTON.—Sorry to hear of the death of your brother, and of his son—the latter one of the many victims to this horrible War. We sincerely hope that its wide-spread horrors will inspire men—and women—to work seriously for the prevention of any such catastrophe in the future. Thanks for good wishes for Mr. Foote's recovery. As you will see, he is steadily gaining ground, and we hope to see him again at the office before long.

G. B. TAYLOR.—There was no need for your conscience to prick you over what Mr. Foote wrote in our issue for June 13, as your subscription had already been received. The remarks were intended for others. Still, we are very glad to acknowledge a second subscription, and also your high opinion of Mr. Foote and the Freethinker. We also congratulate you on your jubilee. Fifty years at sea is a long while, and we judge from the tone of your letter that its completion finds you in good health and spirits. Long may it continue so.

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

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.

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

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

Contributions 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.

I AM glad to say that the funeral of my old friend and veteran Freethinker, Mr. J. W. De Caux, of Great Yarmouth, was reported in the local, Independent, of June 10. Mr. A. H. Smith read a Secular Burial Service over the grave, and a good deal of this was reproduced in the newspaper report. Even the name of the wicked Freethinker crept into the document. Mr. Smith has long been a personal friend of the deceased, and he spoke with an eloquence which is unusual at gravesides. The report of his address appears not only in the newspaper already mentioned, but also appears in full in the highly-respectable Eastern Daily Post. I do not complain of a few sentences borrowed from myself, quite the contrary; there were excellent reasons for not acknowledging them there and then. Mr. Smith is to be congratulated on his discretion. At any rate, I thank him. Poor De Caux was relieved from the odium of such associations.

One paragraph of Mr. Smith's funeral speech is

brief, and worth quoting. I venture to quote it:—

"To the Freethinker, hereafter means eternal happiness or eternal sleep. The Freethinker has no fear of eternal injustice, no belief in eternal punishment. If the grave be the entrance to another world, he believes that world will be one of unclouded light and happiness. The Freethinker believes that if there is a God, he is good, and if he is good, those who have tried to live honestly, according to their light, have nothing to fear."

This is beautiful! * * *

Mr. Smith himself wields a pen long practised in the press. Although journalism is not his profession, he is also the author of at least one volume of verse, which contains whole poems of real merit and passages of striking power and originality. He should be better known as a poet than we fear he is. We know the history of George Crabbe, who might have waited another fifty years for his recognition if it had not been for the penetration and sublime generosity of Edmund Burke. I am not comparing the two poets; I am only referring to the fact that East Anglia is slow, nor do I mean that the rest of England is very much quicker than East Anglia.

* * *

Will the reader forgive me for making a big jump in my subject? I should have acknowledged last week a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund from a lady, but I was too late for the printer. She is the widow of the late Mr. Horace Parsons, who I had known I cannot say how long as a fine man and one of the best of Freethinkers. Towards the end of his life he was elected a Vice-President of the National Secular Society. It cannot be said that he was a rich man, but it was pleasant to know that he had left his wife with ample provision for the way of life they had been accustomed to. Mrs. Helena Parsons remembers the cause which had her husband's devotion and respect—and which has retained her own ever since. Her letter to me (with her cheque) was as gratifying as usual, and I am glad to reflect how far her sex is represented in the generousities of Freethought.

* * *

I see that Mr. Robert Blatchford and Mr. A. M. Thompson—but chiefly Mr. Robert Blatchford—are talking of starting a new daily Socialist paper. A daily paper! My advice for what it is worth—and I don't say it amounts to much—is, Don't do anything of the kind, especially during "the biggest war that ever was." The world doesn't want new papers; it has too many already. What it wants is a little more sense and honesty in those it has, and these things, let me tell everyone concerned, never were in the world's market. The best things in the world never were saleable. That is always one of the consolations of the true humanitarian. Even a dog, who is attached to a beggar, won't leave him to follow a millionaire. You may put money into a fighting journal if you have it, or if you can get it; you may put your life into it in any case, but nothing else will avail against the poltrooneries and devilries of the world.

* * *

Whatever good qualities Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Thompson have devoted to mental and moral causes that have their adherence, appear to have been practically futile. To start again, at such a time and in such conditions as the present, argues a faculty for business which is likely to wreck any enterprise on earth, especially a Socialist daily—published three hundred and thirteen times a year! Mr. Blatchford got his highest circulation for the Clarion on a wave of Freethought. He astonished everybody, including the parsons, who all bought his paper for reasons of their own. He has never reached that circulation since. He admits that his circulation at one time amounted to 85,000. Of course, it is very much less now. There is a note of financial trouble in last week's Clarion. In spite of this circulation and the advertisements that go with it, Mr. Blatchford has not kept the Clarion flag waving as long as I have kept the Freethinker flag, and I am printing in this

journal no ominous notes of coming disaster. Meanwhile, I am pleased to see that Mr. Blatchford is not likely to go down with the *Clarion*, if it is going down. I understand that he has made provision for a rainy day by letting out his pen to Conservative newspapers. I do not say he is not honest and honorable, but I do say that England never was in love with Coalition Governments or coalition associations.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The complimentary dinner to Messrs. Heaford and Moss on Thursday last (we are writing this on June 22) was a pronounced success. The room was quite full—almost inconveniently so—and the guests of the evening were both in good form, and appeared to enjoy themselves thoroughly. Formality was, indeed, reduced to a minimum, and good-fellowship profited in consequence. London Freethought was well represented, and it was surprising how many of those present had been connected with the movement during the whole of the time covered by the services of those in whose honor the dinner was given. Mr. Foote was unable to be present, but sent a letter congratulating the two veterans, which was read to the gathering. Letters of regret for non-attendance were also read from Mr. Harry Organ and Mr. W. Davey.

There was only one toast, "The Guests of the Evening," and the speeches in support of this were commendably brief and agreeably bright. From the vigor and liveliness of the speeches made by Mr. Moss and Mr. Heaford in thanking those present, it would not have been easy to infer that they were celebrating a couple of score of years' work in a cause which Christians say breeds gloom and ill-feeling. Both were full of enthusiasm for the "best of all causes," and one felt in listening to them that whatever discomforts and hardships attend the Freethought advocate, some compensation is furnished by the way in which that advocacy lifts one above the more sordid aspects of life, and gives to one a mental clarity and freshness only to be acquired in this fashion. For our part, we regard the dinner as a mere stage in the career of these two propagandists, and look forward to many more years' service for them with both tongue and pen.

The earlier hour of closing necessarily shortened the musical portion of the evening's entertainment, but what was given was of good quality. Miss Edith Harold and Mr. Alec Hardisty well deserved their encores, which were cheerfully given; and Mr. E. C. Saphin sang with effect "The Friar of Orders Grey" and "All is Vanity." The perfect good humor that prevailed during the whole of the evening was not the least conspicuous feature of a deservedly successful function.

We referred two or three weeks ago to the case of Mr. J. W. Leiper, a member of the Lanark School Board, who annotated some of the school books belonging to the Board, by way of protest against the religious teaching contained therein, and which was given to his children during their lessons. The Board summoned Mr. Leiper for the cost of the books, and, as we anticipated, he was compelled to pay. But the Judge, Sheriff Moncrieff, expressed surprise that so much religious instruction should appear in books intended for Secular teaching, so that it is evident Mr. Leiper had moral grounds for his action, particularly as he had exhausted every constitutional method of getting the matter remedied. Mr. Leiper's contention is that the action of the Board was contrary to the Scottish Education Act of 1872, and in this we are inclined to agree with him. But that was not the issue before Sheriff Moncrieff, only the question of damage done to the Board's property, and the Sheriff had no alternative but to decide against the defendant. Perhaps it may still be possible for Mr. Leiper to raise the question in another way. We do not know what help we can give in this direction, but anything we can do will be done with pleasure.

War has become a monstrosity while it yet remains a necessity. It is a monstrosity because it is absolutely uncombinable with the laws of our own highest life and follows a code of its own. Yet it is not in itself the cause, but rather the result of that ego-centric national spirit which cannot love without hating, nor labor without competing, nor cherish its own life without seeking to absorb that of others, of that nationalism that cannot greet the coming of another race.—Miss M. D. Petre, "Reflections of a Non-Combatant."

The Fourth Gospel.

A NEW JESUS.

To any thinking person who has read the first three Gospels, a perusal of the Fourth evangel should bring a most remarkable fact to light. This is, that the Jesus of the "Gospel of John" appears, in everything except the name, a perfectly new personage, if not a purely imaginary Being. By this is meant that the Jesus of the last-named Gospel is not the Jesus described in the three Synoptics, but a totally different kind of person—one conceived by the writer of the Fourth Gospel himself.

It is asserted by orthodox critics that the "Gospel of John" was written later than the three Synoptics, and that its composer had seen and read the other Gospels. This is true as regards the Second Gospel, and possibly also of the First. John the presbyter had certainly seen the Gospel of Mark, and some discourses which he ascribed to Matthew, because he mentioned them to his friend Papias, but the Third Gospel—that compiled by Luke for Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch—was not written until after his own. Now, the first three Gospels, as already stated, were supposed to be merely revised copies of an older Gospel then in use, and were received by the Church as such. If the sayings ascribed to Jesus were given in somewhat better language and many new details added, no Christian could complain. Most of the old stories were there, and were presented in a better dress; while the new circumstances, inserted here and there, simply showed that the more ancient account was incomplete. This was evidently the light in which those Gospels were regarded. (See Luke's Preface.)

When, however, we come to the Fourth Gospel, we find things altogether different. The writer, it is true, has taken some of the events which he records from the primitive Gospel (or from the canonized Mark); but these are few, and include only the following:—

The preaching of John the Baptist—the Call of Andrew and Peter—the "purging" of the temple—the Feeding five thousand—the Woman anointing Jesus—Jesus riding into Jerusalem—the Arrest of Jesus—the Trial—the Crucifixion.

All the foregoing alleged events are given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Why has the pseudo-John recorded them? Apparently he thought that in writing a Gospel he must give the beginning and the end of the primitive account, as in the short Gospel of Mark, as well as some events near the middle. Had he written merely to supplement the other three Gospels, there was no need for him to give any of the foregoing. But, as already stated, he was a born forger, who could not make a copy of a narrative from an ancient MS. without feeling the desire to alter and transform it almost beyond recognition. This he has actually done in several cases; in others he has made minor alterations either because he could not resist the temptations of doing so, or because he thought his emendations were an improvement. His treatment of the older narratives, however, is a trifling matter compared with his impudent forgeries: for all the alleged events in the remainder of his Gospel are pure fiction. But worse even than this is the fact that all the sayings and discourses in the Fourth Gospel which he has piously placed in the mouth of the Savior, were concocted by the writer himself. The writer carefully omitted all the sayings of the Sermon-on-Mount type recorded by Matthew and Mark, and also all the stories called "parables," and he has put in their place long rambling discourses of a totally different character—which were apparently unknown to the Synoptists. Hence, the Jesus of the "Gospel of John," in both word and deed, is a different kind of Savior from the Jesus of the Synoptics—the only thing common to the two being the name. Yet, notwithstanding this very obvious fact, Christians of all denominations—the clergy included—appear never

to have perceived it. Those uncritical people only read the Gospels to find comforting texts.

THE PREACHING OF THE BAPTIST.

The preaching of John the Baptist, as recorded in the three Synoptics, was, as we know, derived from an older and more primitive Gospel. Taking the account by Matthew as the nearest to the original document, the words said to have been uttered by the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2, 7—12) total no more than seven verses. Of these Mark has recorded only one (Matt. iii. 11). Luke, whose Gospel was unknown to John the presbyter, has given the seven verses of Matthew verbatim (Luke iii. 7—9; 16, 17), between which he has inserted five other verses from some unknown source (Luke iii. 10—14). Coming now to the "Gospel of John," the writer of that fabricated "history" has placed in the mouth of the Baptist no more than twenty-four verses (John i. 20—27; 29—34; 36—38), and of these, all are new save the one common to Matthew and Mark. The problem is, whence did the pseudo-John get them?

Luke, who wrote later than the last-named individual, found, as stated, other sayings attributed to the Baptist in his day, and inserted them; but these were probably traditional, and in some slight degree historical. Josephus says that John the Baptist "commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and as such to come to baptism": etc. (Antiq. 18, 5, 2). Here the "righteousness towards one another" is in perfect agreement with Luke iii. 10—14. Luke, we know, had read Josephus.

Now, had there been any such teaching ascribed to the Baptist as that recorded by the pseudo-John, Luke would have known it; but that evangelist appears to have never heard of it. At the late date when the Gospels were written there was no source open to the writer of the Fourth Gospel that was not open to Matthew and Luke: all ancient Christian documents were then well known. But looking through the "Gospel of John" it soon becomes evident to any discerning reader that the writer had no intention of following in the beaten track, and cared nothing for contradicting or discrediting the existing Gospels. His sole desire was to write a new Gospel, to remodel any of the older narratives he made use of, and to compose a series of original ones himself. He believed it to be meritorious to deceive for the glory of God: his fingers were itching to write, and he did so.

In the case of the story of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, this writer did not trouble to read in that by Mark—he assumes that all his readers are acquainted with it—but, after the baptism, he makes John the Baptist refer to it and says:—

"I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptise with water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptiseth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John i. 32—34).

This remarkable statement by the Baptist is new matter which was unknown to the writers of the three Gospels. In the latter Gospels—before Jesus came to be baptised—John the Baptist is represented as announcing that someone greater than himself was about to appear, who should "baptise with the Holy Ghost," and in Matt. iii. 14 Jesus is recognised as that person before the baptism. After the baptism John the Baptist made no reference to Jesus whatever. But the writer of the Fourth Gospel represents the Lord God as making a direct communication to the Baptist, and gives the exact words. When and where were these words spoken? Was the communication made by the god himself or through an angel? Was there any visible figure present, or was there only the sound of a voice? And did the deity or angel speak in Aramaic or in Greek? These are not irrelevant questions, for the Christian god

has never spoken to any one since the Gospels were written eighteen centuries ago—though there have been thousands of occasions when a voice from heaven would have saved thousands of innocent lives. During the long "witchcraft" period, for instance, when the Christian Church in Europe and America took the lead in burning, hanging, or drowning poor, decrepit, old women, not a word was uttered by that deity to prevent one of those inhuman murders. It is almost needless to say that all the words placed in the mouth of the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel—save the verse copied from Mark—were fabricated by the pseudo-John himself.

Again, this fraudulent writer has placed the same ideas in the mouth of John the Baptist as he has in the mouth of Jesus, as may be seen from the words italicised in the following passages:—

(Jesus): "Howbeit he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world.....as the Father taught, I speak these things" (John viii. 26, 28)—"For the Father loveth the Son..... he hath given all judgment unto the Son.....He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life" (John v. 20, 22, 24).

(Baptist): "What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness.....that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John iii. 32, 34)—"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (John iii. 35, 36).

In the foregoing paragraphs, it will be seen, John the Baptist uses precisely the same language as Jesus. He speaks of God as "the Father," and of Jesus as "the Son." He knows that Jesus was sent by God; that "God is true"; that Jesus bore witness of what he had seen and heard in heaven, and therefore spoke "the words of God"; that "the Father loveth the Son," and "hath given all things" into his hand, and that "he that believeth" on Jesus "hath eternal life." John the Baptist knows, in fact, as much as Jesus himself, and is apparently in the full confidence of "the Father." Yet if we turn to the Synoptics we find that the Baptist, when in prison, sent two of his disciples to Jesus asking "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another"? (Matt. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19). No one in his senses could imagine a person with such a knowledge of God's plans respecting "the Son" and the redemption of mankind sending to ask such a question—which action, in fact, proves the dove story in all four Gospels to be a fable. This, however, is not the point: the question is, Did the pseudo-John himself compose the statements he has put in the mouth of the Baptist? To this the reply must be that he did. Though the language in the foregoing extracts is extremely simple, we do not find the expressions there italicised recorded in any of the other Gospels, or even in any book of the New Testament, unless it be in the "Epistle of John"—which was undoubtedly composed by the same writer. In that Epistle the writer says:—

"God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.....we know him that is true..... This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John v. 11, 12, 20).

In this sample of the writer's own language, addressed to his fellow-Christians (though in the name of the apostle John), we see the expressions that "God is true," and the consequence of "believing on the Son" and of "not believing on the Son"—as placed in the mouth of the Baptist. But when we take into consideration that neither Jesus nor the Baptist was accompanied by a reporter, and that nothing that either is represented as saying was taken down at the time, and also that no such expressions were found in the primitive, canonical, or apocryphal Gospels—the question of the source can have but one answer: they were composed by the pseudo-John himself. This conclusion is the only one that explains the peculiarities of language of the Fourth Gospel.

Papistry and Truth.

IT is often urged against Freethinkers that lack of belief in a personal God weakens their sense of the importance of truth, even where it does not lead to absolute falsehood. In this respect the Roman Catholic Church is specially emphatic, although few Catholics are aware how utterly unreliable can be the oath of a Papist if he follows the express instructions issued to the faithful by the Church, when the latter desire lies to be sworn or equivocations uttered "for the glory of God."

This teaching is not peculiar to the Roman Church alone. It has been, and is taught to-day, by those esteemed and so-called holy men who are doing their best through ritual, confessional, and dogma to Romanise the English Church. The following few quotations and authorities should be enough to convince the simplest that should the Great Lying Church ever again get dominance, but little freedom from persecution will remain.

I am indebted to Count Hoensbroech, who was a Jesuit for fourteen years, for the following information. His book is beyond the reach of many—price £1 5s.—but it is most interesting and profitable for the student of to-day who desires light on the inner workings of the Roman Church, although the reading, to a decent citizen who hates slavery, makes one's blood boil.

Thus Jesuit Delrio, Professor at the universities of Salamanca and Graz, writes:—

"It is an article of Faith that a lie is in itself morally bad. Yet consider, it is one thing to say something false, and another to hide something true, by making use not of a lie, but an equivocation. The utterance of a judge at Liege was both cunning and permissible, who said to a stiff-necked witch who denied all accusations, that if she spoke the truth sufficiently, he would, as long as she lived, provide from his own or public means, food and drink for her every day, and see to it that a new house was built for her, understanding by 'house' the wooden scaffolding, with the bundles and straw, on which she would be burnt."

Sweet justice; beautiful law! The Jesuit Cardenas says:—

"Thus, an adulterous woman when questioned by her husband and threatened with death, may reply without falsehood and without mental reservation, 'I have not wounded your honor,' for 'wounded' means a material wounding, which cannot be applied to honor. She may also deny her adultery by taking this word in the sense in which it is frequently used in the Scriptures, namely, Idolatry.....Whoever is asked by a judge on oath how much he has of a certain commodity, which is unjustly taxed at too high a rate, may swear he has a considerably smaller quantity of it than he really has, and it can be shown in many ways that there is no perjury. In the first place, when he swears that he has, for example, seventy pitchers of oil, he does not deny that he has more, but speaks the truth, saying that he has seventy pitchers. Secondly, he may swear that he has not more than seventy, because he speaks the truth so far as the judge, who only asks as to the amount of oil which ought to be taxed, is concerned. As, according to the hypothesis, the tax is unjustly high, it is quite true to say that the person does not possess more, adding (mentally), than must be taxed."

The Jesuits' layman, Ballerini and Palmieri, and the twentieth century Jesuit, Dahr, teach the same abominations.

The Jesuit Lehmkul, whose Moral Theology is taken as the basis of instruction for the confessors in numerous seminaries for Roman priests, says:—

"Mental reservation is frequently free from falsehood, consequently it is occasionally permissible and necessary, and occasionally not permissible to use it. For example, the expression 'I do not know' may admit the meaning in certain circumstances 'I do not know so that I can communicate it.'"

Thus the Jesuit Gury:—

"Anna has committed adultery; she replied first of all to her husband, who was suspicious and questioned her, that she had not broken the marriage bond; the second time, she replied, after she had been absolved from the sin, 'I am not guilty of such a crime';

finally, the third time, because her husband pressed her still further, she flatly denied the adultery, and said, 'I have not committed it,' because she understood by this, 'such adultery as I should be obliged to reveal or 'I have not committed adultery which is to be revealed to you.'

"Is Anna to be condemned? Anna can be justified from falsehood from the three-fold case which has been mentioned. For, in the first case, she could say she had not broken the marriage bond, because it was still in existence. In the second case, she could say she was innocent of adultery, since her conscience was no longer burdened with it after confession and the receiving of absolution, because she had the moral certainty that this had been forgiven. Indeed, she could make this assertion on oath, according to the general opinion and that of Saints Alphonsus Liguori, Lessius, Suarez, and the Salmanticiuses. In the third case, she could, in the probable view, still deny having committed adultery in the sense that she was obliged to reveal it to her husband."

The Church is, and has been, since Boniface VIII. A.D. 1302, teachers and upholders of the indirect, and, where possible, direct supremacy of Papacy over the State. It became a dogmatically established doctrine through the Encyclicals of Leo XIII. and Pius X. The General of the Jesuit Order, Francis Xavier Wernz (1898-1901), writes:—

"As it not infrequently occurs that, in spite of attempted friendly settlement, the dispute (between Church and State) continues, it is the duty of the Church to explain the point of dispute. The State must submit to this judgment."

Also Jesuit Von Hammerstein:—

"Priests can only be punished by a temporal judge if the Church hands them over to the temporal arm for some just cause."

What an opening for the numerous libertine priests, who, through confessional and fear, control the minds and bodies of thousands of the faithful with no other punishment than transference to another sphere, when they are unlucky enough to be found out; which finding, is as a hunt for the proverbial needle in a haystack.

What splendid citizens in Non-Catholic countries Papists become, if they follow out Lehmkul's instructions, as written in his Moral Theology:—

"It is evident that an oath taken in accordance with the Civil Law and Constitution can never be binding with reference to laws that are contrary to Ecclesiastical Law. Indeed, if there is a controversy between Church and State at the time when the oath is required and civil laws are issued, or episcopal, which are directed against God and the Church, it is not permissible to swear (except with reservation), and the omission of these laws. If a soldier is commanded to do something which is so obviously wrong as to require him to refuse obedience, or if he, through his officer's fault, is exposed to spiritual dangers, it would be better to such immediate military service than be exposed to such immediate occasion for sin.....The obligation of the oath (any oath) can be directly removed by the ecclesiastical authority, viz., by the Pope and the Bishops, or by others legally delegated in accordance with the will of the Pope."

A pretty regard is here portrayed for our Civil and Military Laws, and it is clear that it is never safe to trust the words of a Catholic on important matters.

As an Agnostic, I hold no brief for any sect; but my experience of most of the Christian sects is pretty extensive. My conclusion is, the very devout Papist is never to be trusted where his Church is concerned, and that Church's teaching has the unfortunate habit of preventing many of its followers from knowing the difference between good and bad.

When you find intellectuals like Messrs. Chesterton and Hiliare Belloc doing their best to bolster up a mediæval religion, and manifestly proud of their second century beliefs, it shows one how even such fine intellects may be distorted by theological teaching. In this century it is nothing of pitiable to observe or know that many of our educated folk wear every sort of soapstone consecrated medals, and feast much of their time on lives of saints full of the crudest superstitions; but, of course, approved and recommended by

the Holy Church. How helpful to all that progress conveys, is the awe with which bottles of water from La Sallette, Lourdes, and St. Ignatius' Well are regarded. What splendid scientists, historians, or even common or garden business men we should produce if, as a nation, we believed without daring to question (it means hell to dare doubt) such rubbish as Papias are taught to believe.

Papistry and Truth is this article's title, and my Non-Catholic friends, and others, who read it, will require little more proof that the danger to our country in particular, and the world in general, is, to quote the Bishop of Durham, "not Atheism, but Priestcraft." It is for those who value liberty and progress, never to forget the Spanish proverb, "as bad as a priest." Peel your eyes when you see the "Holy" Fathers' and count how many per cent. look like real men, then think of the 250,000,000 people who are compelled to pour records of their sinful thoughts and deeds into such receptacles, and imagine the effect upon penitent as well as confessor; the reason for the condition of Roman Catholic countries will then be easily apparent.

Cardinal Newman, in his *Apologia*, says "There is a way of winning men from greater sins, by winking for the time at the less." This statement shows how perverted had become the mind of a once honorable man. Here is shown the damnable doctrine of Jesuitry—ends justifying means. Yet it is called the Church sanctified by God and divinely gifted above all others. Having examined some of the teachings of its leaders, let us, in the light of truth, examine their acts.

I do not see the need, in this article, to repeat the oft-told story of the wholesale murder of opponents by the Church, but will show irrefutably that though its present methods have changed, its aims are still the same. I do not know whether the present Vicar of Christ desires the advent of another Alva, but in A.D. 1569 the Pope showed his Catholic horror a jewelled hat and the murder of heretics by burning and racking in their thousands in the Netherlands. One never knows; intolerance being still as rampant as ever in the Vatican.

An instance that rarely mentioned "Encyclical ne temerere" issued by the late Pope on April 19, 1908. All mixed marriages after that date not solemnised by a Roman priest are declared invalid in Great Britain and Ireland, and any children of such mixed marriages are from that kindly church-view, bastardised.

If mixed marriages were allowed by the Church without this condition before 1908, why not since? If evil now, why permissible before the aforesaid date? This is not a sudden discovery on the part of the Vatican, but only the first of other persecuting signs that follow a small growth of power.

Germany resisted this decree and the Pope yielded. We Britons, who pride ourselves on our freedom, and especially submit. It is an insult to us as a nation by endeavoring to set Papacy above them, and is particularly contemptible in taking advantage of the present and holiest thing in life.

The Catholics have boomed toleration here for years until they got it—and then, as of yore, applied the screw. If they have Truth, God, and the Saints behind them, why not leave it in the Infinite hand of the regeneration of mankind instead of ruining thousands of homes by this Encyclical, as they are doing. When one knows that the Non-Catholic has signed a document pledging that all children are to be brought up as Roman Catholics, one can imagine the future home life, whatever views the Non-Catholic holds, unless he or she are weak-kneed.

Cardinal Manning said, "The Church is a vast and perpetual motive of credibility, and an irrefragable witness of its own divine legation." If that is correct, why was it left to Innocent III., in the twelfth

century, to establish transubstantiation? It is hardly evidence of infallibility that Popes' should have lived and died before Innocent developed pseudolepsis or infamy. As he inaugurated that adjunct to civilisation, the Inquisition, at the same time as transubstantiation, the latter was probably his trouble. How few Catholics know this historical truth, which is the most crushing answer to a falsely claimed infallibility?

The confessional kills truth, to which one may add decency. While having no sympathy with the Kenites, they, at least, of all the Non-Roman Christians, are worthy of respect for fighting this monstrous practice, established only to bind still stronger the fetters of superstition on the laity.

The early Roman Church knew it not. Chrysostom, one of the early fathers, said "Confession should be to God alone; apart, in private to Him, who knoweth beforehand, no man knowing." The Church sainted him, so he is a recognised authority. When the alleged Christ told his hearers that they who retained certain sins, he himself would retain and forgive in the same measure, he spoke to men and also women, if he spoke at all. If folk must confess, for decency's sake, let alone purity, women should confess to women, and men to men. These priests are not eunuchs, they eat and drink particularly well, rarely scull, play football, cricket, or swim, and become either Falstaffs with distillery faces or starved non-generators; the latter, through my bitter observance, in the decided minority.

Rome imagines she can, to-day, claim the nation's respect and obedience in spite of her past murders in the Lord's name and her ever-present attempt to control the family through the priest. All her sins must be forgiven in deference to her high official position. So long as one gives obedience, works are of no import. Obedience, obedience! The Church breeds to-day what it has ever bred, cold-hearted ecclesiastical cynicism, quite opposed to all enthusiasm for humanity; hence its power continues to decay both in strength and numbers. The Roman Church reviles Luther and Wycliffe, Huss, and other thinkers of their time; but we have a deal to thank these men for, although not necessarily agreeing with them.

All inquiry is heresy, and, being the mother of freedom and consequently the chief enemy of the Church, is by that organisation forbidden. Hence the black spots of the civilised world are where priestcraft and the Roman Faith predominate.

In Spain (perhaps the most Catholic of all countries) the 1896 Government Report gives figures that should convince the most prejudiced how clerical control affects a nation:—

"In a population of 19,000,000, no fewer than 8,725,519 profess no occupation. There are 91,227 professed mendicants (of whom 51,498 are females), 43,328 members of the clergy, and 28,549 nuns. The number of absolutely unlettered adult persons is 6,104,470, including 2,686,615 females."

Surely such a number of clergy and nuns should suffice to educate the six millions of unlettered adults and turn many of the eight millions of wasters into useful, productive citizens.

Fortunately, the world has been gradually slipping from the deadly control of the Church, and is decaying as surely as Cato is dead. Far-fetched austerities and mediæval dogmas cannot stand in the present light of day. The sun of inquiry means death to such mental leprosy, and its power, fortunately, grows daily.

To any Catholic who may read this, I would point out that 1 Thessalonians v. 21 contains these words, "But prove all things." Read the non-Roman view, hear both parties, even as you do in politics or your business, and then you will eventually find what, after many years, the writer found, that you have been living in the lap of error, supporting a most ignoble institution. This will enable you to develop a happy state of mind, free from fears of hell and kindred absurdities.

E. W. S. COX.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., 3.15, "Christianity and War"; 6.15, "The Ethics of Jesus."
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brookwell Park): 6, L. B. Gallagher, a Lecture.
KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 7.30, W. Davidson, "Are Christians Ashamed?"
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Regent's Park: 3.15, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.
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