

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXV.—NO. 35

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29, 1915

PRICE TWOPENCE

Individuality is everywhere to be spared and respected
the root of everything good.—RICHTER.

George Meredith on Religion.

is maintained by some Christian critics that Meredith has something of vast importance to say on religion, though they find it extremely difficult to find passages in which that something is definitely stated. One of the sanest and most intelligent of the great thinker's Christian admirers is the Rev. Professor James Moffatt, D.D., who endeavors to show, in an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, not only that he "is profoundly alive to the religious current in man's nature," but that he is not "slow either to recognise the reality of devotion or explicitly to state his eager adherence upon its true and false expressions." Dr. Moffatt formally recognises the validity of passages of worship, and we are convinced that the omission of the fact that such passages do not exist. If we do, why not produce them? It is perfectly true, in his poetry, Meredith is fully aware that countless multitudes of human beings have what he called an "aspiration after God," but the number of those who experience it is not sufficiently large to justify its being spoken of as "man's aspiration after God." It is not a characteristic of man, but of certain individuals specially instructed and trained. Dr. Moffatt makes the following significant concession:—

"Curtly he rules out of court all that is known in the religious world as Revelation or the Supernatural. Doctrines of this caste are in his dialect 'the Legends' or 'fables of the Above,' superfluous and misleading efforts of the human soul to get behind and above that natural order which alone renders it intelligible."

with supernaturalism curtly ruled out of court, we should like to know what becomes of the validity of religion. In the absence of a Supreme Being, how can his worship be honestly or intelligently pronounced valid? As a matter of fact, Meredith regards Nature as all in all, and love of Nature, and consequent obedience thereto, as man's complete duty. Veracity and courage in the study of Nature are admittedly the most radical counsels he can give. "The Legends of the Above" are both needless and useless, and their interest for us is of a purely historical character.

"Let but the rational prevail,
Our footing is on ground though all else fail:
Our kiss of Earth is then a plight
To walk within her Laws and have her light."

Now, if Nature is all in all, does it not inevitably follow that religion, in any accredited acceptance of the term, is at once anti-natural and anti-human? The divines teach that love, for example, is of God, and that if there were no God, there would be no love in the world. Meredith assures us, on the contrary, that love is Earth's gift, and that "else were we nought":—

"Her gift, her secret, here our tie."
Our knowledge is commensurate with our require-
ments. All the guidance we need is supplied by our

instincts. Indeed, as Dr. Moffatt himself points out, the trustworthiness of our ethical instincts is Meredith's cardinal principle. It is a principle from which he never departs. Man represents Nature at her highest and best:—

"Meanwhile on him, her chief
Expression, her great word of life, looks she."

Of course, we must bear in mind that we are dealing with poetry, not prose, and that to the poet Nature often "becomes almost as transcendental amid her realism as Goethe's Earth-Spirit." Dr. Moffatt, however, misunderstands and misrepresents this apparent transcendentalism. He quotes the following verse:—

"Shall man into the mystery of breath,
From his quick beating pulse, a pathway spy?
Or learn the secret of the shrouded death
By lifting up the lid of a white eye?"

and observes that the physics of the brain are not the last oracle of Meredith's Nature. From a merely naturalistic point of view, the question is to be answered by an emphatic No; but to say "I trow not" is not to overleap the boundary of the material Universe. Even to declare that the gloomy wherefore of our battlefield is to be "solved in the spirit," is by no means equivalent to a condemnation of scientific Materialism, "the black knights" of which are so objectionable to this Scottish divine. To get outside Nature is utterly impossible; she hems us in on all sides; but it is a mistake to represent Meredith as saying that "she does not reduce us to the level of the beasts that perish," because he does not believe in man's immortality. To die is the fate of all living things. The fact that we have an educable and educated brain does not put us outside Nature, but only helps us to understand her demands upon us and to intelligently conform ourselves thereto. Man's business is to be—

"bedient to Nature, not her slave;
Her lord, if to her rigid laws he bows."

So far we have come across no religious teaching in Meredith's poetry. Obedience to and enjoyment of Nature seem to constitute the whole duty of man. The term "God" is frequently used; but a wide survey of the poems, taken chronologically, leads to the conclusion that God and Nature are identical. At this point, however, Dr. Moffatt makes the startling assertion that the poet "turns briskly round to press on men the habit of prayer"; but no sooner has he made it than he hastens to nullify it thus:—

"His eagerness in this counsel is quite notable. Let us add, it is not unreasonable from his point of view. Prayer, to him, is the genuine expression of a man's belief in the living spirit of the Universe. It is the logical outcome of his ethical idealism, this overflow of the soul, this lift of heart and conscience, this supreme resignation of the heart."

Are we to infer that, in so much as prayer is not unreasonable from the poet's point of view, it is the very height of unreason from that of a Christian? It is noteworthy that in *The Test of Manhood*, wherein Dr. Moffatt pretends to find such an urgent call to the habit of prayer, prayer in the Christian sense is denounced in the curtiest language. Listen:—

"He [the Christian] drank of fictions, till celestial aid
Might seem accorded when he fawned and prayed
Sagely the generous Giver circumspect,
To choose for grants the egregious, his elect;
And ever that imagined succor slew
The soul of brotherhood whence reverence drew."

Does Nature, another name for God, hear and answer prayer? Meredith answers thus:—

"The solitary his own God reveres:
Ascend no sacred Mounts
Our hungers or our fears.
As only for the numbers Nature's care
Is shown, and she the personal nothing heeds,
So to Divinity the spring of prayer
From brotherhood the one way upward leads.
Like the sustaining air
Are both for flowers and weeds.
But he who claims in spirit to be flower
Will find them both an air that doth devour."

Here Nature and Divinity are but one, in that both are "sustaining" to him who devotes his life to the welfare of society, and in that both are like a devouring flame to the self-centred egoist.

Now, the whole philosophy of life, as understood by Meredith, is beautifully and convincingly elaborated in four successive poems, namely, *The Vital Choice*, *With the Huntress*, *With the Persuader*, and *The Test of Manhood*, all written in the year 1901. These poems fall under the general heading of *A Reading of Life*, and such they verily are. The choice which every youth is called upon to make is between the rival claims of Artemis and Aphrodite. The peculiarity of the problem is that, whereas both goddesses claim all from every youth, wisdom consists in giving each only her dues.

"Both are mighty;
Both give bliss;
Each can torture if derided;
Each claims worship undivided,
In her wake would have us wallow."

That is a bare statement of the rival claims presented to every human being.

"Youth must offer on bent knees,
Homage unto one or other;
Earth, the mother,
This decrees;
And unto the pallid Scyther
Either points us shun we either,
Shun or too devoutly follow."

Artemis, or Diana, as the goddess of chastity, forbids love and generation as fatal evils, whilst Aphrodite, or Venus, as goddess of love and beauty, denounces the followers of Artemis as "the irreverent of Life's design," being "the despisers of love and generation," and makes war upon them, often quite successfully. Now, the poet preaches a golden mean. Artemis and Paul pronounce the flesh vile and its pleasures sinful. Such has been the doctrine of the Church in all ages, with the result that large numbers of people have always indulged, more or less clandestinely, in thoughts and practices which they believed to be contrary to the will of God, and punishable by eternal death. Creed and conduct antagonised each other, and character was hopelessly degraded in consequence, all kinds of hurtful excesses being the result.

The poet asks and answers thus concerning man's future:—

"—What hope is there?
'Tis that in each recovery he preserves
Between his upper and his nether wit,
Sense of his march ahead, more brightly lit;
He less the shaken thing of lusts and nerves;
With such a grasp upon his brute as tells
Of wisdom from that wild relapsing spun.
A Sun goes down in wasted fire, a Sun
Resplendent springs, to faith refreshed compels."

Where now is Meredith's religion? In any orthodox sense all his poems testify to his utter lack of it. His prayer is not prayer, his God is not God, and the spirituality he enjoins is not spirituality, after the order with which the Churches are acquainted. Dr. Moffatt complains that "Meredith's language is neither clear nor full upon what most religious people would agree to term the personality of God"; but on no other religious topic can his language be even intelligible to the bulk of Christian disciples. Like Shelley and Walt Whitman, he is the poet and prophet of Nature, whose only religion is conformity to her laws.

J. T. LLOYD.

Equality and Christianity.

THERE is nothing about which the average Christian talks more and appreciates less than equality. Give him a genuine equality and he begins to whine about oppression and persecution, to talk largely about the injury to his religious convictions, and the rights of conscience. Place him in a position of power and, almost invariably, he begins to put the screw on others. His conditions of equality are those that religious persecutors have always offered: "Believe with us and you shall share our privileges; disbelieve, and you must abide the consequences." That is, in a sentence, the record of Christianity the world over. Those who have played the part of persecutors are hardened by successes and remain unconverted by failure. Those who have been persecuted have seized the first chance of retaliating in kind. This was so in the struggle between Catholics and Protestants, and it was the same in many fights between various bodies of Protestants. There was a grim and enlightening truth about a reported utterance of the late Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He declared that his was the only sect that had never persecuted, and, he added, they had never done so because they had never had the opportunity.

The laws of every country in which Christians are in the majority bear evidence of the truth of Spurgeon's utterance. For centuries Christians have had a determining voice in the making of the laws, and they have taken it for granted that they were fully justified in legislating so as to favor their own opinions and harass those of other people. They have done this for so long, and so systematically, that any alteration in the state of affairs is treated as an injustice to them. Thus, if the severity of Sabbatarian laws is relaxed there is talk of Christian citizens being outraged. If, in the nation's schools, it is proposed that the State shall confine its attention to such things as are common to all members of the State, without distinction of creed or party, the same cry is heard. The Christian cannot be himself of the idea that the State ought to be a Christian State; that is, one in which the interests of the Church—his church—ought to override all others.

I have written the above because of some remarks made by the *Church Times* in the course of the article with which I have been dealing in the last two issues of the *Freethinker*. And the mere title of that article proves what I have said. In view of the judgment in the Bowman Appeal case the article headed "The Legal Establishment of Atheism." And this was a nonsensical misrepresentation. The judgment did not give Atheism a legal establishment. Nor did anyone ask that Atheism should be legally established. All that Atheists have asked is that they shall not be punished, or oppressed, or harassed because they are Atheists. They wished to be judged as other people are judged, for such offences as other citizens are responsible, and not remain subject to special laws that were framed and maintained for the express purpose of punishing people who do not happen to be Christians.

The Judges of Appeal had nothing to do with establishing Atheism. That, on the face of it, could only be done by Parliament. They did not even disestablish Christianity. That also was beyond their power. All they did, and all they said, was of the law to-day that would justify their proposition. Freethinkers and Atheists propagating their opinions, and of receiving bequests to assist them in that work. The only thing established by this ruling was a removal of citizenship. Christianity was left where it was minus one way of persecuting people of opposing opinions. The judges said, in effect, that they had nothing to do with whether a man was an Atheist or whether a Society was made up of Atheists with the intention of teaching Atheism. All the courts were concerned with was whether the individual or the

Society acted within specified limits or not. And the only thing established by that ruling is a principle of equality before the law. That is why Freethinkers welcome it. That appears also to be the reason why Christians deplore it.

The Judges of Appeal agreed that a trust contrary to morality would be illegal. This was one of Mr. Cave's points, although he put it with such characteristic clumsiness that he defeated his own purpose. He put it that because the Secular Society, Limited, attacked supernatural belief, and because Christianity rested morality on religion, therefore Secularism attacked morality. It reminded one of the puerile reasoning of a Christian Evidence lecturer. He was reminded by Mr. Justice Joyce that the Society aimed at putting morality on a *different* basis; and much the same comment was interjected by the Master of the Rolls. No one but a bigot would conclude that a difference of opinion as to the foundation of morals constitutes an attack on morality, *per se*. The why of morality is a subject always open to dispute. The practice of morality is, in the main, above the region of discussion.

The *Church Times* in noting the Judge's decision that trusts contrary to morality are illegal, asks:—

"What morality? If the Atheist form of unbelief is as much established in this country as the Christian faith, the only morality which the Courts, on their own principle, can enforce is a morality common to the Atheist and Christian."

Quite so; and that is all that right-minded people will ever wish the Courts to enforce. The writer of the article points out that the Appeal Court decision proves that "the Courts of England are no longer Christian Courts." But why should they be Christian Courts? They are not constituted to judge points of Christian doctrine. They are not—at least they are not of necessity, staffed by Christians. Everyone on the Court, from the usher to the judge on the bench, might be a non-Christian, and even an anti-Christian. The laws are made by all sorts of people—including Christians. The disputes settled by the Courts are between all kinds of people, or the offences punished by them, and are committed by all kinds of people. What justification exists, therefore, for the Courts to be Christian? Their essential function is secular one, and if the Bowman case helps to confine the activities of our judges and the scope of our laws to secular affairs, it will all the more deserve the name of epoch-marking.

Why should not everyone be content if the Courts confined themselves to a morality common both to Atheist and Christian? As a matter of fact, that is the only morality worth bothering about. Questions such as whether there is a God, or a future life; whether the Bible is inspired, or whether Jesus rose from the dead, are not questions of morality at all. They may affect conduct, as may the weather or the temperature, a badly-fitting collar, or a tight pair of boots. But offences such as Christians have brought before the Courts in relation to Freethinking, are not questions of morality, but of religious belief, of religious doctrine. True, they have charged Freethinkers with offences against religion and morality, but to mix up the two as though they were inseparable is part and parcel of the religious game. It helps to create an antipathy and hostility to Freethought where none might otherwise exist. It is part and parcel of the prostitution of man's social sense in the interests of religion.

A morality common to both Atheist and Christian is not Christian morality, it is human morality. And there really is none other. You may have the opinions of an Atheist, a Christian, a Baddhist, a Mohammedan, or a Jew about morality, but that is all. Not to steal, not to lie, not to murder, to be honest, to be truthful, to be virtuous, are teachings common to all peoples, because they represent the conditions of social health and well-being. Moral laws are to the body social what the laws of physiology are to the individual organism. You cannot neglect them absolutely and live. You may observe them indifferently and exist. It has been the work

of scientific Freethought to illustrate the first truth. The history of religion offers innumerable illustrations of the last.

We do not so much welcome the Appeal Court decision because it is a triumph for Freethought, as we welcome it as a triumph for the principle of the equality of all before the law. Atheism or Freethought does not ask to be legally established. It only asks for freedom from oppressive laws that were framed and maintained for the sole purpose of oppressing them. We protest against laws that oppress our opinions. We hope, also, to protest not less strongly against laws that oppress the opinions of others. We claim liberty for ourselves because we believe in liberty for others. What the Christian has usually understood by liberty is the freedom to oppress others.

C. COHEN.

Popular Hymns.

"The inapt use of words creates a wonderful obstruction to the mind."—FRANCIS BACON.

"Talk about it as we like, a man's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion."—OLIVER W. HOLMES.

"Fools do not understand what they read."—LA BRUYERE.

HERR ERNST LISSAUER, author of the famous "Hymn of Hate," has issued an apology for the verses which have made his name notorious. He explains that the hymn was directed not against individual Englishmen, but against England as a political force. Herr Lissauer also explains that his hymn was written as the result of a passionate impulse in the first weeks of war. Probably, the explanation will leave the Englishmen cold, it being a matter of indifference to us whether the Christian versifier damns us individually or collectively, or even whether he damns us at all. We should, however, be glad to find similar signs of grace as regards other hymn-writers, for many of these compositions are open to grave objection.

Hymns have always held an important place in Christian worship. From the days when the early Christians got into trouble with the Romans, down to the most sensational mission services of the present time, they have been growing in popularity. Yet it is doubtful if the average hymn of to-day has any more claim to be considered as real literature than the usual music-hall song. This may well appear a grave indictment, but the hymns which are regarded as being eminently suited for public worship are far too frequently antiquated, unrhythmical, and nonsensical. Under the soporiferous influence of religion, the public has been far too ready to accept bombast and bleat as the fine gold of poetry. It has almost invariably hailed hysteria in adjectives as the quintessence of reverence.

The hymns used by Churchmen and Nonconformists alike are not really much better than those painfully familiar and disgraceful compositions which are used by Salvationists, Revivalists, and other howling Darvishes of our streets and open spaces, and which make educated people almost ashamed of their own species. The charge of sentimentalism is not the only one that can be brought. Some hymns are brutal in tone and language, and written in the worst possible taste. The hymns are full of sanguinary details and a glowing satisfaction which is eminently repulsive. Here are some samples:—

"Here I rest, for ever viewing
Mercy poured in streams of blood."

"By Thy red wounds streaming,
With Thy life-blood gleaming."

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins."

"Lift up thy bleeding hand, O Lord
Unseal that cleansing tide."

"O those limbs, how gaunt their leanness,
Tortured, torn for our uncleanness,
On these stiff branches weltering."

"Come let us stand beneath Thy cross ;
So may the blood from out His side
Fall gently on us drop by drop ;
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified."

If we turn to the purely literary aspect of these hymns, we find some of them bad enough to break the critic's heart. For sheer, downright bathos this triplet is worth noting :—

"Upon the Crucified One look
And thou shalt read, as in a book,
What well is worth thy learning."

The solitary attempt at rhyme in the following is sufficient to disqualify any amateur in a limerick competition :—

"Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,
This is the total sum ;
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
Then let Thy mercy come."

The author's reason must have been tottering when he penned this pious outburst :—

"God the Word, the sun maturing
With his blessed ray the corn,
Spake of Thee, O sun enduring,
Thee, O everlasting morn,
Thee, in whom our woes find curing,
Thee that liftest up our horn."

This apostrophe to the Cross is pure and unadulterated doggerel :—

"Faithful Cross, above all other
One and only Noble Tree,
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit Thy peer may be ;
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron,
Sweetest weight is hung on Thee."

But perhaps the most nonsensical couplet of all occurs in the following :—

"May all these our spirits sate,
And with love inebriate."

"These," as a reference to the preceding lines in this masterpiece will show, refer to thorns, cross, nails, lance, wounds, vinegar, and other stage properties connected with the crucifixion. Toplady's "Rock of Ages" is a perfect medley of irrational images and misapplied metaphors. "Cleft rock," "riven side," "to Thy cross I cling," and "to the fountain fly," are examples. The confused imagery drowns the sense in verbiage.

Another favorite hymn, "Hark! Hark! my Soul," has upset even the Christians. Bishop Alexander, who was a poet, has said of this gem that it "combines every conceivable violation of every conceivable rule with every conceivable beauty." "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" which is almost as popular as "All Girls are Lovely by the Seaside," is by no means above criticism. The last line of the chorus is commonplace in expression and atrocious in rhyme.

There is a frankness of Materialism in some of these so-called "spiritual" hymns, which is as delightful as it is unexpected :—

"Lord, I believe, Thou hast prepared,
Unworthy though I be,
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me."

And, again :—

"Oh! for the pearly gates of heaven,
Oh! for the golden floor."

Plummet cannot sound the depths of feeble-mindedness revealed in some of these effusions. The bewildered reader feels that he has glanced at an album of a lunatic asylum, so painful and so obvious is the comparison.

The foregoing quotations, be it remembered, are from the most distinguished Christian collections. They are by no means the worst of their class. If any reader wishes his raven hair brought down with sorrow to the grave, let him turn to the pages of the *War Cry*. There he will find the work of some bold and bad versifiers, ignorant of their mother-tongue, and yet unafrighted by the awful spectacle of their first "General" in the robes of Oxford University.

"Miracles," as Matthew Arnold said, "do not happen." A literary standard in hymns is more than we hope for. The Church is notoriously weak among the upper and the working-classes, and especially

among the male portion of the community. Hence we are not surprised at the inclusion of some appeals to the British working-man. Listen to the voice of the clerical syren :—

"Sons of Labor, think of Jesus
As you rest your homes within,
Think of that sweet Babe of Mary
In the stable of the inn.
Think, now, in the sacred story
Jesus took a humble grade,
And the Lord of Life and Glory
Worked with Joseph at his trade."

The enormous popularity of certain hymns is due mainly to the music. On this point there can scarcely be any doubt—

"As long as the tune has a right good swing,
It doesn't much matter what bosh you sing."

And Lewis Carroll's advice to speakers, "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves," is commonly inverted when applied to hymn-writers. Such hymns as have a slight claim to literary merit are little esteemed by the popular mind compared with "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," "The Glory Song," "Tell Mother I'll be There."

To a mere outsider, hymns would suggest restraint, sobriety, the dignity of reverence. But the Torrey and Alexander mission and the Billy Sunday crusade amply prove the association of Christianity with hysteria and theatricality. What is worse, these Americans gauged their public to a nicety. Their audiences were, perhaps, better dressed and better schooled than those who listen spell-bound to the trombones and tamborines of the Church and Salvation Armies, yet they, no less than Carille's and Booth's audiences, sing hymns of the most rank and fulsome sentimentality. Christian congregations seem unable to distinguish between poetry and doggerel, pathos and bathos. Singing their delirious rhymes, they are intellectually on a level with barbarians. Savages do this one way, and the countrymen of Hall Caine another, but the nature of the act, and the results, are very much the same.

MIMNERMUS.

The War in the Roses.

THE sayings reputed to Jesus Christ are so contradictory that one may be either sceptical of his authorship or have doubts about his sanity.

Perhaps nothing, in modern days, is more provocative of amusement than the art of telling lies in truthful language. Public men of all kinds are adepts; and no considerable amount of research is required emphatically to prove them thorough-paced artists. The felicity of their contradictions and the grace of their denials are æsthetic. They appeal to our sense of the softness of things; and in our admiration we overlook the curve.

Jesus Christ, although an orator of no mean standing, we are told, had not learned the art of curving. He always spoke his mind. Never did he twist. It was, in fact, impossible for him, if we judge from his sermons, to do so; it was characteristic of him to forget what he had previously said on the same subject. And when a public man's brain is tentative, we cannot justly accuse him of deliberate contradictoriness. For all that, Jesus Christ's teachings cut each other to pieces, slaughter, massacre, and annihilate each other in a manner that suggests the prolonged ruthlessness of the warfare of his present-day children. It is folly to attempt a symphony of his sayings.

Every minister of the Gospel, every follower of the lowly Nazarene, endeavors beautifully to mould his teachings into one choice example of the excellence of ethical art. When a pastor has preached a sermon upon the harmony of Jesus Christ's sayings, he has passed the pons asinorum of religious philosophy. He has completed the university course for instilling the spirit of God into mediocre minds. Having accomplished the impossible, he joins the chanting

band of warbling metaphysicians. Difficulties, hereafter to be encountered, can be treated lightly and easily; for a bridge, connecting fact and fancy, has been engineered, and the turbulent river has been crossed in a safety that makes fear an amazing funk.

Occasionally we may stumble upon a pastor who prides himself in his courage. He denies all the popular opinions that are pivoted on religion. He steals the Freethinker's facts and arguments, and uses them in his sermons to achieve fame and a full church; and he names them lies and mothers of lies in his prayers. What he applauds in his sermon, he renounces in his prayers. If he asserts in his preaching that Jesus Christ's sayings cannot be harmonised, for a multitude of obvious reasons, he will assuredly call the assertion a wicked and abominable falsehood when he prays.

My preacher's attempts to find enduring harmony in some of the most conflicting sayings, or rather commandments, of his Lord and Master, had amused me greatly; and, as I sat, afterwards, in the old garden, amongst the roses, I smiled often at the recollections that passed fitfully through my mind. It seemed such a useless job. All the facts grieved horribly at it. What mattered it whether Jesus Christ said love your enemies or hate them? What mattered it whether he said treat well those who despitefully use you, or whether he said plug them with a bloody bayonet? What mattered it whether he said we would all, friends and foes, dance a ring of roses around the throne of grace, or whether, from the great pity of his far-reaching love, he said I would surely go to hell, and you would surely go to meet him in heaven? No wonder the roses smiled in the sunrays.

Lying stretched on an old-fashioned garden seat made of fir boughs, I enjoyed myself. The silver smoke-clouds floated up into the fragrant air, and helped to make me indolent and dreamy. The blue of the impenetrable heavens, artistically relieved by wisps of white fleece, offered no question, nor answered one. It was beautiful.

Amidst their fresh green leaves, rose-trees of nearly every variety rejoiced in their flowers. The garden flamed with color. It glowed with heat. It was heavy with a rich fulness of the very essence of life. Nothing jarred. There were no discoloration, no riotous destruction of each others' beauties. Contrasting forms and colors blended charmingly. The garden was a color-picture in which all things breathed æsthetic peace with the perfumes of their hearts. Nature, controlled by the brain and assiduity of man, by knowledge and carefulness and love, had completely eliminated the ugly and grotesque, the horrible and hateful—had successfully brought peace and plenty into the garden of roses. There was a purity that no angel's face would ever show, and a joy of life untarnished by the dark stains of corruption. On the soft cheeks of the roses shone a light that man may sometimes see in a child's eyes, but very seldom on its cheeks.

From the cool woods came the raucous croaking of crows that still lingered around their nesting-places. On the hillside, sheep—remembering, perhaps, the passing away of their lambs—called plaintively for the families they had butted into independence. Behind me the waterfall, making eternal music of ever-varying sound, plashed on the hollowed rock; and the burn, gurgling happily in the shadows of fire, around and over the stones Nature had unconsciously given for playthings, sang its endless song of undimmed joy.

Nor were the more delicate singers silent. Multitudinous voices rose from the flowers and trees and grass, all blending in support to the blackie that sang Nature's solos from the fir-trunk engarlanded by a bush rambler.

Surroundings such as these did not tend towards hate and horror, nor blood and brutality, nor death and degradation; did not tend towards making one a bigoted believer in the moral and military superiority of any one country; nor did they tend to make one hypercritical of the forenoon sermon.

Christ's wonderful love for his British children and his German children did not seem to matter much. His comprehensive commandments to both did not seem to be very important after all. The roses told me that implicit obedience to the commands of God was a thirdly affair, to be taken in very small doses, when power and money had achieved their ends. The roses laughed lightly at the thought of the comical sublimity of the commandment, Love your enemies. They moved their bonnie heads, in a negative sense, as they dreamed of the two sets of the dead killers of men embracing each other on the safe side of the pearly gates. And, as the bees tenderly kissed their fragile hearts, they wondered how men could glorify murder for the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ. In their foolish rose-like way, the roses wondered over many things; for roses are pitiable things, when one thinks of it: they have no sense, no reason. The War, in the roses, seemed afar off, unreal and hazily imaginative.

Perhaps it would have been different if a Zeppelin had dropped a shell amongst them, Mainie said.

ROBERT MORELAND.

The Bowman Appeal Case.—II.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE. COURT OF APPEAL.
Before the Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Pickford, and Lord Justice Warrington.

JUDGMENT.

(Concluded from p. 540.)

LORD JUSTICE WARRINGTON: Charles Bowman, the testator, by his will, directed that after the death of his wife his trustees should convert into money the whole of his estate, and after making certain payments out of the proceeds, should stand possessed of the ultimate residue thereof in trust for the Secular Society, Limited. The testator died in 1908 and his wife in 1914. The question was then raised whether or no the gift of the residue was in law capable of taking effect. An originating summons was issued for the purpose of determining this question. Mr. Justice Joyce has decided in favor of the gift. The heir-at-law and the next of kin of the testator appeal, contending that the gift of the ultimate residue is for an unlawful purpose, and, therefore, void, and that there is consequently an intestacy.

The Secular Society is a Company incorporated under the Companies Acts. The Memorandum of Association states that the objects for which the Company is formed are:—

"(a) To promote in such ways as may from time to time be determined the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action."

And to promote a number of other ends, political and otherwise, and to do a number of other things, which it is unnecessary to specify. The Appellants contend that the principle above set forth involves the rejection of all religious sanctions for human conduct and of all religious belief and that to promote such a principle is to promote Atheism and irreligion and is unlawful. They contend further that a gift to or a trust for a Company incorporated with such an unlawful object, whether that object be merely one of many or, as they say it is in this case, the main and governing object of the Company, the others being merely ancillary thereto, is a gift or a trust for an unlawful purpose, and is therefore void. On the construction of this Memorandum I think the "objects clause" divides itself into two parts, one being clauses (a) to (h) inclusive, the other being contained in clauses (i) to (o). The real and substantial objects with which the Company is incorporated are those expressed in the first part, the matter mentioned in the second part are incidental or ancillary only. The object expressed in clause (a) is one at all events of the real and substantial objects with which the Company is formed, and I think we are driven to conclude that money given to the Company is given to be used in furtherance of that object which thus becomes the purpose of the gift. So far I agree with the Appellants that if the promotion of the principles described in clause (a) is illegal the gift in question is given for an illegal purpose. Farther, I think the principle as described in the Memorandum does involve the negation of any religious sanction for human action and to this extent may be said to tend to the subversion of religion as an active force in human life. It is moreover impossible to reconcile such a principle with a belief in the Divine government of

the world or in revelation, and it must therefore be taken to involve a denial of the truth of such a belief and to promote it would be to promote Atheism. The question, therefore, comes to this: Is the mere promotion of a principle involving the characteristics above mentioned, an illegal act? It would, of course, be illegal if it amounts to the offence of blasphemy at Common Law. In the Laws of England, vol. ix., p. 531, this offence is said to consist in (1) scoffingly or irreverently ridiculing or impugning the doctrines of the Christian Faith or (2) uttering or publishing contumelious reproaches of Jesus Christ, or (3) profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures or exposing any part thereof to contempt or ridicule; but it is not blasphemy with due gravity and propriety to contend that the Christian religion or any part of its doctrine or the whole or any part of the Holy Scriptures is untrue. The accuracy of this definition has been disputed and it has been said that any denial of the truth of Christianity in general or of the existence of God, however decent may be the terms of such denial, is by the Common Law punishable as blasphemy (see Mr. Justice Stephen's Digest of Criminal Law, 5th Edition, p. 125, and Chief Baron Kelly in *Cowan v. Milbourn*, Law Reports, 2 Exchequer, p. 230, as to which case I have something to say presently on another point). But in my opinion the weight of authority is strongly in favor of the accuracy of the definition (see per Lord Coleridge in *The Queen v. Ramsey and Foote*, 15 Cox's Criminal Cases, p. 231, and per Mr. Justice Phillimore in *Rex v. Boulter*, 72 Justice of the Peace, p. 188). On this point I desire particularly to refer to the opinion of Mr. Justice Erskine, advising the House of Lords in *Shore v. Wilson*, 9 Clark and Fennelly, p. 355. At p. 524 he says this:—

"It is indeed still blasphemy punishable at Common Law scoffingly or irreverently to ridicule or impugn the doctrines of the Christian Faith and no one would be allowed to give or to claim any pecuniary encouragement for such purpose, yet any man may without subjecting himself to any penal consequences soberly and reverently examine and question the truth of those doctrines which have been assumed as essential to it."

In my opinion, therefore, the promotion of the principle in question provided it be done with due gravity and propriety would not be illegal in the sense of being an offence at Common Law.

The next question is whether it is made illegal by the Statute of 9 William III., chap. xxxv. Under the terms of that Statute any person having been educated in or at any time made profession of the Christian religion who by writing printing teaching or advised speaking denies any one of the Persons in the Holy Trinity to be God or asserts or maintains that there are more Gods than one, or denies the Christian religion to be true or the Holy Scriptures to be of divine authority is guilty of an offence under the Act. That is to say this Statute renders the conduct described an offence only in the case of persons answering a particular description. In my opinion it would not be right to assume that the agents of the Company who carry out its objects will be persons answering that description. Unless that assumption is made the object we are considering is not rendered illegal by the Statute. I am aware that wherever this Statute has been referred to the words limiting its application to a particular class have been ignored, but on the other hand the words are there and when the Statute is relied upon as creating an offence they cannot, in my opinion, be left out. So far as can be now ascertained there has never been a prosecution under it, and its effect has therefore not been directly tested. I think I may safely say that nowadays it would be strictly construed. Next the purpose of the gift is said to be illegal because by the express terms of the Statute 29 Charles II., chap. ix., by which the Writ De Hæritico comburendo was abolished the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts in cases of atheism, blasphemy, heresy, or schism, and other damnable doctrines and opinions is preserved, and those Courts may punish the same by ecclesiastical punishment and censure. In my opinion a gift cannot properly be held invalid on the ground that it is given for a purpose which may be contrary to Ecclesiastical Law but is not otherwise illegal. Lastly it is said that the purpose of the gift is against public policy, and therefore illegal. The doctrine that contracts ought not to be enforced or legal sanction ought not to be given to legacies or trusts otherwise valid and effectual on the ground of public policy ought to be applied with the utmost caution. As to this Lord Bramwell made some pertinent remarks in the case of the *Mogul Steamship Company, Limited, v. McGregor, Gow & Co.*, 1892 Appeal Cases, at p. 45 he says:—

"'Public policy,' said Mr. Justice Burrough (I believe quoting Chief Justice Hobart) 'is an unruly horse, and dangerous to ride.' I quote also another distinguished judge, more modern, Mr. Justice Cave: 'Certain kinds of contracts have been held void at Common Law on the ground of public policy; a branch of the law, however, which certainly should

not be extended, as judges are more to be trusted as interpreters of the law than as expounders of what is called public policy.' I think the present case is an illustration of the wisdom of these remarks. I venture to make another. No evidence is given in these public policy cases. The tribunal is to say, as matter of law, that the thing is against public policy, and void. How can the Judge do that without any evidence of its effect and consequences?"

In respect of such a matter as the discussion of questions affecting religion the views of men as to what is or is not contrary to public policy vary with the times. It is not so very long ago that the promulgation of the views of Charles Darwin on the "Origin of Species" or those of Robertson Smith on the incorrectness of the attribution of certain books of Scripture to the traditional authors were regarded by many as tending to subvert the foundations of revealed religion, but at the present time most people of education, at all events judging from the experience of the past, would regard temperate and instructed discussion of such subjects as tending rather to strengthen than to weaken the real foundations and at all events would not for a moment think that to allow such discussion is against the public interest. In my opinion, therefore, we ought not to hold the gift in the present case to be invalid on the ground now under consideration, unless we are bound so to do by authority of such a kind that to refuse to follow it would be to alter the law.

The cases as to charities do not seem to me to be in point. It may well be that a trust which could not be supported as a charity because it could not be brought within the spirit and intendment of the Statute of Elizabeth, might yet be not illegal if expressed in such a way as not to infringe the rule against perpetuities. In *Da Costa v. De Paz*, 2 Swanton, p. 487a, a gift for encouraging the preaching of the Jewish religion was held to be bad, the reason given being that to preach a religion contrary to the Christian religion could not be a good charity. On the other hand where a gift was capable of being supported as one for the relief of the poor it was held good, though the form of relief given was the supply of the materials necessary for the due performance of the Jewish rites (see *Straus v. Goldsmid*, 8 Simon, p. 614).

As to the suggested non-existence of copyright in books impugning the veracity of the Scriptures there seems to be no actual decision. In some cases injunctions protecting the copyright have been refused on the ground that until the Plaintiff had brought an action and established his copyright the Court of Chancery would not interfere, but in none has there been any detailed examination of the impugned book or any consideration of the mode in which the author's views are presented. It is true that in *Lawrence v. Smith*, Jacob's Reports, p. 471, at p. 476 Lord Eldon said that the law does not give protection to those who contradict the Scriptures, but this was a mere dictum, the learned Lord Chancellor refusing the injunction on the ground mentioned above. The Appellants in this part of their case relied chiefly on *Cowan v. Milbourn*. The question there was whether a man who had let certain rooms for the purpose of lectures and afterwards discovered that the lectures to be delivered were of a blasphemous nature, was bound by his contract. The subject of the proposed lectures could only be guessed by their titles. One of them was, "The Character and Teachings of Christ; the former defective, the latter misleading." The Court there held that the proposed lectures, judging from their titles, were blasphemous and the purpose of the letting was unlawful and the contract could not be enforced. I think Chief Baron Kelly thought that the delivery of the lectures would amount to the Common Law offence of blasphemy. He mentions in particular the lecture the title of which is set out above and he may well have thought that to impugn the character of Christ must necessarily involve that offence even according to the narrow definition. I infer, however, from the words he has used, that he would have hardly accepted that as correct. Baron Bramwell founds his statement that the purpose was unlawful on the Act of William III., and also refers particularly to the same lecture. Neither of the Judges really dealt with the question whether the lectures, if not infringing a positive ordinance of law would have rendered the contract incapable of being enforced. It is quite true that Baron Bramwell laid it down that a thing may be unlawful in the sense that the law will not aid it, and yet that the law will not immediately punish it, but accepting this as correct, as I think it clearly is, it still remains to consider whether the particular thing in question is unlawful in the wider sense or not.

In my opinion there is no authority binding us to hold that the promotion in a proper manner of the objects of the Company is contrary to public policy, and we ought not to hold it to be so.

I have already said that it is, in my opinion, not unlawful on the other grounds suggested, and the appeal therefore fails.

Mr. TOMLIN: Then, my Lord, the appeal is dismissed at his costs?
 THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS: Yes.

Acid Drops.

How we shan't be long! After playing—some might call it fooling—with religions terms ever since the War began, Mr. Horatio Bottomley delivers himself thusly to the female readers of the *Sunday Pictorial*:—

"And yet, sisters, do you know that I—'man of the world,' 'man of business,' 'man of affairs,' disciple of Bradlaugh, nephew of Holyoake—do you know that I have come to be convinced that there is no such thing as death? No, the human soul is immortal, and over and above all the creeds, I see and feel this living truth—that, liberated from its mortal prison, it returns to the great sea of immortality which, as Dickens said, 'flows all round the world,' to await the arrival of its Affinity, temporarily held in bondage. Therefore, dear mothers, sisters, wives, and sweethearts, whose men and lads have fallen or shall fall upon the field, or on the seas, have no misgiving. *They are not dead. You have lent them to God.*"

I suppose that ought to settle it. If Mr. Bottomley is satisfied, if he has become convinced that there is no death, who are we to cast doubts upon it? The editor introduces the article with the statement that it is, "perhaps," the most inspired article ever written by a layman. The point is that this "inspired" message could not have been delivered in a form that would not remind one of thousands of pulpit-thumping messages from thousands of very ordinary ministers.

Perhaps it would be irreverent to ask what Mr. Bottomley means by all this balderdash about a "sea of immortality," and an "Affinity," and the soul "liberated from its mortal prison." It looks to us as though Mr. Bottomley had been picking up scraps of third-rate "occultism," pseudo-religious metaphysics, cheap spiritualism, and Christian Evidentialism, and then thrown the ill-digested mess at the heads of his readers. It may impress those who have spinal meningitis instead of heads; but the rest will be inclined to smile and ask "What's the game?" We are quite as ready as anyone to listen to Mr. Bottomley when he happens to be talking about something he understands, but in this instance his conviction is of no greater value than that of a street-corner evangelist. Sensible people do not want any conviction; what they want is their proof. They will accept the conviction themselves. And Mr. Bottomley should remember that nonsense in a newspaper impresses level-headed people no more than nonsense in the pulpit. And remains nonsense even when uttered by a "man of affairs," etc., etc. A war such as the present one is bound to disturb things. It is setting some people on their feet and sending others off their heads. But it is a bad business to try and achieve the first by means of the second.

"O men in the trenches—have faith in God" is a sage piece of advice quoted in the *New Age*. Unfortunately, the men in the opposite trenches put their faith in the same God.

A contemporary informs us that "The Bishop of Yukon, who was caught by an early winter on his return to Dawson City, kept himself alive by eating his boots." Not a very palatable diet, but better than dining with the prophet Isaiah.

The French Minister of War has ordered the following to be placed in all the military hospitals:—

"You have the absolute right to practise the religion to which you are attached. You have the absolute right to stand apart from any religion. A grateful country intends that its wounded should be surrounded with enlightened and fraternal care. It intends that in you the citizen should be respected. Around those who suffer moral quietude must reign. To those who have fought for the liberty of the world liberty is due."

We do not know what the notice is intended to correct, but the sentiment is admirable, and does honor to the Minister. We wonder when our own military authorities will have the grace, and the dignity, to take a similar step. Our soldiers have a certain amount of choice in the matter of religion, and the man of no religion is ordered to church as part of his military duties, and would be punished if he disobeyed.

Above all, we like the closing words, "Around those who suffer moral quietude must reign. To those who have fought for the liberty of the world liberty is due." That is finely expressed and magnificently expressed. It contains a stern

and much-needed rebuke to those fussy religionists who carry their impertinent piety to sick men under the guise of solicitude for their welfare. Mental and moral quietude are indispensable to the sick, and it would be well if all "religious visitors" were kept from all except such as specially request their presence. This would mean the absence of at least ninety-five per cent. of this class, but their absence would leave nothing to regret. It seems the fate of France to lead the world in really progressive ideas, and it deserves all honor for emphasising the fact that, while the religious man has an absolute right to practise his religion, the non-religious have an equal right to pursue their way unmolested by the impertinent inquisition of unintelligent piety.

There is a paraphrase of a popular catch in one of Jack London's novels that is pertinent to some recent happenings. It runs:—

"Providence moves in mischievous ways
 It's blunders to perform."

We see that in Jamaica the banana crop has been partly destroyed by a hurricane, and a number of lives lost. In Galveston, U.S.A., a terrible tropical storm resulted in a loss of life, and immense damage done which is estimated at about £1,000,000. At the same time a violent cyclone devastated the entire southern side of Haiti. Good old Providence!

"Clergyman's Mistake" was a headline in the *Daily Mail* recently. The errors of the clergy are too numerous to deserve displayed notice.

There is a great conflict of opinion among the clergy concerning the present position of religion. Some say that Christianity has benefited by the War, and others are very emphatic in stating the opposite view. Canon Dormer Pierce, speaking at Prittlewell, Essex, said "the Christian Sunday has almost gone," and he doubted whether there was any religious revival among the people. Perhaps his clerical colleagues will notice what the Canon says.

Religious journals are unapproachable in the art of saying what on the face of it is true, and yet suggesting something that is wholly false. This is the way in which the *Christian Commonwealth*, in its issue of August 18, refers to Sir Richard Barton: "Traveller, soldier, author and religious inquirer." The italics are ours, and the purpose of the two words is, obviously, to suggest that Sir Richard Barton was religious. To be accurate, the description should have read, "Traveller, soldier, author, and Freethinker," for Sir Richard Barton had done with all religions. Of course, he was an inquirer into religions; but so are we. And we publish the results of our inquiries week by week.

There is much more in this policy of suggestion than meets the eye. Religion nowadays is largely a matter of imitation and authority. Many accept religious beliefs because they are impressed by the authority of others, and many because of the sheer force of example. Consequently, it is part of a deliberate policy to persuade the masses that they who reject Christianity are very few in number and of no authority. That is why, when a prominent man or woman dies who is a Freethinker, no mention is made of it. Other aspects of their life or work are emphasised; their writings or opinions about religion are ignored. In this way the delusion is maintained that the Freethinker represents nothing but an infrequent "sport" in the social or intellectual world. And this policy of the *suppressio veri*, or the *suggestio falsi*, operates not alone with regard to the masses; it has its effect on the prominent men themselves. They are much less outspoken in consequence than they might otherwise be, or than they ought to be. There is suppression on the one side, delusion on the other. The pretence of being more or less religious is kept up. If an epidemic of honesty set in, and absolute fearlessness of speech prevailed, the Churches of this country might be reduced to impotence in the course of a single generation.

There is a great deal of talk going on in the papers just now about the revival of religion in France, as a consequence of the War. It is admitted that in England the expected religious revival has not occurred, and is not likely to do so; but in France it is said that people are beginning to look at religion from a new point of view. As nearly all this writing is by religious persons, one may take it that, in the main, the wish is father to the thought. And it must be remembered that the overwhelming majority of the French people—as in all other European countries—have always professed some sort of religious belief, mostly that of the Roman Catholic Church. The number of convinced Freethinkers could never have reached more than above one

in ten, although their determination, and the logical strength of their position—a factor which counts for much more with the French than with the English—gave them a power in public affairs out of all proportion to their numbers.

One need, therefore, feel no surprise on learning that large numbers of the French soldiers and civilians attend church. And doubtless the more ceremonial character of Roman Catholic worship has its effect in impressing the English visitor. But to talk of this meaning a revival of religion in France seems little short of absurd. Writers say that because many of the French priests are in the firing line, Freethinkers are beginning to revise their attitude towards the Church. This we can hardly believe to be the case. Rational Freethought does not rest upon the character of priests, but upon the doctrines they teach, and these remain the same whether the priest is in the firing line or not. And French Freethinkers are not likely to forget that behind these priests stands the power, the intrigues, and the ambitions of the Roman Catholic Church. The result of its intrigues in France are too recent and too glaring for Frenchmen to easily permit it to regain its old official position in the national life.

What does appear to be the case—and this is confirmed by private information—is that the principal agents of the Church in France, the Jesuits, are making a strenuous endeavor to gain something from the War. Driven from the elementary schools, they are using efforts to secure posts as directors of the higher education, intriguing for appointments in the military schools, etc. In this way they hope to be able to exert some sort of a determining influence on national affairs, and perhaps enable the Church to regain its old official position in the nation. We do not believe they will succeed in this, although it is not unlikely that some gains will be made. In this matter, however, we may trust the Freethinkers to be on their guard, and any real advance made by the Church towards re-establishing a political supremacy may easily become the cause of a decisive reverse. And against advances in other directions, there are always the forces of reason and enlightenment.

Some of the comments on the alleged growth of religion in France are very curious. Thus, a writer in the *Church Times*, while admitting the evil of the old official religion in France, and admitting also the growth of Freethought in France since 1870, says that "behind the official irreligion of the country there was coming to the birth a new France, sternly moral, profoundly religious, which paid little attention to the chicaneries of parliamentary politics." But really—from the religious point of view—it ought to read that the "official irreligion" of France and the spread of Freethought led to immorality and national demoralisation. If a new France, "sternly moral," grew up side by side with the growth of Freethought, there is at least an arguable case in favor of the proposition that the growth of Freethought played a powerful part in bringing this new France to birth. Personally, we believe this to be the case. The *Church Times* proves rather too much—not for us, but for its religious readers.

According to the Newspaper Press Directory, there were ninety-one fewer British newspapers at the beginning of 1915 than there were at the beginning of 1914. This decrease represented five months of war only. All these papers relied on advertisements as well as circulation. Without any advertisements, and in the teeth of a formidable boycott, the *Freethinker* has kept its flag flying for over thirty years, and has not reduced its size during the War period.

An amusing hoax was perpetrated upon Spalding (Lincolnshire) folk by a Belgian soldier, who claimed to have killed "40,000" Germans, and who was entertained at a public dinner. The "hero" was exposed by the press. In the credulous days of the Gospels, the yarn would have crystallised into "history."

The secularisation of the Sabbath is worrying some parsons, and the Rev. J. B. Marshall, of Southend-on-Sea, has been bemoaning the old-fashioned Sunday, which he says "was one of the great bulwarks of our national glory and strength." We do not regret the bad old days, when the only Sabbath alternatives were the gospel-shop and the public-house, which meant spiritual or spirituous intoxication.

The *Sunderland Daily Echo* reports a sermon by the Rev. A. A. Body on the Miracle of Mons, which proves that he belongs to that large body which believes that any story will do so long as it promotes the interests of religion. Mr. Body

has been "investigating" the story and, of course, believes it. His evidence was of the usual kind. "Some soldiers" told him they saw the angels. "A soldier friend" told him that another soldier he knew had seen them. "A lady informant" of "undoubted integrity" had another lady friend who had been informed by soldiers that they saw an angel with outspread wings. And a colonel said to the lady, "the thing happened, I saw it myself." The surprising thing is the modesty which prevents any verifiable name and address being given. It is evident that Mr. Body thinks any sort of a story does for a religious congregation.

On the other hand, J. E. Seymour, late 3rd Hussars, writes the following letter to the *Daily Mail* of August 20:—

"Sir,—The general retirement of the British Expeditionary Force began on August 22, 1914, and they fought a rear-guard action in the Mons-Cambrai-Le Cateau region from August 23 to August 26, commonly termed the retreat from Mons.

"As a cavalryman I was fighting rearguard actions from August 22 to September 6, and I never saw any angels during that time, though I did hear of one man seeing the 'devil,' which eventually turned out to be an old blind cow.

"Since August 22 I have spoken to thousands of men who went through the retirement, and I never heard angels referred to. Also while this controversy has been in progress I have spoken with soldiers on this subject who described it as 'bosh.'—J. E. SEYMOUR, late 3rd Hussars."

We are afraid that Mr. Seymour is somewhat lacking in development of his spiritual nature.

A "Soldier's Mother" writes to the *Times* protesting against the distribution of mascots to soldiers. She asks that we should turn from these "idols" to God, and asks "What have these to do with lucky horseshoes?" etc. The connection between the two things is closer than "Soldier's Mother" thinks. The belief in God is only another order of "mascot," and the superstitious temper that finds comfort in the one is fundamentally the same as that which finds comfort in the other.

The English have been accused by foreigners of taking their pleasures sadly. In a recent issue of the so-called comic paper, *Punch*, the Kaiser is depicted in a cartoon as starting back at the sight of Christ hanging on the cross. Even Dr. Martin Luther could jest better than that.

A great Roman poet has told us there are tears in human affairs. Sometimes there are smiles. A Sunday-school excursion at Southend-on-Sea was overtaken by a bad thunderstorm whilst the band was playing "There's a Friend for Little Children, above the bright blue sky."

That pious nobleman, Lord Hugh Cecil, who is nearly forty-six, has taken up flying, and has made a cross-channel flight. Let us hope that he will be more fortunate than the Founder of the Christian Religion, who made one record ascent and was seen no more.

Canon Dormer Pierce, who has travelled in Russia, says "there could be no greater contrast than between the spiritual habits of the Russians and the English people. This is not a compliment to the Greek Church."

The War-babies are a myth; the story of the Russian Army crossing England was another; and the "Angels of Mons" shows that there is still much credulity in the world. But people are not so gullible as they once were. No one pretends to-day that 5,000 Belgian Refugees have been fed with three sardines and two buns; or that dead soldiers have been restored to life.

"The Americans strike one as an intensely religious people. Materialism repels them," says Mr. Cecil Chesterton. A more caustic critic has pointed out that the Benighted States is the home of fancy religions.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, during a recent visit to Soissons, was greatly impressed by the damage done to the cathedral by the Germans. As he walked away, he said, "That cathedral is a load on my mind." May we call it "The white man's burden"?

The clergy are always telling us that Materialism is dead, but some laymen have their doubts. The *Standard* says, "Mr. Wells and his recent work seems to put a full stop to the age of materialistic thought." This looks as if the writer thought that Materialism was to be stopped by fiction.

To Correspondents.

TRUSTEES' HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £136 2s. 4d. Received since:—Mr. and Mrs. J. Neate, £1; "Constable," 10s. *Per J. Ainge*: S. Leeson, £1; D. Winterton, 5s.; G. Bartlett, 5s.; W. Leeson, 5s.; A. Wade, 2s. 6d.; J. Hopkins, 2s. 6d.; J. Ainge, 2s. 6d.; A. Letts, 1s.; W. Clarke, 1s.; H. Leeson, 1s. Total, £25s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*: F. Maclachlan, 5s.

J. BRUCE.—Glad you found Mr. Cohen's articles on the Mons Angels useful. The really remarkable thing about the whole business is, not that the stories should have been circulated, but that so little notice has been taken of the number of leading clergymen who professed to have evidence of the truth of the vision. The claim was made *before* Mr. Machen explained how he invented the story; but when it was made clear that these clergymen had invented the evidence, no one appeared to be surprised or shocked. Evidently to lie for the glory of God is still taken by the vast body of Christians to be an excusable practice.

J. BOWEN.—Certainly it would be a good plan for anyone having business in the Courts to provide themselves with a copy of the Oaths Act. A letter to the Secretary of the N. S. S. will bring a leaflet containing all the necessary information.

Owing to the demands on our space, we are obliged to hold over a number of replies to letters until next week. We regret it, but the problem of putting about twenty pages of matter into sixteen is, so far as we are concerned, insoluble. Correspondents will please note, and exercise due charity towards the editorial department.

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

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

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

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

URGENT 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.

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

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

Personal.

SOME weeks ago a paragraph of mine in "Acid Drops" (p. 487), called attention to a contravention of Bradlaugh's Oaths Act (1887) at the Old Bailey in the case of a juror who was objected to on the ground that having no religious belief he should not be allowed to try a serious case. I suggested that it was high time the Lord Chancellor should set an examination paper on the subject of the oath and that the people at the Old Bailey should receive one of the earliest copies. I did not at that time know the identity of the juror who was turned out of court. It was merely a public case in the newspapers. So far as I know that was the first mention of the matter in the London press. It was one of those cases that appealed directly to a Freethought journalist, and did not require any special stimulus to press it on his attention.

I referred to the same case in the following week. By that time I had learnt quite accidentally from a letter of Mr. A. B. Moss's that the juror who was turned out of court because he had no religious belief and who raised no protest on that account at the time and on the spot, was Mr. H. Cowell, a member of the executive of the National Secular Society. I said nothing very harsh, and should have been quite prepared to see the matter drop. There was also a front page article in that very same number from my pen, and when I wrote it I was still ignorant of the ejected juror's identity. He now explains that he is rather deaf, and really did not know what it was all about; but the newspapers all gave the same report. His rejection—which he took to be his expulsion, for he walked out of court

—was grounded entirely upon Mr. Muir's statement that a man with his peculiar views ought not to be allowed to try a serious case. What Mr. Muir really wanted was to detach the Atheist from the Crown jurors in the matter in litigation, but that is what he said, and that is what the Judge heard, and that is what the newspaper men reported. What was there to prevent me from taking it as an ordinary newspaper case? All that I wrote about it would have been the same had Mr. Cowell's name never appeared.

* * *

Mr. Moss is a good fellow, yet he has something in him of what is called the stickler, and at his instigation I, not being able to go to London myself, was not able to set any machinery going, as Bradlaugh used to do, to stop the defiance of his Oaths Act in a court of law, all I could do was to point out that the real point at issue, when I found out who Mr. Cowell was, was whatever eminence in the Freethought Party he possessed rendered his action all the worse. A public man is under a greater responsibility than a private one, and Mr. Cowell ought to have seen this, so that every bit of praise I spared him helped to reduce his offence. Let me here indeed say that had I known the identity of the ejected juror in the first instance, I should never have mentioned him afterwards. I have a reason for this, but it can wait. There is no need to be in a hurry about these things, they press themselves upon the world in course of time. Accordingly, I made a few mixed remarks about Mr. Cowell's action, emphasising the fact that he ought to have acted differently as a representative Freethinker, and that the more representative he considered himself to be, the more representative ought to have been his public action.

* * *

That is the point! I have already said that Mr. Cowell does not provoke any interest of mine, but I have said, and still maintain, that a certain measure of courage is due to the self-respect of a soldier of Freethought. A civilian may run away from the enemy; a soldier is bound to stand his ground. Mr. Cowell did *not* stand his ground, and there is nothing more in it.

* * *

Claiming a right of reply, Mr. Cowell defends himself by attacking me in last week's *Freethinker*. He forgets it is not I who am charged with anything. There is only one person in this charge, and that is Mr. Cowell. Mr. Cowell says he did his duty two days after in another case. I am only discussing what he did in this case. I cannot, for my part, see what Mr. Cowell's remarks upon me have to do with either him or myself, but they do concern the general public, whose mind must not be abused.

* * *

I am sure no one, for instance, has ever yet seen me walk out of court at the instance of a lawyer, and the order of a judge. I am sure no one ever knew me fail to understand what I was sent out for. Mr. Cowell charges me with having "either a very exalted opinion of my own position, or a very low one of my colleagues"—taking himself, I suppose, as a normal specimen—which I am glad to think is untrue. He admits that I am "President of the N. S. S.," but says that he is "Vice-President," as if there were only one specific vice-president, and all the other vice-presidents, except himself, with whom he has been sitting for years, are phantoms. A vice-president may be, owing to accident, a poor sort of creature; the President never can be so. There are reasons for this. Mr. Cowell does indeed belong to the same Society that I do. In a sense that makes him my colleague. In another sense the statement is a flippancy. Suppose I ask him what has he ever done for Freethought that is particularly worth mentioning? But I will tell him one thing about myself which is very well known, and, therefore, better worth telling. The Secular Society, Limited, is really my creation. From infancy to maturity I have been father and mother to it.

Freethinkers have been made by it as free as Christians. We attain the full rights and dignities of citizenship. I founded and have upheld the *Freethinker* for over thirty years, with the help, of course, of devoted and energetic pens. I have written quite a library of separate books and pamphlets of my own. I have co-operated with nearly all advanced societies at considerable risk of time and health. I have faced the judges three times, the worst one gave me my historic year of imprisonment, and amongst the names of those who condemned it was that of the great Herbert Spencer. George Meredith referred to me as one who was fighting for "the best of causes, profitless though I must know it to be." I am grateful to all who stood by me and aided me in this long fight, and I assure them, whatever "a vice-president" thinks, I do not, and never shall, forget them. * * *

Mr. Cowell goes out of his way to inform the world that he "has to say" that his services to the cause "have always been given gratuitously." Has he ever found anyone expressing a wish to pay for them? The only servant I know of who is paid a salary in the N. S. S. is the Secretary. The suggestion regarding others is false and ridiculous. The presidency of the N. S. S. has always been an unpaid post. Bradlaugh passed it over to me by the Society's vote on the same conditions, and I have held it—a quarter of a century—as an unpaid post ever since. * * *

With regard to the Secular Society, Ltd., solicitors have been paid, counsel pleading in court have been paid, reporters have been paid. I like to see them earning their money; but where do I look in? The fact is, I did not want to look in. I was working for a principle and a cause. "Gratuitously!" Many workers for Freethought, according to their opportunities, might say that with, perhaps, a better record. My work admits of no such comparison. I have given all I had, I have given my life. * * *

I do not like talking in this way. When I started criticising the action of a fellow citizen in a Court of Justice, I had no knowledge of his identity. The disclosure, however, made no difference to my treatment of the case, but it induced me to remark that a vice-president ought to have known how to act with some dignity and courage on such an occasion. Mr. Cowell defends himself, not by denying the facts of the case, for they could not be denied, but by resenting the word "cowardice" as a fair description of his share in them. Mr. Cowell is free to search the dictionary for something he considers more appropriate. I began by discussing a public principle, and so I will end.

G. W. FOOTE.

The World's Premier Plant.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 534.)

COLUMBUS saw cotton in use in the West Indies in the fifteenth century, and his successors found it among the civilised races of Mexico and Peru. It had long been in use with the Peruvians, who employed cotton clothing for their mummies, and among the spoils sent from conquered Mexico by the sanguinary Cortez to Charles V. were magnificent cotton fabrics beautifully dyed in various colors. But at that period, and for many years to come, cotton was most extensively grown and manufactured in the Eastern World, and only in quite recent days has the Land of the West become the great centre of the industry.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the cotton consumers of Europe had to rely upon the Far East, the Levant, and the West Indies for their raw material, but before the American Civil War the initiative, energy, and more scientific agriculture of the Southern planters had almost obtained a mono-

poly of the fibre so necessary to the rising manufactures of England and continental Europe.

The English became acquainted with cotton in the Middle Ages, very probably from knowledge gleaned from the Saracens during the Crusades. But little progress was made until the fifteenth century, when the persecuted Flemings sought safety from their religious oppressors in our freer land, and brought with them the mystery of their cotton handicraft. The modern manufacture of cotton really began its amazing career in the late eighteenth century. For the period 1786-90, out of 63,000 bales of cotton imported to our island, 45,000 bales arrived from the British West Indies, while the United States sent us 100 bales only. In the quinquennial period 1846-50, as Mr. Ellison, the author of *The Cotton Trade of Great Britain*, informs us, we were indebted to the United States for 1,297,238 bales, while the West Indian exports had shrunk to 1,910 bales. By 1856 West Indian cotton had dwindled to 660 bales, while the American exports to England had increased to 3,186,790 bales.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, our West Indian possessions furnished us with 70 per cent. of our cotton, but the rapidly expanding American plantations were commencing to drive their neighboring competitors from the market. Not can it be claimed that the island planters permanently suffered, for they soon discovered that it paid them better to devote their capital and labor to the production of sugar and other profitable commodities.

The first recorded shipment of cotton into Britain occurs in a thirteenth century document, and the French were also acquainted with the staple at that time. Germany, Holland, and Switzerland were using cotton in the sixteenth, and Russia utilised it in the eighteenth century. But it was mainly used for making candle-wicks or for blending with flax and woolen textiles right down to the end of the last-named century. The earliest English-made calico—town of Calicut—was produced in 1788. Before that year cotton yarn had been utilised as weft only, the warp being furnished by flax or wool. Perhaps we may remark for the benefit of the uninitiated that the loom uses two sets of threads in forming the web. These are termed warp and filling. The set running lengthwise is the warp, and those threads extending from side to side—the transverse threads—constitute the filling or weft, or as some call them, the woof.

Hargreave's "spinning jenny," which was invented in 1764 and patented in 1770, proved unable to secure a cotton yarn strong enough for warp; but this disadvantage was surmounted by Arkwright's "water frame," which introduced the principle of spinning by rollers. Hargreave's "spinning jenny" was practically superseded by Crompton's "mule," a contrivance which owes its name to the circumstance that it united the principles of both the earlier inventions. The "mule" was patented in 1779. Another name adopted for the "mule" was the "muslin wheel," for the reason that it evoked a finer and more regular yarn than either Arkwright's or Hargreave's inventions.

Previous to Crompton's discovery, the advance of the cotton industry had been tardy, the cotton imports of 1779 being 6 million lb., while nearly a million lb. was consumed in 1764 against about 1 million lb. in 1751. "In 1785," states Mr. Ellison—

"Arkwright's patents, which comprised improvements connected with carding, drawing, roving, and spinning, were thrown open, and the industry at once advanced by leaps and bounds—the imports of cotton rose to 18 million lb. in 1785 and 31 million lb. in 1790. There was now a plethora of yarn, but this was overcome by improvements in weaving. Dr. Cartwright introduced the power loom in 1785, and added to its utility in 1787."

From 1790 to 1797 raw cotton was seriously needed, and prices rose rapidly, until they nearly doubled. The spinners appealed to India for supplies, when the invention of Whitney's "saw gin" in

...vastly improved the American export, so that in 1800 46 million lb. of cotton were landed on the shores. Meanwhile, Bell had made "cylinder spinning" possible, and this invention "enabled one man and a boy to do the work of 100 men and 100 boys." Oxy-muriatic acid was now utilised in bleaching. This process was revolutionary, for labor which had previously occupied several months could now be completed in a few days.

Watts' steam engine was applied to cotton spinning and manufacturing in 1785. During the nineteenth century nearly all the earlier inventions were greatly improved, but progress in spinning was for many years more marked than in weaving. The improved "self-acting mule" of 1830, and Kenworthy and Ballough's "power loom" of 1841, worked wonderful changes. This last invention, in addition to the saving of labor it produced, also succeeded in turning out a larger quantity, as well as a superior quality of cloth. Still later improvements have led to augmented output and lessened cost of manufacture. For example, Hargreave's earliest jenny had eight spindles only, but the number grew by degrees up to 120. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the mule carried about 200 spindles; now possesses from 1,000 to 1,200 while within a few generations "the speed at which the spindles revolve has been increased from 7,000 revolutions per minute to 10,000 revolutions." Various other recent improvements are of equal importance.

The cost of both spinning and weaving has now been greatly reduced. Calico which sold at six shillings a yard towards the close of the eighteenth century may now be purchased for as many pence. Other manufactured cottons have not, however, fallen to the same extent, although they are immensely cheaper than they were. The general use of Hargreave's and Arkwright's brain products—that is, their inventions—led, between 1785 and 1790, to an enormous increase in consumption. The remarkable increase in the volume of cotton commerce between 1800 and 1840 was very materially due to the invention of the "self-acting mule." During the next twenty years (1840-60), the power-loom's efficiency was considerably developed, but the great expansion of the cotton industry which this period witnessed must be in large measure attributed to the opening of commercial relations with China.

In 1861 the Northern and Southern States of America were at war, and in 1862 British cotton production declined to 524 million lb. against 1,257 million in 1861 and 1,891 million in 1860. India and other cotton countries rendered Lancashire what they could, but a heavy deficit remained. The Civil War ended in 1865, trade with America was reopened, and the cotton imports in 1866 rose to 1,377 million lb., and the Lancashire industry soon regained its earlier prosperity. During the cotton famine the mills were reduced to half-time, and in September, 1862, nearly a quarter of a million cotton operatives and others connected with the industry were unemployed, while 165,000 other workers were only partially employed. At the same period 284,000 men, or twenty-four per cent. of the entire population of the affected area, were in receipt of some relief in one form or other. In the three following years the privation and misery were heart-breaking, although the unemployment was not quite so great as in 1862. But, from first to last, the Lancashire famine was responsible for a direct loss to the Lancashire industry of between £65,000,000 and £100,000,000, including some £28,000,000 to £30,000,000 of wages to the operatives. May the great Western county never again be overtaken by the cotton calamity!

The cotton industry forms the foundation of nearly the entire economic activity of Lancashire. This vast manufacturing district is situated chiefly, though not entirely, on the famous coalfields of South Lancashire. The total contents of these coal measures are estimated at 4,580,000,000 tons. The coal deposits already contained iron, but the yield of metal is nearly at an end. Originally a pastoral

people, the natives of Lancashire employed the Pennines as sheep runs, and the wool formed a valuable article of export to the Continent. At a later date a local industry grew up, and, as the fifteenth century drew to its close, several towns were beginning to become important centres of the woollen trade. With the increased use of cotton, which was to some degree due to the discovery of the Cape route to India, the hereditarily proficient Lancastrian handicraftsmen easily turned from woollen to cotton manufactures. At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century the spinning and weaving of cotton became established in the County Palatine. But the industry remained precarious so long as the business was dependent upon the cotton sent from the Levant to London for consignment to Lancashire. In such circumstances, the cost of carriage became a very serious item. But with the development of cotton culture in North America, the industry was placed on a sounder basis. The neighboring port of Liverpool, which is seated much nearer the leading industrial districts than London, then became the chief landing-place for raw cotton imports. The proximity of the Mersey city proved of immense advantage to Lancashire. But a further fact of immeasurable moment resides in the extremely favorable climate of the county.

The prevailing air currents blow from the Atlantic, and these westerly winds are heavily charged with moisture, and when they reach the Pennine hills they are driven upwards and cooled. The surrounding atmosphere is therefore extremely humid, and this phenomenon is of transcendent importance to the cotton-spinner, as the damp air moistens the fibre, particularly the finer qualities, and prevents it from breaking. Were the air drier, the cotton, in company with other fine vegetable fibres, would snap. These climatic peculiarities reveal themselves in the division of labor which has slowly arisen within the industry itself. As Professor McFarlane, of Manchester University, points out:—

"The spinning towns—Oldham, Bolton, Bury, Stalybridge, and others—lie in valleys up which the winds from the ocean may easily blow. Of the weaving towns, on the other hand, Blackburn, Darwen, Accrington, Nelson, Colne, and others, lie sheltered to some extent, while Preston and Chorley have the rainfall of the Lancashire plain, which is lower than that of the Pennine slopes. Thus, the towns situated most favorably for spinning developed that branch of the industry, while others without these advantages took more naturally to weaving."

The British merchant marine has also served Lancashire well, for the men who go down to the sea in ships have carried its commodities at reasonable charges to every port in the world.

When compared with its past giant strides, the cotton manufacture now progresses slowly. Still, in the period 1908-10, England could claim the possession of forty per cent. of the entire globe's cotton-spinning spindles. Britain specialises more and more in the finer qualities; so, despite the enormous number of our spindles, not more than twenty per cent. of the raw cotton worked up in the world's mills is manufactured in our island. The average amount of cotton consumed per spindle in 1912 has been estimated at 35.2 lb. in England, 82.4 lb. in Germany, and 88.4 lb. in the States.

While not wishing to play the part of Cassandra, one may perhaps be permitted to observe that the pre-eminence so long enjoyed by Lancashire may not prove eternal. While our cotton industry is nearly stationary, those of other countries are rapidly advancing, and the introduction of humidifiers may deprive Lancashire of her climatal advantages. We have hitherto relied principally upon the American crop. But in consequence of the vastly increased consumption of cotton in the United States factories, and the growing demand for the fibre in continental Europe and elsewhere, there is a tendency towards a restriction of the quantities available for the British industry. The quality of the American staple is so

much superior to that produced in any quantity in other countries, that it threatens to remain the world's leading cotton product. The demand for raw cotton seems likely to outrun the supply.

England's dependence upon America for cotton has occasioned considerable uneasiness. In 1902, the British Cotton-Growing Association was founded, and this organisation has carried out a series of experiments with the object of discovering a way out of the difficulty. Some of the more sanguine look to India and Egypt to make good the prospective deficiency. But it has been objected that little may be hoped for from India, while the suitable soil of Egypt is already under cultivation, and, although the quality of the Nile cotton is extremely good, a very small increase in production is to be anticipated.

Sea Island cotton is being successfully cultivated in the West Indies, and the crop is increasing. Australia and New Zealand promise very little assistance. It is from Africa that the relief is most likely to come. British Central Africa is thought to possess about twenty million acres of suitable cotton soil. Thousands of acres have already been planted, and satisfactory results are confidently expected. Some of the West African colonies and protectorates possess soil and climate favorable to the plant. In South Africa its growth is being encouraged. Let us trust that the labors of the Association will meet with the reward they merit, and that the future supply of this exceedingly important fibre will be placed on a solidly enduring foundation.

T. F. PALMER.

The Latest Champion of the Faith.—II.

(Concluded from p. 541.)

THESE discrepancies, it may be said, do not prove that the writer of the Acts was not a companion of Paul. Be it so; but let us continue the comparison. Returning to Galatians, we find it stated that—

"after the space of fourteen years [from the previous visit] I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain."

This is evidently the visit which "Luke" has set out to describe in Acts xv. (We may remark here that "Luke" has interposed a visit to Jerusalem during the fourteen years' interval, of which Paul says nothing—see Acts xi. 29-30. As Paul, in the epistle to the Galatians, purports to be giving an exhaustive enumeration of his visits to the church of Jerusalem, it seems evident that the visit in Acts xi. never occurred.) According to "Luke," the visit in Acts xv. was in the character of a deputation from the church of Antioch, in consequence of the trouble caused there by the Judaising party. We read:—

"And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

When they got there, instead of the private conference with "them who were of repute," described by Paul, "Luke" gives an account of a council which he alleges took place in the presence of "all the multitude," at which Paul and Barnabas described "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."

There is no reconciliation possible between these two versions. According to Paul himself, he was moved "by revelation" (the meaning of which, whatever it may be exactly, excludes the hypothesis of a formal deputation on behalf of the Antiochene community, such as is described in Acts xv. 2) to go up to Jerusalem and confer privately with the leaders of the church there, in order to satisfy himself that he

he was conducting his missionary work on proper lines. According to "Luke," Paul is deputed by the church of Antioch to go up, and attends on their behalf at a public council, at which set speeches are made, a regular decision arrived at, and delegates appointed to communicate the result to the church of Antioch.

According to the account in Galatians, the apostles with whom Paul privately conferred on this occasion were Peter, James, and John. Paul informs us that they—

"imparted nothing to me: but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision.....and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision: only they would that we should remember the poor: which very thing I was also zealous to do."

How does the account in Acts compare with this? So far from "imparting nothing to" Paul, the apostles in Acts xv., after the public meeting and the set speeches, issue an authoritative decree for Paul and his companions to take back to the Church of Antioch. Whereas, in Paul's account, the result of the informal conference is to leave him a free hand in the administration of his churches, subject only to an occasional monetary contribution to the needs of the "poor" of Jerusalem; in the Acts a definite charge is laid upon the Gentile converts to "abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled" (Acts xv. 22-29).

From this comparison it would appear that, from whatever source the author of the Acts derived the material for his fifteenth chapter, it was not from Paul himself, and the presumption is against rather than in favor of his having been a companion of Paul. Possibly the writer of the Acts had the epistle to the Galatians in front of him, and endeavored in a clumsy way to "write up" the account he found there, not seeing that in doing so he materially contradicted the original narrative.

The subsequent discrepancy is graver still. According to the impression left by the Acts, the controversy respecting the validity of the Jewish law was finally settled by the so-called "council" of Jerusalem. From the epistles, however, nothing is more evident than that the dispute referred to as having preceded the conference was only the beginning of the breach between the Pauline and Jewish parties in the Church. The compromise between Paul and the apostles broke down almost at once. Paul continues:—

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; inasmuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

This important breach was evidently of some considerable duration. It had not been healed when the epistle to the Galatians was written; otherwise Paul, in fairness to Peter, must have mentioned that the quarrel had had a satisfactory termination; which he does not. Now what has the author of the Acts to say of this grave split between the two chief figures in the early Church? Absolutely nothing! The whole incident is decorously suppressed. There is, indeed, a reference to the breach between Paul and Barnabas, but it is attributed in the Acts to a personal difference as to whether "John, who was called Mark," should accompany them on their next missionary journey or not. The impression is deliberately conveyed that the great controversy of principles was now closed. This suppression of the truth is, perhaps,

the gravest count in the indictment against the historicity of the Acts.

At this point may be noticed in passing the difficulty raised by the so-called "we-sections" of the Acts. Nothing but the occurrence of these passages could have induced intelligent critics to attribute the whole work to a companion of Paul. These sections, which comprise nine verses of chapter xvi, and the greater part of chapters xx. to xxviii., can be accounted for in one of the following ways:—

(1) They may be fragments of a document written by a companion of Paul, and incorporated by the author of the Acts in his work, either (a) to suggest that he was an eye-witness himself, when he was not, or (b) in good faith, but without altering the person, the source of quotation was well known in the compiler's day.

These alternatives are probably excluded by the identity of style between the sections in question and the rest of the work.

(2) The whole work may be from the hand of a companion of Paul (the orthodox view). If so, the unworthiness of the general narrative is most seriously prejudiced by the discrepancies, already shown to exist, between the Acts and the Epistles; and the author of the Acts can hardly be acquitted of "writing for a purpose."

(3) The "we-sections" may be free renderings by the author of rough notes by a companion of Paul, which had come into his possession. The similarity of style is then accounted for by the compiler having "written up" the note-book into an orderly narrative. Hypotheses (2) and (3) are both possible, and it is our intention here to offer one rather than the other for final acceptance. The writer personally inclines to (3).

To return now to our comparison between the Acts and the Epistles. It is evident from the latter, as we have pointed out, that the Jerusalem conference was the beginning of the long and bitter controversy between the party of "the circumcision" and the party of Paul. After the breach between Paul and Peter at Antioch, it is evident from the epistle to the Galatians, and the second epistle to the Corinthians, that a determined effort was made by the Jewish party in the Church to root out Paulinism, even to the Gentile churches, and that their attempts were with much initial success. The epistle to the Romans was written expressly to counteract this propaganda, and is therefore far the most important document in the New Testament for evidence on the real history of the rise of Pauline Christianity. The second epistle to the Corinthians is only second to it in importance. We learn from chapters x. and xi. of that epistle that the Jewish-Christian party called themselves the party "of Christ" *par excellence* (2 Cor. x. 7; cf. 1 Cor. i. 12). They ridiculed Paul's personality and manner; they denied the validity of his apostleship, and the genuineness of his "revelations"; they asserted the exclusive authority of the original twelve apostles, and boasted of their greater knowledge of the actual life and teaching of Jesus. The conflict lasted for years. In the epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, Paul still warns his converts against the party of "the circumcision," the preachers of ceremonial observances (Phil. iii. 2-21; Col. ii. 16-23).

Of all this most important controversy we learn absolutely nothing from the Acts. The writer has much to say of such ephemeral matters as the riot about "Diana of the Ephesians," the various speeches Paul is said to have made before Felix, Festus, etc., and the vicissitudes of the voyage to Rome; but of the great dispute which had so vital a bearing on the very history of Christianity we are told nothing.

Even in the accounts of journeys there are discrepancies between the Acts and the epistles which make it more difficult to believe that the writer was a companion of Paul. From the first epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter iii. 1-3, we infer that Timothy accompanied Paul to Athens, was sent by him from Athens on a mission to Thessalonica, and rejoined

Paul later at Athens, or perhaps at Corinth. In Acts xvii. 13 to xviii. 5, the writer distinctly says that Timothy did not accompany Paul to Athens, but remained at Berea with Silas, the two subsequently joining Paul at Corinth. Again, the second epistle to the Corinthians mentions three visits of Paul to Corinth; the Acts only record two (chapters xviii. 1 and xx. 2 (?)).

So much, then, for the historical exactitude of the author of the Acts. Obviously, in the face of such facts, the doubtless interesting speculations in which Mr. Simpson indulges, as to whether that writer was a doctor by profession, whether he had read Hippocrates, Galen, and Dioscorides, etc., lose their importance. Even if he was a physician, it does not prove that he was identical with "Luke, the beloved physician," referred to in Col. iv. 14, of whom we know practically nothing. It is surely conceivable that there were two Christian physicians between the age of Paul and the middle of the second century. To establish the identity of the author of the Acts, physician or no physician, and Paul's friend Luke, requires more evidence than the archaeological researches of Sir William Ramsay, the critical reputation of Professor Harnack, and the assertion of Mr. Simpson.

Mr. Simpson would do well, therefore, to abstain from pretending that the case against the historicity of the Third Gospel and the Acts is an invention of German professors, to admit which is to be guilty of treason to the Allied cause, and of moral complicity in the atrocities in Belgium! He speaks of German historians, Treitschke, Sybel, and Mommsen, using their learning to prove a thesis. This is, unfortunately, true of too many historians in all ages and countries. Even in this country we have the "tendencious" histories of Macaulay, Carlyle, and Froude, not to mention the scandalous so-called "history of England" concocted by Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher and Mr. Rudyard Kipling for the benefit of public schools. To say, therefore, that the histories of the New Testament display "tendencies" is only to say that they exhibit the weakness of historians in general, while, of course, they lack the critical capacity and objective instinct for truth which can only be expected in an age of science and of scholarship.

It will not surprise readers of the *Freethinker*, after this, to note that Mr. H. B. Simpson accepts the monstrous myth of the angels at Mons! "It has recently been suggested," he writes in a footnote, "that these narratives had their rise in an imaginative story published in a London evening paper, which told how the spirits of the English archers of Agincourt appeared in aid of our Army in Flanders. This is scarcely a probable explanation of the belief which some of our soldiers undoubtedly entertain." Now, Mr. Simpson must be aware, firstly, that nothing whatever was heard of these miraculous happenings at the time, or at all until after the publication of Mr. Arthur Machen's fantasy in the *Evening News*; secondly, that the difficulty has been to find any officers or soldiers who will vouch publicly for the truth of the stories. All that we have, up to the present, is the assurance of certain soldiers (unnamed) who say they saw the angels. The insolence with which vulgar requests for evidence are treated by these humbugs may be exemplified by the following quotation from a letter by Mr. William Crouch in the *Church Times* of July 30:—

"The demand for evidence reminds me of the Jews requiring a sign; and our Lord's condemnation of those who did so as an evil and adulterous generation is not yet erased from my Bible."

Even so, Amen! I wish Mr. H. B. Simpson, C.B., joy of his company.

ROBERT ARCH.

Guessing is only fertile in proportion to the fertility of the experience it reproduces. If a man knows little, he can infer little.—George Henry Lewes.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.
OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Truth About the Bible"; 6, "The Trinity."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 7.30, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, a Lecture. Regent's Park: 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.15, a Lecture.

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



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