

# THE Freethinker

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*The first demand of the State upon the individual is not for self-sacrifice, but for self-development.*

KARL PEARSON.

## From a Christian Standpoint.

"THANK God for the Zeppelins," said the Bishop of London, and on October 13 there were many who had an opportunity of returning thanks if they felt so inclined. Presumably, Bishop Ingram did so, although I hope that I am wrong in making the assumption. At any rate, a Zeppelin raid on the "Eastern Counties and London Area" resulted—according to the official list—in the death of 56 people and the wounding of 114. The Bishop of London was not amongst either the killed or the wounded.

The day after the raid a crowded meeting was held at the Cannon-street Hotel for the purpose of urging upon the Government the necessity of adopting measures to combat similar raids in the future. A resolution was passed declaring the definite belief that the only effectual method of putting a stop to Zeppelin raids was to adopt "a systematic policy of reprisals" by British and French aeroplanes on German towns. The meeting believed that when Germans find their women and children and civilians subjected to bomb-throwing by British and French airmen, their raids on our shores will cease.

I do not desire to say much about the wisdom of this policy. The method of raining down explosive bombs on sleeping towns and cities which have not the slightest sign of fortifications is villainous enough in all conscience. And its stupidity is equal to its villainy. For if Zeppelins managed to do ten times the damage they inflict, and murder ten times as many civilians, it could have no appreciable effect on the course of the War, save to stiffen our backs and make everybody more resolved than ever to see the thing through. Nor am I quite convinced that if our airmen kill German women and children, it will make their airmen less assiduous in attempting to kill ours. It is a common observation that brutality brutalises he that gives as much, or even more, than he who receives; and while I can quite appreciate the feelings of those who have actually been in an air raid—and I have been in the midst of two—that does not convince me of the wisdom of the plan proposed by the Cannon-street Hotel meeting.

I wish to call attention to a single incident that occurred at the meeting. The resolutions—there were two—were moved by the Vicar of Brompton, the Rev. A. W. Gough. Mr. Gough evidently differs a little from his Bishop in regarding Zeppelins as a blessing. He moved the resolution demanding reprisals, and said that he "supported the objects of the meeting from a Christian standpoint." The italics are mine.

From a Christian standpoint! The expression is superb! It is monumental! None but a Christian minister could have so risen to the occasion. Some years ago when we made war on King Thebaw, his Buddhist subjects went to their priests and asked what they were to do. They pointed out that Buddhism forbade the taking of life. More, it taught that he who took life must suffer the inevitable con-

sequences of his action. The Buddhist priests met the situation in what I am afraid the Vicar of Brompton would regard as a miserable way. They said they had nothing to do with the rights or wrongs of the War. If a man believed it to be his duty to take life in the defence of his country, that was a matter that lay between him and his conscience. But the moral law remained. And to take life necessarily lowered a man, even though it came under the guise of duty to one's country. The moral law was supreme.

Now, the Vicar of Brompton is also the representative of a religion. I do not know what he is paid to preach it, but I daresay it is a little above the starvation line. His religion also says "Thou shalt not kill." It says, moreover, that he is not to resist evil. He is to turn one cheek when the other is smitten. To love those that ill-treat him. And if any man sues him at law for his coat, he is to give him his cloak also. More; the question before the meeting was not put by *soldiers* asking whether they should fight. It was a question of whether they should advocate the killing of enemy women and children, as defenceless as our women and children who had been killed. And the Vicar said, Certainly; I advocate this from a Christian standpoint.

The expression is so complete, so all-embracing! It covers everything. An hostile critic—a crude Atheist, as Mr. Harold Begbie calls every questioner of his angels—might have suggested that the necessity for reprisals, the necessity for war itself even, demonstrated the impracticability of Christian teaching. He might have said that these things proved that Bishop Magee was right when he said that a country that attempted to regulate its life by the Sermon on the Mount could not exist for six weeks. Mr. Gough disarms all such criticism by saying, not that force of circumstances compel him to abrogate for a time his Christian teaching in favor of a lower ethic, but that he supported the resolution from a Christian standpoint.

The phrase explains so much. Ever since the War commenced it has been pointed out that the fact of all these Christian nations not being able to settle their differences by any other method than that of brutal warfare is a decisive disproof of the civilising value of Christianity. It has been said that the fact of Christian armies attacking each other while believing in the same God, each calling upon the same God for help, and each claiming that they have received it, is a spectacle that ought to shake people's faith in the virtue of religious belief and in the unifying power of Christian faith. But that is only from the point of view of the Materialist and the Atheist. It is quite all right—from the Christian standpoint.

Look at Bulgaria and the Balkan States. A few years ago these States were at war with the Turk. Our own papers were full of praise for these most Christian States that were fighting against the tyranny of the Turk. They called the war a crusade. It was a holy war—a war of the Cross against the Crescent; and Ferdinand of Bulgaria vowed never to rest content until he had placed the Christian Cross on the Mosque of Saint Sophia. They didn't do it; and no sooner had Mohammedan Turk and Christian Greek, Servian and Bulgarian, ceased to wage their "holy war," than Christian Servia and

Christian Bulgaria were at each other's throats. The quarrel was purely one of plunder. These Christian warriors had avowedly no other aim. And ever since this War started Christian Bulgaria has been in the market. It was ready to join in with whichever side offered the highest price. If Germany offered most, it would fight with her and with the Turks. If the Allies offered most, it was equally ready to fight against them. It was the same Ferdinand who had kissed the cross on the hilt of his sword and vowed to supplant the Turk, and over whom our own Christian writers shed so many tears of admiration. *Quite* the same Ferdinand—looking at things from the Christian standpoint.

Why, you can explain anything, reconcile anything—from the Christian standpoint. Unenlightened Freethinkers are always wondering why, if God can do so much, he does not do more than he actually accomplishes. They wonder why the God who can send a troop of angels to save a regiment cannot send enough to save an army; why he is so powerful in France and so powerless in Gallipoli. They wonder why, if God can protect a wayside cross or a church from German shells, he cannot, or does not, protect inoffensive women and children from German bombs. But they do not look at things from the right point of view. They forget how these things look from the Christian standpoint.

The Vicar of Brompton is truly immense. Not that his method is really new. Quite the contrary. When people believed that the Bible ordered the destruction of heretics and witches, they were looking at the world from the Christian standpoint. And when they taught quite the contrary, they were applying the same rule. It is the Christian standpoint that justifies a denunciation of evolution at one time, and its adoption as a part of Bible teaching at another. When Christian Spain blotted out a whole civilisation in South America, when Catholics butchered Protestants, or Protestants butchered Catholics, they were all justified from the Christian standpoint. They said so, and one must pay them the compliment of believing they thought so.

The greatness of the Vicar of Brompton is that he does not appear to have minced matters in the least. He indulged in no subterfuges. He did not even say that he regretted the necessity for reprisals. He faced the suggestion of treating German women and children as German airships have treated us without a quiver. He said it is necessary that this should be done, and that we should practice the same methods of slaughter that has covered the very name of German with infamy. He believed in all this because he looked at things from the Christian standpoint.

The Christian standpoint!

C. COHEN.

## Slow and Intermittent Progress of Freethought.—II.

(Concluded from p. 659.)

THE Bible contains many passages which only Freethinkers could have written, but not one of its books can legitimately be regarded as a plea for Atheism. The drama of Job is very largely an exposure of the belief in the justice and goodness of Jehovah; but in the last chapter the patriarch is represented as abhorring himself and repenting in dust and ashes because he was supposed to have had a direct vision of the majesty and benevolence of the Most High. In Proverbs, as Mr. Robertson points out, there are verses which are "admittedly the expression of a skeptic's conviction that God cannot be known; but the book as a whole rests upon a Theistic foundation. The nearest approach to genuine Freethought is to be found in Ecclesiastes." Probably, in its original form this treatise was wholly atheistic. The late Hebrew scholar, Cheyne, says that to him "Koboloth is not a Theist in any vital sense in his philosophic meditations." But, as Mr. Robertson well puts it, "Of Greek or other Atheism there is no direct trace

in the Hebrew literature; and the Rationalism of the Sadducees, who were substantially the priestly party, was like the Rationalism of the Brahmans and the Egyptian priests—something esoteric and withheld from the multitude." When we cross over to ancient Greece the case is entirely different. From very early times we discern a secular trend in both poetry and philosophy. In ancient Greece there was no priestly class or organisation. As Mr. Robertson says, "the higher thinking was done not by an order of priests pledged to cults, but by independent laymen." Even Professor Mahaffy acknowledges that "epic poetry, from having been purely religious, became purely secular." "After having treated men and heroes in subordination to the gods, it came to treat the gods in relation to men. Indeed, it may be said of Homer that in the image of man created he God." Commenting on this statement, and others like it, Mr. Robertson is more strictly accurate when he says:—

"Still, it cannot be said that in the *Iliad* there is any clear hint of religious skepticism, though the gods are so wholly in the likeness of men that the lower deities fight with heroes and are worsted, while Zeus and Here quarrel like any earthly couple. In the *Odyssey* there is a bare hint of possible speculation in the use of the word *atheos*; but it is applied only in the phrase *ouk atheoi*, 'not without a God,' in the sense of similar expressions in other passages and in the *Iliad*. The idea was that sometimes the gods directly meddled. When Odysseus accuses the suitors of not dreading the gods, he has no thought of accusing them of unbelief" (vol. i, p. 127).

What characterises the Homeric poems is their "free treatment of things hitherto sacred," and this was bound "not only to affect the attitude of the lay listener towards the current religion," but also to "react on the religious consciousness." And this freedom of treatment is characteristic of all the great Greek poets and philosophers. The Greek spirit was fundamentally a free spirit. It is true that Socrates, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle "fell victims in different degrees to the bigotry of the populace," but it is also true, as Mr. Robertson observes, that the three "taught in freedom for many years till political faction turned popular bigotry against them."

Ancient Rome derived whatever freedom of thought it had from Greece:—

"When Rome, advancing in the career of conquest, had developed a large aristocratic class, living a city life, with leisure for intellectual interests, and had come in continuous contact with the conquered Grecian cities of Southern Italy, its educated men underwent a literary and a rationalistic influence at the same time, and were the more ready to give up all practical belief in their own slightly defined gods when they found Greeks explaining away theirs" (*Ibid*, pp. 197-8).

The intellectual freedom of Greece bore fruit in Rome. Epicurus found a magnificent expounder in the poet Lucretius, whose *On the Nature of Things* is an immortal Freethought classic. Of Lucretius Mr. Robertson says:—

"He was practically the first systematic freethinking propagandist; so full is he of his purpose that after his stately prologue to *alma Venus*, who is for him not a personification of the genetic forces of Nature, he plunges straight into his impeachment of religion as a foul tyranny from which thinking men were first freed by Epicurus. The sonorous verse vibrates with an indignation such as Shelley's in *Queen Mab*; religion is figured as *horribili super aspectu mortalibus inestans*; a little farther on its deeds are denounced as *sclerosas atque impia*, 'wicked and impious,' the religious terror being thus turned against itself; and a moving picture of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia justifies the whole" (*Ibid*, p. 281).

Paganism, though often intensely religious, was on the whole exceedingly tolerant. Julius Caesar, a confirmed Freethinker, was permitted to hold and fulfil the function of high pontiff. "The greatest and most intellectual man in the ancient world had no part in the faith which was supposed to have determined the success of the most powerful of all the ancient nations." Tolerance has been, from the beginning, a prominent feature of Buddhism. The

same thing is more or less true of Mohammedanism. Everybody is familiar with Omar Khayyam's bold, freethinking verses; and it is well-known how profoundly indebted Europe is to the emancipating influence of Arab philosophy. Of all religions Christianity has been the most bitterly intolerant of all criticism. Heresies innumerable have always troubled the Church, and every heresy is the expression of the instinctive desire for freedom of thought; but all heresies had to be suppressed at whatever cost. Chapter ix. of this *Short History* deals with them at length. "It would be an error," we read, "to suppose that even in the Dark Ages, so-called, the spirit of critical reason was wholly absent from the life of Christendom. It had simply grown very rare, and was the more discountenanced when it strove to speak. But the most systematic suppression of heresies could not secure that no private heresy should remain." To think freely was treated as a crime that needed severe punishment. Immorality was rampant among the clergy and the laity alike, and was officially winked at; but the slightest heresy was hunted down with the utmost cruelty. Why were the Albigenses exterminated? Not because they were morally depraved, their morality being of very superior order; but simply because they had the audacity to think for themselves on some theological points. It is a noteworthy fact that heretics, as a rule, were animated by the noblest spirit and motives, being exceptionally delightful friends and neighbors, though the Church could never acknowledge such a fact. Even to-day it is habitual with many divines to calumniate Freethinkers and hold them responsible for all sorts of wickedness and crime. Only a few weeks ago a popular Nonconformist clergyman called Robespierre an Atheist simply because of his connection with the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution. Very frequently indeed has the Reign of Terror been characterised as a sample of what would happen under regnant Freethought. Mr. Robertson proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Robespierre was a firm believer in the Supreme Being, and set up his worship as a protest against the Atheistic movement, the leaders of which he cruelly put to death:—

"Thus the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror, if it is to be charged on any species of philosophical doctrine rather than on the unscrupulous policy of the enemies of the Revolution, in and out of France, stands to the credit of a belief in a God, the creed of Frederick, Turgot, Necker, Franklin, Pitt, and Washington" (vol. ii., p. 279).

Again, he says:—

"No part of the history of Freethought has been more distorted than that at which it is embroiled in the French Revolution. The conventional view in England still is that the Revolution was the work of Deists and Atheists, but chiefly of the latter; that they suppressed Christianity, and set up a worship of a Goddess of Reason, represented by a woman of the town; and that the bloodshed of the Terror represented the application of their principles to government, or at least, the political result of the withdrawal of religious checks" (*Ibid.*, p. 274).

*A Short History of Freethought* is a work that deserves the widest circulation. To Freethinkers it is invaluable as a thesaurus of the most useful information; and if Christians were to study it with care their belief in the divinity of the Church would be very considerably shaken. On thing is certain; persecution, whether by Church or State, can never destroy the love of Freedom in the human breast.

J. T. LLOYD.

#### DEATH.

A wise man thinks of nothing so little as death, and his meditation is of life, not death.

There is nothing that a free man thinks of less, than of death.—*Spinoza*.

It is clear that in normal death, or the death of decay, or the death of debility, the sentient state is the farthest possible from that which accompanies vigorous life, and that sensations and emotions all gradually decrease in intensity, before they finally cease. Thus, the dread of dying, which most people feel, is unwarranted.—*Herbert Spencer*.

#### An Old-World Secularist.

"For proud and fiery and swift and bold—  
Wine of life from heart of gold,  
The blood of his heathen manhood rolled  
Full-billowed through his veins."

—JAMES THOMSON.

"Bird of the little, bright, grey, golden morn,  
First of all and sweetest singer born."

—SWINBURNE.

THE personality of Lucretius, the great Roman poet, is at once the most extraordinary and the vaguest of any in the world of letters. He comes before us in his works as distinctly as any other writer; he is, as it were, always present, but the details of his life are so shadowy and so misunderstood. Yet, in some ways, this old-world Freethinker may come closer to our modern sympathies than many others of those of the far-off time in which he lived. Across the gulf of twenty centuries, across the far deeper abyss of an older civilisation and an alien language, we recognise in him a brave soldier in the Army of Freedom.

His name is immortalised by his atheistic work, *On the Nature of Things* (*De Rerum Natura*), which is the finest didactic poem in any language. According to Lucretius, the great curse of human nature is religion, which priests still use to fool and degrade mankind. No lingering doubt, timidity, or affected reverence for what his manly reason condemned as false, restrained him in his masterly denunciation of religion as unworthy alike of philosophers and men. He treated with scorn and earnest indignation the priestly cant that attempted to shield the contradictions, puerilities, and immoralities of religion, by denouncing those who submitted unauthenticated fables and theories to the test of reason. He fiercely denied the immortality of the soul, on arguments founded on Materialism. He also denied the doctrines of a divine creation of the world and of a superintending Providence. Couched under other forms, arrived at by other courses, the principles of this brave Roman are the same, or almost the same, as those accepted by the Freethinkers of to-day.

The attitude of Lucretius was rationalistic. He came forward as the champion of Reason. Indeed, at times, we might almost fancy he was a prehistoric Voltaire, confuting the arguments of the priests, or an old-world Huxley, deriding the pseudo-science of theologians interested in defending an organised hypocrisy. Lucretius mocked at the clerical idea of a future retribution with which the old priests of Paganism terrorised the multitude. The fairy tales of the tortures of the damned, he said, were merely the projection into futurity of that blind cowardice, those craving passions, that baulked ambition, that restless dissatisfaction, those penal inflictions that cause the misery and degradation of human life.

Now and again his cheek flushes with anger, as when he records, in lines of great beauty, the terrible guilt, prompted by religion, against the most sacred ties of humanity. No poet has presented us with a picture more finished and exquisite than that of the awful sacrifice of Iphigenia, a story "too deep for tears." We see the hapless maiden, trembling by the altar, without power of speech, the murderous priest, the sorrowing father, the strong men powerless, and the bloody end. Lucretius concludes his account with lines that make us feel his heart throb with indignation as we read:—

"She died—

That so the ships the wished-for wind might gain  
And air puff out their canvas. Learn thou then  
To what damned deeds religion urges men."

This is the one idea that runs like a golden thread through his whole poem, *On the Nature of Things*. He is man's champion against Priestcraft. He tilts like a knight-errant against every form of religious terror, one by one unhorsing them, and leaving them disarmed and prostrate. He charges first at the most important and formidable, and then, having cleared the ground about him, demolishes at his leisure the more scattered squadrons. His very

method is but part of the modern method; it is the modern method in its infancy. We may gain some notion of the general effect of his masterpiece, *On the Nature of Things*, if we conceive Tennyson to have devoted his genius to versifying Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, or Swinburne to have subordinated his splendid gifts to the poetic presentment of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Everywhere Lucretius treats Priestcraft with passionate invective. In his contests with the clerics, an atmosphere as congenial to the Roman as the breath of battle, he proved himself the sublimest of his country's poets.

As a proof of his wonderful soundness and integrity as a thinker, it is not sufficient to say that he is like the moderns. Writing about half a century before the alleged birth of the mythical Christ, he anticipated many of the scientific ideas of the nineteenth century. With most remarkable foresight he perceived the truth of evolution, the indestructibility of matter, the survival of the fittest, the origin of language, the progress of society. To us these things are but comparatively recent tidings. Twenty long centuries ago they dawned on the prophetic mind of this great Roman poet "dreaming on things to come."

A most marked characteristic of Lucretius was his passionate ardor for knowledge. His pathos and tenderness in contemplating the riddle of life have already been noticed. His was a tenderness of a strong and manly character, self-reliant, and feeling sympathy with the weak and helpless, even with the animal world as well as humanity. He voices the helpless grief of brutes sorrowing for their young. His allusions to children are exquisitely touching and beautiful. His love of science, his austerity of character, the magnificence of his genius, rank him among the really great poets, who, like fixed stars, shine for ever in the firmament of time. When we think of the present condition of priest-ridden Russia, Spain, Portugal, and his beloved Italy; when we reflect on the struggle of reason and religion, written in blood and fire during the centuries, we feel it but just to acknowledge that this old-world Secularist fought the battle for Humanity. Lucretius helps us to understand the magnitude of the struggle between reason and unreason. In his day, each, as it were, armed with simpler weapons, fought together. Now, Freethought, armed with weapons so much more formidable and deadly, marches to battle in the confident hope of final victory.

MIMNERMUS.

## Famous Freethinkers I Have Known.—X.

JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER.

IN his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* Mr. Wheeler concludes a very brief notice of his own work by the following modest sentence: "The compiler of the present work is a willing drudge in the cause he loves, and hopes to empty many an inkstand in the service of Freethought." That desire he faithfully fulfilled during the many years he devoted to the cause of human emancipation from the tyranny of an ignorant and cruel superstition. I first met Mr. Wheeler, nearly forty years ago, in Edinburgh, but I did not get to know him intimately until after the trial of Mr. Foote, Mr. Ramsey, and Mr. Kemp for Blasphemy in 1883. During the time that Mr. Foote was in gaol, Mr. Wheeler was the "willing drudge" who did most of the work on the *Freethinker*, although for some time Dr. Aveling acted as the editor. My friend Mr. Wm. Heaford and I were occasional contributors, and Mr. W. P. Ball and other well-known writers made the publication as lively as possible during the time that Mr. Foote bravely endured twelve months of Christian persecution in an English gaol.

Sometimes poor Wheeler seemed to me to wear a very worried look. Detectives were often hanging about the shop, sniffing about for every publication

which they considered blasphemous. After Mr. Foote came out of gaol and resumed the editorship of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Wheeler appeared to be much more cheerful. A few years later, when Mr. Foote secured new premises on Clerkenwell-green, I used to pay him occasional visits, and on these occasions I often met Mr. J. M. Wheeler and Mr. W. P. Ball, both of whom were on the regular staff of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Wheeler acting as the sub-editor and Mr. Ball as a regular contributor.

But it was when I was on my holidays at Ramegate, and Mr. Foote and his family came to spend their holidays in the Isle of Thanet, that sometimes Mr. Wheeler would pay us a visit, and in our walks over the cliffs, and the conversations we had on all kinds of subjects, that I realised what a clever little man Joe Wheeler was; how wide his reading, how vast his knowledge, and how accurate his deductions on all the subjects I heard him discuss.

No man, I am bound to say, however, understood Joseph Mazzini Wheeler half as well as his friend, philosopher, and guide, George Wm. Foote. Although, in business, Mr. Foote stood in the relation of employer and Mr. Wheeler employed, there was no assumption of superiority on the part of Mr. Foote; they were more like brothers and companions than anything else. Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler were both born in the same year, viz., 1850; and although one came from Plymouth and the other from London, they had many ideas and tastes in common. They both had a wonderful knowledge of the poets and a keen appreciation of the best of their work, and of its value as literature; they were both admirers of Shelley and Burns and Shakespeare, and among novelists of Thomas Hardy and George Meredith. They were critics as well as admirers, students as well as hero-worshippers. Often, when the N. S. S. Conference has been held in the provinces, Mr. Wheeler and I have travelled together, and discussed some of the latest works on religion and science.

Joe Wheeler, as we used to call him, was not only a prolific writer, and contributed articles to all the Freethought journals, but he also wrote articles on advanced subjects to some of the leading monthly magazines. On one occasion I remember going to see him at his house at Holloway, and taking my two sons with me to see his library; and I have often laughed at my boys' description of how, when they opened the door of one of his rooms, the books were piled up with such careless profusion that they fell on their heads as they entered the door. But what books they were! how carefully they had been read and annotated! In his time J. M. Wheeler had contributed to the *National Reformer*, the *Secularist*, the *Freethinker*, the *Liberal*, *Progress*, and the *Freethinker*, of which he was sub-editor from 1882; he also wrote articles occasionally under the signatures of "Laon" and "Lucianus." He was the author of *Frauds and Follies of the Fathers*, which was published in 1888; *Footsteps of the Past*, a collection of essays in anthropology and comparative religion, in 1886; *Crimes of Christianity*, written in conjunction with Mr. Foote, with whom he also edited *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, the Jewish life of Jesus. Mr. Wheeler wrote an extremely fine preface to my little work on *Christianity and Evolution*.

Another collection of essays from his pen contains some of his best work. A series of essays called *Bible Studies*, the preface to which was written by the editor of the *Freethinker*—Mr. G. W. Foote.

One sentence in it beautifully describes the value of the book. Mr. Foote says:—

"Careful readers of this little book will find it full of precious information. Mr. Wheeler has a peculiarly wide acquaintance with the literature of these subjects. He has gathered from far and wide, like the summer bee, and what he yields is not an undigested mass of facts, but the pure honey of truth."

The essays on *Phallic Worship among the Jews*, *Religion and Magic*, and *The Evolution of Jehovah* are well worth preserving. There is also much valuable information in the essays on *Taboos*, *Blood Rites*, and

escapegoats. Indeed, Mr. Wheeler's articles and essays are of enduring value; they were not written with a view of merely satisfying the whims or desires of a particular class of readers, but they contained real solid information and accurate deductions from facts that will make them of value to generation after generation of Freethinkers.

Mr. Wheeler could write learnedly on *The Apocryphal Gospels* and show the part they played in early Christian belief, and turn from this and discuss, with equal facility and knowledge, *Confucianism*, and compare its teachings with those of Christianity. Considering that he contributed a weekly article to the *Freethinker* for years, and that, in addition, he wrote articles for *Progress* and other magazines, it was wonderful how fresh and original his articles were, and how free from pedantry and egotism. They were written with a clearness and terseness that appealed to the man in the street as well as the philosopher and thinker. Recently I have gone through several volumes of the *Freethinker* of the early eighties, and I am truly astonished at the scope and versatility of Mr. Wheeler's knowledge and talent. In fact, those old *Freethinkers* contain some wonderful reading, and I sometimes wonder that a selection from the articles by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, Mr. W. P. Ball, and Mr. Foote and others are not often reprinted—they make such capital reading. For several years J. M. Wheeler plodded on with his work, always taking a keen interest in everything that concerned the well-being of the movement. Although he had a large heart, a generous nature, and a gentle disposition, he had a weak body and a highly-strung nervous organisation. By-and-bye his strenuous efforts began to tell upon him and, under the constant strain, his nervous system broke down, the chords seemed to break like the strings of a musical instrument—he collapsed. His great brain could bear the strain no longer; his reason gave way; and, alas! he ended his days in an asylum. But while his brain was strong and his intellect clear, he gave all his energies and all his talent to the service of Freethought.

When he died on May, 5, 1898, hundreds of Freethinkers throughout the length and breadth of the land mourned his loss. On the occasion of his funeral I attended at Highgate Cemetery, when his old friend and colleague, Mr. G. W. Foote, delivered a most pathetic and beautiful address at the graveside, before a very large and sympathetic crowd of admirers. Mr. Joseph Mazzini Wheeler had played his part in the great drama of life, and had played it well. And though a good many years have passed since we stood at his graveside, we still deplore his loss, and count his contributions to Freethought literature as the achievements of a brave soldier who fought a gallant fight in the cause of the emancipation of his fellows from the curse of an old and effete superstition.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## The Ethics of St. Paul.—II.

(Concluded from p. 669.)

HAVING now given a full account, within the limits imposed by space, of the theological basis of Paul's doctrine, let us look at some of the ethical applications. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians we find contained some of the solutions which Paul afforded to the practical questions put before him by his converts. Some of his judgments show a certain amount of sense, no doubt; but if the ethics of Christianity were as perfect as is alleged, then they all ought to have been on the same high level. That the ethics of Christianity leave much to be desired is shown by some of the curious positions taken up by Paul in this and other epistles.

Firstly, we notice that he perversely depreciates and condemns the faculty of reason. "God hath made foolish the wisdom of the world." "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." "Not many

wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise," etc. This is the proverbial position of the fox and the sour grapes. Because Paul was deficient in the reasoning faculty, he depreciated it in others, and pretended that his doctrines rested on other proofs than those of reason and common sense.

Secondly, on the question of marriage, Paul takes up a fundamentally degrading and false position. The Corinthian Christians had asked him whether marriage was permissible to a Christian. We propose to give the opening part of his reply, and let the words he employs speak for themselves. (1 Cor. vii. 1-9.)

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency. But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment. Yet I would that all men were even as I myself. [Paul was apparently a bachelor.] Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one man after this manner, and another after that. But I say to the unmarried and to widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."

This remarkable passage, a faithful commentary on which would be unsuitable to a weekly journal with a mixed circulation, is directly responsible for the appearance in the Church of England Marriage Service of certain passages, which it is hardly necessary to characterise as a scandal and an offence to public decency.

It is commonly asserted that Christianity has immensely raised the position of women. Let us see what Paul has to say about it:—

"I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head: for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man: for this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels" (1 Cor. xi. 3-10).

In reading this drivelling passage—there is no other word for it—we must of course bear in mind that Paul, like all Jews and Christians down to little more than a generation ago, believed literally that Eve had been made out of a rib of Adam by the god Yahweh. The last verse quoted, which brings in "the angels," will not be readily understood without further explanation. A passage in Genesis, which Paul of course accepted as inspired truth, related that, in the days before the Deluge, the "sons of God," *i.e.*, the angels, had become enamored of the "daughters of men," and that from their union had sprung a race of giants, whose appalling wickedness had provoked Yahweh to drown the whole earth in a flood. The reason Paul meant to give why women should cover their heads in church was to prevent any such *contretemps* arising from the presence of angels, who might have their susceptibilities roused if they saw the female worshippers unveiled!

From this it will be seen that Paul's conception of womanhood was thoroughly Oriental, and considerably lower than that of the ancestors of the Germanic races, as depicted by Tacitus.

Let us conclude this survey by a glance at Paul's attitude to the greatest social evil of his day, slavery.

This institution is thoroughly endorsed by him in several passages. "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it: but if thou canst become free, use it rather" (1 Cor. vi. 20-21). "Servants [i.e., slaves], be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ" (Eph. vi. 5). It is sometimes said that Paul's treatment of Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, is a marvel of Christian perfection. To the present writer, Paul seems to have been both mean and snobbish on the occasion in question. What are the facts? Philemon, so far as we can infer from the epistle addressed to him, was a well-to-do citizen, probably of Colossæ in Asia Minor, whose house was a meeting-place for Christian worship in that town (Philem. 1-2). He had a slave, named Onesimus, who pilfered some of his property and ran away to Rome. There he met Paul, and was converted to Christianity. Paul promptly exercised his influence over Onesimus to make him go back to Philemon, with a somewhat oleaginous letter to the latter asking him, as a personal favor, to treat him decently.

This episode may well serve as an epitome of the role Christianity has played throughout the ages in the conflicts of social classes. The Church has always contrived, first to secure an unbounded influence over the minds of the poor and oppressed, and then to render them thereby more obedient to their oppressors. In the Middle Ages, the Church always upheld the rights of the feudal baron over his serfs. To-day it upholds the rights of the capitalist class over the wage-earners. Its aim is always, in fact, that "Onesimus, who was aforesaid unprofitable" to his master, may be "profitable," both to Church and master alike (Philem. 10-11). How hypocritical, then, is the claim of Christianity to have been responsible for the abolition of slavery, or to be instrumental in the emancipation of the working class to-day!

Only, indeed, through the awakening of the working class to the insidious role played by the Churches in maintaining the established order, and to the futility of trusting in the philanthropic intentions of Parson Paul and Boss Philemon, will that emancipation come into sight.

ROBERT ARCH.

## Two Sonnets.

### I.

O WAR! Thou wholly vile and hateful Beast,  
 Who wert in twisted brains conceived and born!  
 Thou monstrous spoiler gorging at the feast  
 Thy cruel power from plenteous Peace has torn!  
 What wanton Passion's call could bring thee back  
 Thy horrid tale of agonies to trail  
 O'er happy souls, contriving with thy rack  
 From Joy herself to tear a hopeless wail?  
 "Ambition," say'st thou? Could she fall so deep  
 Beneath her honor as to make thee friend,  
 Thou friend of savage Lusts! Our mothers weep  
 Their shattered sons; for ease, on Death attend—  
 Is't thus Ambition feeds her far-flung fame?  
 Then let her share, foul Beast, thy sink of shame!

### II.

By noisome fumes are swallowed up the rays  
 Which Peace to Progress bent. Our hearts are low,  
 For what can be bequeathed to future days  
 From such as these? The best is bitter woo  
 In legacies of hate, and such the worst—  
 Our brains refuse to hold it. Mars is king,  
 His yoke great Vulcan bears; where Kindness nursed  
 There now his vicious wars have fixed their sting.  
 Yet e'en while raging through his noisy reign  
 He feels approach his glory's close—his doom—  
 Oblivion. Then shall Time remove the stain,  
 And give pure airs in which affections bloom.  
 So Cupid's tender darts shall prick our will,  
 And prove the merry god our tyrant still.

W. T. K.

## Acid Drops.

Christian Bulgaria has joined the War, and on the side of the Central European Powers and the Turks. The latter fact might be taken—we suppose—as an example of the way in which a Christian people turn one cheek when the other side is smitten, but for the fact that from the very outset it made it known that its services were in the market. It was ready to go in with the side that made the highest bid, and in this auction sale the advantage lay with Germany, which was, obviously, able to promise more than the Allies. Bulgaria was for sale, and Bulgaria has been bought; that is the whole moral of the entry of another Christian nation into this War.

Of course, its entry into the War has been accompanied by the usual crop of high-sounding proclamations. King Ferdinand calls on his people to witness "the unparalleled efforts which have been made for a whole year, since the beginning of the European War, for the maintenance of peace in the Balkans and the tranquillity of the country." All the other nations said the same. All these Christian powers were striving for peace, but not one could trust the other sufficiently to secure it. And Bulgaria, like all the others, calls on God to bless her in her enterprise, and sprinkles its proclamations with the usual appeals to patriotism, love of liberty, etc. Oh, these catchwords! They sound so great, and they mean so little; perhaps because they might mean so much. They are used by all, and their common use robs them of all real value. If the intelligence of peoples could only develop to the point of setting on one side phrases in favor of actualities, there would be a more promising outlook for the future of the world.

Archdeacon Paterson Smyth says that death is the "good angel of God," but "what a fright he gives us." The frightfulness is intensified for Christians, who think that there is a red-hot poker department in the next world.

Pearls of wisdom are always falling from Mr. Harold Begbie. One of his latest gems is that "Theism is the inescapable faith of Rationalism." Why not Polytheism? Christians worship three gods.

It appears to be very difficult for clergymen to avoid professional prejudice. Canon Scott Holland, writing on Swinburne's poetry, says that its vibrant music was Hebrew, and that "Biblical England pricked up its ears as it saw its finest jewels prostituted to the service of the goddesses of mud and slime." What Christian charity! Swinburne did not believe in gods or goddesses of mud or any other material. He left such delusions for the clergy and their dupes.

Mr. R. J. Campbell has returned to the Church of England, and one reason for his return seems obvious. He has been in ill-health, and a Nonconformist pastorate appears to have demanded more strength than he possessed. There are "softer" places in the Established Church. Still, we do not feel inclined to congratulate the Church of England on his return, nor the Nonconformists on his departure. His powers were always vastly overrated, and in any other walk of life than that of theology he would have attracted no attention whatever. He lacked the physical and mental stamina for a really great fight, just as he lacked the mental stamina for completely logical thinking. He appears to have attracted people by his head—but by its outside appearance, not by its inside capacity. Study the sermons of R. J. Campbell with those of, say, Butler or Newman, and the tremendous gulf that separates them will soon be recognised. One never gets more than vague, ill-digested generalities and amiable "yearnings." The principal proof of the intellectual bankruptcy of the Christian Church is the mental calibre of those who stand forth as its chief thinkers. A few generations ago they would never have emerged from obscurity, even in the Church.

Rev. S. W. Hughes says that he cannot believe that God is neutral in this War. Of course he is not. He is on the side of every one of the nations engaged. And he will be specially on the side of those that win. This is not neutrality; it is what one may call diplomatic intervention.

Dr. Karl Vecera, a Catholic priest, of Nicolsburg, Bohemia, has been sentenced to four months' imprisonment for *lese majeste*. He preached a sermon lacking in respect due to the Kaiser. The priest is, probably, petitioning the King of Kings to make things lively for Wilhelm.

A Mr. Walter Faber wants to "hang those who betrayed us as high as heaven." This would require "some" rope, as our American friends would say.

According to the pious *Westminster Gazette* a unique collection-box for churches has been invented by an Oklahoma man. When a high-value coin is dropped in there is silence, but a low-value coin causes a bell to ring. We suggest that the inventor should improve the machine by making it sound a whistle when a brace-button is inserted, and, if possible, the offender's portrait be taken.

The sectarian priest sometimes crops up in most unexpected places. In an advertisement for an anæsthetist and X-ray operator for a military hospital in France, it was stated that the applicant "must be a Church of England communicant." Presently we shall hear of a revival of religion among the medical attendants.

"We fight, we and our Allies, that God may live," said Mr. Bottomley a week or two ago. We hope that God will feel cheered up by the news. And now the editor of *John Bull* appears to be developing a quite abnormal power of detecting anything that might seem a reflection on religion. Thus, there is a Vicar of Boynton who has actually buried a dog in front of his study window, and engraved on the headstone, "Punch, for many years a loving friend to his master, who trusts in the mercy of God to see him hereafter. 'And all things ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'" *John Bull* is shocked. "That grave," we are told, "on the lawn of the vicarage is a dog's tomb, and perhaps we ought to be thankful that the vicar did not bury his pet in the churchyard." We have tried hard to feel shocked, but for the life of us we can't manage it. We are almost ashamed to relate that we even feel a little respect for the vicar who, loving his dog during its life, and believing in a hereafter, hopes to meet his canine friend there. *John Bull* says it is scarcely a reverent picture to imagine a man being greeted by a terrier's yelp at the gate of Paradise. Well, it is a very human one, even though it shocks the soul of the newly-converted editor of *John Bull*.

We have had the assurance from hundreds of the clergy that this War has developed a rare spirit of sacrifice in this Christian country. Here is a sample. The President of the National Federation of Boot Trades Associations told the Conference that "out of this time of adversity there was coming a glorious harvest for the boot and shoe trade." The method of reaping this harvest was explained. "From now onwards, to-day's prices of boots, no matter what they come to, you must all determine are going to be your prices for the future." Good news for the bootsellers; but it is probable that the general public will look at the matter from another point of view. Such, however, is the spirit of sacrifice generated by war!

The newspapers are making a fuss about the Earl of Charimont working at a munition factory at twenty-five shillings a week. Why not? The clergy inform us that "God" worked at a carpenter's bench.

The European War has stopped the pilgrimages to Lourdes, which is unpleasantly near the fighting lines, and the hospitals there are used for wounded soldiers. Evidently the military authorities do not believe in the healing value of the shrine, for they rely upon the ordinary medical and surgical appliances.

Although Mr. Horatio Bottomley has become very pious, he must be an *enfant terrible* to the Churches. In a recent issue of the *Sunday Pictorial*, he asks for a preacher "to weave the tangled skeins of the spiritual problems of this War into a pure white robe for the soul of man." Won't the 50,000 professional soul-savers in England be delighted?

Dr. Horton says that he heard a missionary from China say that "the War is the greatest argument for Christianity the Chinese have ever known.....The shrewd common sense of China has begun to see that the boasted civilisation of the world is of no value at all unless it is spiritualised, unless it is Christian." We can quite believe that some missionary said this; it is just the idiotic thing missionaries would say. But we fancy that no one outside an asylum—or a chapel—would believe it. The Chinese are not fools, and the spectacle of all the Christian nations of Europe doing their level best to butcher each other is no more likely to impress them with the value of Christianity than it impresses others. Even before the War the Chinese

used the state of things in the Western world—its crime, and misery, and vice—as a very cogent reason for having nothing to do with Christianity; and when to these is added this War, they are less than ever likely to bother with it. For the Chinese are, above all, a peaceful people. They have never prostituted the national energies to warfare, even though Christian cupidity and brutality has driven them some distance along that evil road.

The War has knocked a great many delusions on the head, and we should imagine that with thoughtful people it ought to have killed the idea that a nation degenerates without war, and develops bravery and endurance through warfare. There never has been a war that tested a man's power of endurance as this one has done, and we have no reason to doubt, and certainly no desire to decry, the many stories of sheer heroism that one reads and hears. Men in all the armies engaged—both with the Allies and against them—have faced death in a far more terrifying form than was common in previous wars, and have emerged from the ordeal in a way that shows the spirit of adventure and daring to be as strong as ever.

How, then, can it be said that the theory of warfare developing courage, and a long peace weakening it, is disproved? In this way. Putting on one side countries that possess a system of conscription, and in which all available men may, therefore, be said to have received a military training, and to that extent to have become habituated to mimic warfare, let us look at home. Only a small and very insignificant portion of our own people have ever seen war, or are used to the military life. Our Army is nominally a very small one. But at the present we have actually in the field certainly more than a million men—reckoning Australians, Canadians, and others, probably a million and a half. Much the larger portion of this number were until recently engaged in purely peaceful pursuits, and until war broke out had not the remotest intention of joining the Army. They joined, went through a brief training, and, once in the field, have shown a coolness under fire, a bravery that has elicited the admiration of all, and quite astonished many military men. But, it must be remembered, these men were not the product of militarism; they were the product of a peaceful social life. Militarism had nothing to do with the shaping of their character, or the creation of their courage. War did not make them; it only provided the occasion for their action. And the truth is, not that militarism creates virtues, but that it lives upon those qualities created and fostered by a peaceful, organised, social life. Just as an army is compelled to live upon a home industrial life, so it depends for its *morale* upon the qualities fostered in social life. It is as sterile in morals as it is in economics.

Pious people appear to have two convictions concerning the War. The one is that God is on our side. As Mr. Harold Begbie says, while it is possible that some Germans may have had visions of angels vouchsafed them, it is impossible to believe that the "angels of light have actually exercised their power upon the Austro-German side." The second conviction is that we must win because our financial resources are so much greater than those of Germany. God and gold. Poor "Tommy" appears in the scene only as a medium for the influence of the one and the expenditure of the other.

We have been favored with several copies of a now weekly paper called *New Days*, and after reading them, we rather prefer the old ones. It is not an avowedly Christian paper, but it has the cant of Christianity all over it, and the historic Christian disregard for truth. One of its writers has a most unintelligent criticism of Nietzsche, when it says he went incurably mad and declared himself Almighty God. This is quite untrue, although we may point out that it is quite common for lunatics to consider themselves God, just as it is common for other lunatics to believe themselves to be inspired by God. Nietzsche's teaching is, we are told, that all strong and ruthless crime is praiseworthy. It is surely not necessary to print falsehoods of this kind in order to criticise Nietzsche, but we suppose *New Days* knows the class of readers it is likely to attract.

In the same issue, another article falls foul of the newspaper press because it "collects all the Agnostics and Atheists to write for them." This is indeed news. We are aware, of course, that there are many Agnostics and Atheists on the press, but it is news that they are specially sought after. We have always been under the impression that unless these writers kept their opinions on religion to themselves, their places on the press would soon be vacant.

And the advice given is, "Let us only read Christian writers." Modesty prevents the writer saying, "Read only *New Days*."

Finally, we reprint the following gem in its entirety:—

"We desire to pay a tribute to the good work done by the Christian Evidence Society. Summer and winter, in the public parks, their speakers put the case for Christianity intelligently and fearlessly. The lecturers are, almost without exception, men of pronounced intellectual ability, sometimes showing evidence of scholarship which is highly appreciated by their audiences, composed mainly of working-class people. The infidel element is always well to the fore at these meetings, jeering, reviling, and criticising, but C.E.S. men are generally more than a match for their opponents. Their hardest task is that of explaining away higher criticism, and it is no easy matter to justify principles that have been torn to shreds by theologians like Dr. Sandy and his school."

"Men of pronounced intellectual ability"! "Sometimes showing evidence of scholarship"! Even the press seeking to collect Agnostics and Atheists for its columns pale before this. We wonder what will be the feelings of some unsuspecting reader of *New Days* who makes it his business to go and listen to these men of pronounced intellectual ability? The "tribute" is worthy of preservation.

"Observe," says the *Christian World*, "how Holy Scripture never destroys the reasonableness and proportion of Truth." What delightful and childlike innocence! Has the Christian journalist never met with the text, "He that believeth not shall be damned"? And has he any recollection of such very reasonable yarns as those of "Noah's Ark" and "Jonah and the Whale"?

A contemporary says that the Rev. R. J. Campbell's appearance suggests a "ruined archangel." We do not dispute the angelic comparison, but a Cabinet Minister's salary and two motor-cars do not spell ruin.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley says that Moses was the "most wonderful of all fighting priests." The dear old boy not only compiled his own dispatches but wrote an account of his own funeral.

A newspaper paragraph states that Lord Spencer has sold a Rembrandt painting for £35 000. And the Bible tells us that "God" was sold for thirty shillings.

In proof of the way in which the War is making for the development of religious belief, Dr. Horton says that "these sailors of ours who are guarding our coasts make the North Sea ring with the hymns of Zion." And he quotes the following *alleged* letter from a *boy* who is out with our fleet:—

"The winter has been rather a trying one for us in this tiny little craft; but, really, I never knew the companionship of a present Savior so thoroughly as I have since hostilities began. It would seem almost as if I were his only care, and that he made me a special study. The wonder of it is more marked when I remember how poor has been my service to him compared with all the great benefits with which he daily loads me. In answering my prayers, in subduing the storms just when they were at their worst, in giving me a thorough victory over my usual weakness, and in a thousand other ways; he makes me to lie down in green pastures, satisfied and at rest, contrary to all the seeming laws of warfare. These things I tell you not from convention or compulsion, but because they really are so, and because I should be thrice unworthy of his name if I forbore to tell out what great things he has done."

This is very touching, and the fact of our sailors making the North Sea ring with their hymns is one that has escaped the notice of every one who has written about the Fleet. That is, every one but Dr. Horton, and he, apparently, heard them at Hampstead. The letter from the *boy* is very touching, and we would give something to see it—still more to see the boy. As we probably shan't see either, we would suggest to Dr. Horton the advisability of getting boys to send him letters who write a little more like a sailor-boy, and a little less like—Dr. Horton.

According to the *Sunday Pictorial*, King George has about forty suits of clothes, and 400 British and foreign uniforms in readiness for use. Yet the "King of Kings" had not where to lay his head, and wore one seamless garment.

Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, has been airing her views of the War. She considers the European conflict as a "visitation" of God, due to some of the nations questioning the very existence of the Deity, and allowing Atheists and Materialists to dominate their literature and govern their press. Miss Corelli overlooks the fact that Turkey alone

worships one God, and all the rest pay their respects to three deities. Perhaps the "visitation" is due to too much Godism.

A well-known novelist, who is not fond of the limelight, refused recently to be interviewed. "My personal appearance," he wrote, "may be a gracious blend of Milton and Judas Iscariot, but I do not care to trade on it."

In the course of an anniversary sermon preached in connection with Foreign Missions the Rev. Dr. Kelman said that "Foreign Missions were based upon the ground of sheer necessity." *Whose* necessity we are not told. The present state of Christendom makes it appear as though—assuming that Christian missions are productive of any good—their chief field of exercise should be at home. It is neither the yellow Japanese, or Chinese, or the black African that threatens civilisation. That danger comes from the white Christians.

Dr. Kelman also said that he would rather sweep a crossing well than preach a crusade badly. Maybe, but crossing-sweeping would certainly not raise as much *dust* as preaching a mission.

Up to the time of writing we have not seen it announced that the better paid clergy have decided to surrender half their incomes for the service of the nation. They have urged the duty of sacrifice—on others—and, we dare say, have invested some part of their surplus wealth in the War Loan. But a good many can practice patriotism at five per cent.

Of all the cranky schemes that have been mooted during the past year, "The League for the Marrying of Broken Heroes" seems the crankiest. Two British clergymen are responsible for its existence, and the promoters say that "many noble-minded women will gladly give their lives and strength to ameliorate the conditions of such men," and the League calls upon all such to volunteer to marry them. Now, we have not a word to say against any woman marrying a soldier who returns from the War crippled for life, and we readily grant that many a man minus an arm or a leg, or otherwise, might form a quite desirable partner for life. But the idea that you can arrange these things by asking for women who will volunteer for this kind of marriage strikes us as supremely silly. The ones least likely to form happy marriages under such conditions would be the most likely to respond to the appeal—sentimental women led away by the emotion of the moment, and then venting their disenchantment on the object of their momentary solicitude. The "League" is a first-rate example of the ineffectiveness of the clergy. If the people wish to do their duty in this matter, let them see to it that those "broken in the wars" receive enough by way of pension to secure them from want for the rest of their lives. If all the clergy joined in a League to secure this, it would be a work of value. They will be quite able to look after their own marriages, without advertising for women to come along and marry them out of a spirit of pity.

A word or a phrase may be very indicative of a type of mind. The Rev. Dr. Griffith Jones was preaching the other day, before the Congregational Union, on "Immortality in the Light of the War." One wonders what kind of a light the War could shed on this subject. Man is not less, or more, immortal than he was before the War. Killing a man with bullet or bayonet sheds no more light on the topic than in the case of one who dies from disease or old age. Of course, people who believe in immortality, or who are inclined to believe in it, may be led by the casualty lists to reflect more upon the subject; but the evidence for or against remains exactly what it was. The title of Dr. Griffith Jones's sermon is merely symptomatic of the readiness of the clergy to exploit any emotion or passion that happens to be uppermost.

### Blessed are the Damned.

"HAVE Faith—else perish in Hell.  
Believe—and thou shalt be saved.  
Bless they that curse you"—(sometimes).  
"Love your enemies"—(when you are told to).  
"Reason—and thou art damned."  
All this is what the priests do tell,  
No wonder that we are deprived.  
How joyous are the times  
To the damned enlightened few;  
They who won't be crammed.  
Oh, Blessed are the Damned!

C. B. W.



### To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.**—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £161 17s. 4d. Received since:— J. De B. and Wife, £1 1s.; E. B. (second sub.), £1 1s.; W. Barton, 2s.; J. E. Cockcroft, 2s. 6d.; J. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; E. Baggett, 10s. 6d.; A. Taylor, 3s.; R. M., 2s. *Per Miss Vance:* J. M. Alexander (Melbourne), £4; Robert Stirton and Friends (Dundee, quarterly), £1 5s.; P. C. Harding, 5s.; J. G. Dobson, 5s. *Per E. Pinder:* Mrs. Martin, 1s.; G. H. Folwell, 4s.; R. Wheatley, 1s.; A. B. Taylor, 2s.; Hopkins, 2s. 6d.; S. Woolley, 1s.; W. Marston, 1s.; G. Shardlow, 2s.; J. T. Law, 2s.; T. Carter, 1s.; E. Pinder, 2s. 6d.; C. Pell, 2s.—Total, £1 2s.

**A. MILLAR.**—We agree with you that Mr. Foote, in the reminiscent vein, is interesting to Freethinkers. We have often urged him to write his reminiscences of the Freethought Movement, but now it is, unfortunately, too late.

**OPTIMIST.**—We do not usually notice unsigned communications, but your letter bears so many signs of sincerity, that we are tempted to depart from this rule. Thanks for your many suggestions.

**EX-LANCER.**—We never implied that all the clergy are swayed by monetary considerations. But we are certain that some are. And we are sure that they are no more proof against the bribe of wealth and position than any other class of men.

**W. BARTON.**—We are pleased that the *Freethinker* has given you so much pleasure. Yes, we quite know what it is to be in the midst of a Zeppelin raid, but in a way the very helplessness of one is a safeguard against fear—even if we were inclined to be panic-stricken.

**E. BAGGETT.**—Yours is a very effective manner of showing interest in the *Freethinker's* welfare.

**A. TAYLOR.**—We hope that our letter reached you in time to be of service, and that you experienced no official discourtesy.

**E. B. writes:**—"I think that, in his 'Soliloquy of the Rev. Mr. Binks,' 'E. G.' has inadvertently transposed 'the initials' of the biscuit makers, who are known only 'too well.' Huntly and Palmer are world renowned, but who are 'P. & H.'? The initials ('H. & P.') would serve 'E. G.'s' purpose equally well, as they would stand for Hell and Purgatory, which is much the same thing as Purgatory and Hell.

**R. MEARS.**—Perhaps there is some little wisdom in the old advice to believe only half of what one sees and a quarter of what one hears.

**"SIX YEARS' READER."**—We have not Draper's *Conflict* by us at the moment of writing, but if it is as you say, the statement must be a slip of the pen. It is probable that "argument" implied no more than criticism. But the fact is that the measurement of the sun's distance from the earth, and the calculation of the moon's path by Aristarchus, proves him to have had correct ideas of our solar system. He lived in the third century B.C.

**H. PORTER.**—If the parcel of back numbers of the *Freethinker* is delivered to our shop manager, he will be very pleased to see to their distribution as desired.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Death of G. W. Foote.

G. W. FOOTE is dead. That is the one fact that has been pressing upon me with hideous force since Sunday last, and I have no inclination to say more this week than is absolutely necessary. Next week it will be possible to write more fully and more freely. Up till Wednesday last he was making really good progress towards recovery. He was assiduous in taking his daily constitutional, and felt so much better that he had actually arranged to come up to the office on Monday or Tuesday (Oct.

18-19), and his wife tells me he was looking forward to his visit with pleasurable anticipation. On the 13th (Wednesday) he wrote me—it must have been about the last letter he did write—and asked me to go down and see him. I promised Friday. When I arrived it was to find him in bed. He had been taken suddenly ill on the Wednesday evening, but was then much better. I remained with him for about two hours, and although I recognised that he was very unwell, his voice was so strong and firm that I did not anticipate any immediate danger. We talked a little over business matters, and I returned home. On Sunday I received a summons to Westcliff, with the news that our great leader had died at 1.15 on the morning of that day. All his family—with the exception of his son, who is not in England—were with him to the end. These are the bare facts of the situation, and I do not purpose adding more now.

The cremation has been fixed for Thursday, October 21, at the City of London Crematorium, Little Ilford. The ceremony will take place at 1.45 p.m. I hope this notice will be in time for London friends, at least. And many will have learned the sad news from the columns of the daily press before the *Freethinker* reaches their hands.

The world has lost a great man and Freethought a fearless and incorruptible fighter. C. COHEN.

### Sugar Plums.

By the special request of the wife and family, there are to be no flowers at the funeral of Mr. Foote. We feel that this is quite in accord with what would have been his own desire, also, in this matter. Those who desire to be present at the funeral ceremony will find Manor Park Station on the Great Eastern Railway and Woodgrange Park on the Midland Railway are the nearest stations to the Crematorium. On the Great Eastern Railway there are convenient trains which leave Liverpool-street at 12.23 or 12.50, and from Fenchurch-street at 12.17 or 12.46.

There is a certain melancholy pleasure in being able to announce that nearly all the morning and evening papers in London gave a kindly worded notice of Mr. Foote's death. The *Daily Mail* published with the sketch a portrait of Mr. Foote, as did the *Daily Mirror*. The *Daily Chronicle*, after referring to him as "a scholar of ripe judgment and wide learning," added, "there have been, in recent years, few men of such uncompromising honesty and candor of character; few men whose public utterances seemed anti-Christian to the point of intolerance, yet whose private actions were so tolerant, generous, and free from malice and personal ambition."

We cannot see all the papers that are issued, even in London. We should, therefore, be greatly obliged if provincial readers would be good enough to forward us any references to Mr. Foote which appear in local papers. Such a record may be found useful in many ways.

Our next issue will be a Memorial Number. There will be a portrait of Mr. Foote, taken from a recent negative, with special memoirs by Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. F. J. Gould, and others, in addition to the usual *Freethinker* writers. Those who require extra copies of this issue should place their orders in good time.

In spite of a reduction in the number of its pages from sixteen to twelve, the *Christian Commonwealth* has been compelled to issue an urgent appeal for a thousand pounds to keep it afloat. The *Clarion* some time ago made a similar appeal for twenty pounds per week. We genuinely regret the necessity for both these appeals; it points to a bad state of affairs generally, and we would far rather see papers of a serious bent able to at least pay their running expenses. But when journals with a regular revenue from advertisements find themselves in these straits, our friends will the better recognise and appreciate the enormous difficulties that lie in the way of a journal such as the *Free-*

*thinker*. And we have not reduced the *Freethinker* either in quantity or quality.

Here is an illustration of one of the difficulties which seriously affect this paper. Some weeks ago our shop manager made arrangements with a newsagent in the City of London to make a good display of the *Freethinker*. One week was enough. The agent regretfully informed our shop manager that so many of his customers had informed him that they would take their custom elsewhere if this journal was displayed, that he was compelled to discontinue showing. We are not blaming the newsagent, but it is an outrage that this kind of pressure should be brought to bear upon men in business by unscrupulous bigots. And we hardly know how this kind of attack can be met. All we know is that it is bigotry which so largely prevents the *Freethinker* having the circulation which it deserves, and wielding the influence it ought to exert. The only corrective we can suggest at present is for each of our readers to do what they can to secure new ones. That not only helps us directly, but in time the increase in the number of readers would break down the boycott we have mentioned.

We had only just written the above paragraph when we received a letter from a new reader, from which we take the following:—

"I am rather surprised at being unable to get a copy in this town this last six weeks, and not being sure whether you have ceased to publish same, take the liberty of asking you. If your reply is that you still publish the paper, I will find out the reason why I am unable to get it, and failing a satisfactory answer from my newsagent, I shall order direct."

It is evident that our correspondent has received the not unusual report that the *Freethinker* was out of print, or had ceased to appear, and this is one of the cowardly ways in which the bigots attempt to do us injury. We do not think that a reader would be justified in demanding that his newsagent should display this paper to the injury of his business, but we think that Freethinkers are fully justified in demanding that their newsagent shall secure them copies when ordered, and if they declined to deal with them unless they did so, this would be done.

On another page will be found an advertisement of Mr. Foote's *Letters to the Clergy*. Although in the form of Open Letters to various eminent clergymen, the subjects dealt with are of perennial interest—Prayer, Miracles, Creation, etc., and they are written in Mr. Foote's best style. They are being sold at 3d. each, instead of the published 6d., and are admirable little books for those who wish to do a little inexpensive propagandist work.

The *Freethinker* is much more widely read than most people think, and its arguments and teachings have a habit of sticking. In the matter of the Mons Angels it was first in the field, and its exposure of the myth had not a little influence in the provincial press. Of course, no mention of the *Freethinker* was made—except in a very few cases, but that does not alter the point. Now, in the *Christian Commonwealth* a writer who fell foul of Mr. Harold Begbie for his almost incredible credulity, writes in reply to a rejoinder from Mr. Begbie:—

"My objection means that it is so fearfully difficult to believe in a God who can intervene successfully in human affairs, and yet concerning whom one never knows when he will intervene, or whether he will or not. If he could intervene to save Paris, why did he not intervene to save Liege or Warsaw? The fall of these places favored the German chances of success (I speak as a fool) as much as ever the fall of Paris would have done. If he could intervene to make the way of the Germans to Paris impassable, why does he not intervene to make the way to Constantinople easier for the Allies, whose cause he is supposed to be espousing? If he intervened to save a troopship (according to Dr. Horton's story) from aerial bombardment, why did he not intervene to save the innocent *Lusitania* from the submarine? It makes it so hard to believe, doesn't it? when your God can, but doesn't; when he makes a demonstration in force here, and not there; when he appears to act spasmodically and intermittently? A God who can be anywhere in particular is nowhere."

Our readers will, we think, recognise how very often similar statements have been made in the *Freethinker*. And, after all, when one Christian writes to prove that another Christian is illogical, he is almost compelled to fall back upon rationalistic arguments.

### The Friends of Liberty.

"Whose service is perfect freedom."

A PHILOSOPHER from the Celestial Empire once made a tour through Europe to investigate those great principles of liberty and justice, of which it is well known Europe possesses the

exclusive monopoly, in order to apply them, on his return home, to his own miserable country, that it might arrive at those higher heights of steady progress, settled order, and the like, of which we are enjoying the delights in Europe at the present moment. Having enjoyed for a while the hospitality of France and Italy, he turned his steps to Berne, the capital of Switzerland. Here he entered into conversation with an honest, dumpy, smooth-shaven, fat-faced, somewhat wrinkled Swiss. After he had spoken in more or less favorable terms of the ounce of liberty doled out in those two countries, the Swiss, with a fat grin of amiable superiority which extended from ear to ear, responded: "Yes! it is quite true the Italians have some idea of liberty; in fact, to tell you the truth, they have too much of it there, and here and in France it has degenerated into licence. On the contrary, in Switzerland we have succeeded in tempering it with just that measure of order and discipline which makes of it a perfect whole." The Chinaman took his leave of Switzerland and turned his steps to England. Having expressed his admiration of Swiss liberty as the perfect mean between liberty and licence to an English acquaintance, the latter, who was seated in an armchair, adjusted his pince-nez and scrutinised a copy of the *Times* he had on his knee with a kind of critical and concentrated intensity. At length, after having twiddled his thumbs a little, he graciously condescended to observe, with an impressive lisp, that the Swiss had some elementary ideas of liberty, but that true freedom (he emphasised the difference between the two terms) ought "to broaden slowly down from forcedness to precedent." In England, he remarked proudly, "the eternal process moving on," proceeds so smoothly and imperceptibly, that it would be impossible for the keenest analytical historian to distinguish the smallest difference between one country and another. Having been present at a hanging and seen several prisoners flogged to death in that centre of liberty and civilisation, the Chinaman now turned his steps towards Austria, Germany, and Russia. Everywhere he received the same reply, that the measure of freedom doled out in that particular country most perfectly adjusted the claims of liberty and order. In Austria the people, to give themselves the semblance of a liberty they had long been deprived of, devoted themselves to frivolity and debauchery, for the Government, while suppressing any noble expression of independent thought and conscience, winked at licentiousness in the press, as the surest means of enslaving its miserable dupes. In Russia there was not even this false semblance of liberty. Every one lay gagged and bound, while the authorities rifled their pockets with the most perfect disinvolution. In Germany it was much the same, only that there the licence of the people manifested itself in such disgusting forms that the Chinaman, who was a decent sort of fellow, could not repress his gey, and was taken with such vomiting that he had to fly the country. At last he reached the offices of the Spanish Inquisition. There he found hundreds of unfortunate wretches gagged, bound hand and foot, and subjected to every kind of torture imaginable.

"Here," said one of the Jesuit Fathers who had the management of the operations, "you see the only form of liberty which Christ and his Church really tolerate. Our Master, whose service is perfect freedom, said himself that he came not to bring peace but a sword, and to perfect humanity by suffering; and as you are nothing but a heathen Chinese, destined to eternal torment in Hell if not converted to Christianity (he made a sign to an attendant), the mercy and loving kindness, with which our whole being is suffused, renders it imperative that we do our best to save your immortal soul as well." In a moment the Chinese philosopher was trussed and settled upon one of the most excruciating of their torture traps, and if he has not been already torn to pieces by the Paladins of Liberty, he is being tortured there still.

W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A., Trin. Coll., Cam.

### The Fourth Gospel.

#### THE LAST SUPPER.

ACCORDING to the three Synoptical Gospels, "on the first day of unleavened bread"—that is, on the day when the paschal lamb was to be eaten in the evening—the disciples asked Jesus, "Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover?" Having been informed where they should find a room, they went and "made ready the passover"; and "when the hour was come" Jesus sat down to that meal with his disciples (Matt. xxvi. 17—20). After the passover had been eaten, Jesus

took bread and a cup of wine, and instituted what is called "the Lord's Supper": then, when they had sung a hymn, "they went out unto the Mount of Olives," and from there to "a place called Gethsemane"—where Jesus was shortly afterwards arrested and led away to the high priest's house.

The pseudo-John was well acquainted with this account; but he had no intention of following it in his new Gospel, thinking no doubt that he could make a better story himself. Writing under the name of the apostle John, he felt free to alter it wherever he thought proper: and he did so—root and branch. The only points in the old story which he retained were that Jesus and his disciples partook of a supper, and went the same night to Gethsemane—where he was arrested. Judas and the betrayal are mentioned, but with entirely new details, and less than one verse is devoted to Peter's denial of his Master. This last supper, in the new "Gospel of John" was not, however, the paschal meal, and it was not eaten in the evening of "the first day of unleavened bread," but on the evening preceding that day—which was called the Preparation for the pasover. In this account there is no institution of a Lord's Supper: instead of this Jesus rises from his seat "during the supper" and "laying aside his garments," takes a basin of water and a towel and "washes the disciples' feet, and wipes them with the towel," after which he takes his garments and sits down again, saying "If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." After this episode the supper is continued, during which we find the "beloved disciple" reclining in the Savior's bosom, while the little comedy of Judas and "the sop" is played. Immediately after the departure of Judas, Jesus makes a most extraordinary oration, sometimes addressing the disciples and sometimes "the Father" in heaven, which must have taken the Presbyter John a considerable time to compose; for it occupies no less than four chapters (John xiv., xv., xvi., xvii.) and part of another (xiii.). The pseudo-John, in fact, has taken five chapters to relate the events narrated in Mark xiv. 17—31, and even then he has omitted the principal event—the institution of "the Lord's Supper."

In this long oration there is not a single sentence (save two lines predicting the denial of Peter) that can be found in any of the other three Gospels: it is all new matter composed for the occasion by the pseudo-John himself. Here is what a Christian commentator says of this wonderful speech:—

"From John xiii. 31 to the end of chapter xvii. is the most solemn and affecting portion of the whole Gospel narrative. In it Jesus opens his heart to his chosen ones, and love, intense overflowing love, binds the Divine Master and his little band of faithful ones together. There is a tone of great peace and calm, as well as of holy awe, in these most blessed chapters. These were the last moments which the Lord spent in the midst of his own, before his Passion, and words full of heavenly meaning flowed during them from his holy lips. All that his heart, glowing with love, had yet to say to his own was compressed into this short space of time..... Surrounding their Master, the disciples listened to the words of life. Finally, in the sublime prayer of the Savior (chap. xvii.) the whole soul of Christ flowed forth in earnest intercession for his own to his heavenly Father."

Here we have a marked illustration of the manner in which a large class of Christians regard the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel—as well as the probable reason why the early Christian Church admitted the authenticity of that Gospel. But neither the ancient nor modern believers ever thought of inquiring by what means the writer—if we assume him to be the apostle John—kept in his memory all that was uttered in this long address. Nearly all Biblical critics admit that the "Gospel of John" was not written much before the last decade of the first century. The question then arises, How did this late writer keep all the sayings recorded in these four chapters fresh in his memory for at least half a century? Assuming that Jesus really made

this long speech, he only delivered it once, and no qualified reporter was present on that occasion to take it down. The apostle John, if present, heard it spoken once: but fifty or sixty years later—when he was old and feeble—he reproduced the whole of the speech verbatim. How was it possible that he was able to remember such a lengthy address? Here, I can imagine some of these unthinking believers adducing the following alleged utterance of Jesus as a sufficient and conclusive answer:—

"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26).

Now, the first point to be noticed here is that this passage is taken from the grand oration under discussion. Knowing that this new and long-winded discourse might naturally be regarded as a fabrication—and lead to the rejection of his new Gospel—the pseudo-John placed in the mouth of his imaginary Jesus the foregoing promise respecting the gift of the "Holy Spirit," which should bring to their remembrance all his sayings and discourses. When once the apostles were filled with the holy *wind* or *spirit* (the two are expressed by the same Greek word *pneuma*) they would remember everything which Jesus had ever said to them. This was truly a very clever idea. But the presence of this passage in the speech written by the pseudo-John does not prove that that speech was ever delivered, or that the disciples received the power to recall everything Jesus had spoken. The other three evangelists knew nothing of this great oration, or of the promise that the Holy Ghost would bring the sayings of Jesus to the remembrance of the apostles.

In the book of the Acts (chap. ii.) we have a story of "a rushing mighty wind" which "filled the house where the disciples were sitting," and of "cloven tongues, like as of fire" which "sat upon each of them," after which "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." But the result of this outpouring of the "spirit" was not to bring the sayings of Jesus to the apostles' remembrance, but to give them the power of speaking every known language—without having learned them. This ridiculous story was taken by Luke from one of the apocryphal writings in circulation in his time—probably the "Acts of Peter"—and, like the "Comforter" of the Fourth Gospel, it is of course fictitious. We are thus brought back to the question, Where did the writer of that Gospel find the materials for his grand four-chapter oration? As far as we know, there was nothing in writing in the days of the pseudo-John from which the speech could have been copied or elaborated: it was undoubtedly composed by the Presbyter John himself.

In one part of this long dramatic address there is a break through which we behold a scene in which something like a little comedy is played. This reads:—

John xiv. 2—10.—"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you..... And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and thou dost not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not I am in the Father, and the Father is in me?"

According to the opening statement of this paragraph, there are in heaven many "abodes"—translated "mansions." Of this fact we are quite certain, because "if it were not so" Jesus would have told us. There are also in heaven beds and couches and tables and footstools: of this, too, we are perfectly certain, because "if it were not so" Jesus would have told us. For the same excellent reason, the public and domestic arrangements in heaven are

precisely the same as those upon earth in the time and in the locality of the pseudo-John. Again, though Jesus had lived with "the Father" in heaven all through the ages, this one solitary statement respecting "abiding-places" is the only scrap of information which he has given us in connection with that celestial region. Such reticence upon a question which so deeply concerns all Christians can only be accounted for in one way—that this so-called Savior had no knowledge of heaven whatever.

Next, the reply of Jesus to Thomas is merely a quibble or a play upon the word "way." After saying he was going somewhere to prepare a place for his disciples, Jesus said that they knew the way to that place—that is to say, the direction in which it was situated, etc. The words "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" refer to a totally different matter.

The next statement—"If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also"—was not in agreement with fact: for the disciples knew Jesus as a living person, but they knew nothing of "the Father" save as a Being supposed to exist. The further assertion—"from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him"—was also untrue: the disciples did not know "the Father," and had never beheld that august personage. Speaking of "the Father," Jesus himself, in the same Gospel, is represented as saying to the Jews:—

John v. 37.—"Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form."

John vi. 46.—"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is from God, he hath seen the Father."

We also find it stated in the same Gospel that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son.....he hath declared him" (i. 18).

We come now to the grand climax. After Jesus had said to the disciples "from henceforth ye know the Father, and have seen him," Philip, who did not understand what was meant, said "Lord, show us the Father." Upon hearing this, Jesus turned to that disciple and sharply rebuked him for being so dull of comprehension. He said (in effect) "Have you not seen me long enough to know me, Philip? and have I not told you that those who know me know the Father, and those who have seen me have seen the Father? What, then, do you mean by saying Shew us the Father? You know me and have seen me. Can you not understand that I am the Father?"

As a matter of fact, the Presbyterian John has made his pseudo-Jesus utter all kinds of contradictory statements. Upon one occasion this Savior is represented as saying that "God is a spirit" (iv. 24); upon another occasion he says that God had a "voice" and a "form" (v. 37); upon a third occasion Jesus states that "I and the Father are one" (x. 30); upon a fourth, he says "the Father is greater than I" (xiv. 28). Now this Savior assumes an entirely new position. Commentators, of course, explain that what Jesus meant was that he was one in substance, power, and eternity with "the Father"—that is to say, that he was equal to, but not identical with, that great personage. This explanation may perhaps be allowed in the case of one statement—"I and the Father are one" but it cannot be admitted as applying to such a clear statement of personal identity as that in the foregoing paragraph—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The latter words can have no meaning unless they refer to personal identity.

This short break in the grand Last Supper address is brought to a close by Jesus asking the unfortunate Philip a most embarrassing question—"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me?" How Jesus could be in the Father, and the Father in Jesus, at one and the same time, I have not yet discovered. I will therefore leave this knotty point for future consideration; but it is some satisfaction to know that we are only asked to believe the absurd statement, not to understand it.

ABRACADABRA.

## The Air and Water Currents of the Earth.—II.

(Continued from p. 662.)

THE anti-trade winds, however, are not exclusively confined to the higher regions of the atmosphere. They are all deviated by our planet's rotation, and ultimately become westerly winds. There is thus a complete circulatory movement of air currents over all parts of the globe. But the prevailing aerial currents, such as the south-westerly winds of the British Isles, are not continuous, as the wind frequently veers to the north and east.

The trade winds, however, are in reality constant currents, as they blow continuously from the same quarter. The action of the sun in the tropical belt is a ceaseless action, and from this solar activity the trade winds take their rise. These winds impart their motion to the water-molecules lying on the surface of the sea. As both air and water are imperfect fluids, friction is set up between their respective molecules. In the tropical oceans the waters become subject to a dual influence. The north-east trade winds of the northern hemisphere and the south-east trade winds of the southern hemisphere combine to urge the surface-waters of the equatorial seas from east to west.

Now, one of these oceanic currents is of immense importance to the climate and civilisation of Western Europe. This is the remarkable marine current which crosses the Northern Atlantic and which proceeds from the coast of West Africa to the shores of Brazil. This ocean stream, on reaching Cape St. Roque, is driven by the configuration of the American Coast to divide into two parts. One of these currents turns towards the south and produces the Brazil current of the South Atlantic, while the other and larger stream, which is of such priceless importance to Europe, travels northwards and runs along into the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, and is there piled up by the pressure of the water flowing from behind, the Gulf being almost closed. The ocean stream is now in the neighborhood of land heated by the equatorial sun, and the temperature of the already warm water rises as a result. The constant inflow of the tropical current at the Mexican Gulf forces the heated water along a return current which passes through its only available channel by the Strait of Florida, through which it rushes at the rate of 4½ knots an hour, or about eight kilometers. Thus it returns to the Atlantic and now forms the Gulf Stream which, in the words of Sir John Murray, is "the greatest and most important of all oceanic currents." Its speed now increases, its temperature rises, and its volume enlarges when we include the greater mass of water which now participates in its motion.

This ocean river, then, is the world-famed Gulf Stream—a mass of hot water which flows between two banks of much colder water, "the cold wall." When it emerges from the Gulf of Mexico, the stream is 1,300 feet deep, and 37 miles broad. As Professor H. N. Dickson says, it "is probably the most rapid and most voluminous stream-current in the world." In the vicinity of Cape Hatteras its depth declines to 1,000 feet, but it spreads out over the ocean to a width of 75 miles. This wonderful current carries along its course the amazing quantity of 8,720 millions of gallons per second, which is more than 2,000 times the mass of water discharged by the mighty Mississippi River into the sea. This great American stream, the "Father of Waters," which drains an area of the North American continent of more than a million and a quarter square miles, or more than two-fifths of the entire surface of the United States, was at one time regarded as the parent of the Gulf Stream. But, as we have seen, this ocean current is of equatorial origin, and its waters bear in their bosom a stupendous amount of heat. Its thermal powers have been estimated as the equal of the total heat imparted to one of the Frigid Zones during the six months when an Arctic region

is cheered by the light and warmth of its summer sun. Another comparison, perhaps still more vivid, has been made by Mr. E. W. Barlow, who tells us that "the Gulf Stream transports as much heat as a stream of molten iron the size of the Mississippi River."

This current of warm water may be said to constitute the commencement of an oceanic circulation which is completed by the cold currents which press forward to replace the water which streams from the equatorial ocean, when this is heated by the solar rays, and then gradually diffuses its heat, until it is ultimately exhausted in the proximity of the Poles.

On its outward journey the Gulf Stream widens its course over the Atlantic to the south of Newfoundland; one branch of the current is restored to the tropics along the shores of Spain and Africa, while the other travels north between our Isles and Iceland and up to the Norwegian coasts, which are in this way rendered habitable, while the opposite coasts of Greenland, which are practically in the same parallel of latitude, remain permanently icebound. A frigid polar current moves southward by the shores of Greenland and joins near Cape Farewell with the Davis Strait stream, thus forming the current of Labrador which, emerging from the Baffin Sea, travels along the coast of North America and renders the climate of the adjoining continent intensely harsh in the winter season. This icy water then descends beneath the Gulf Stream as it crosses its path in the neighborhood of Newfoundland, the cold heavy current sinking down, while the lighter liquid of the warmer current sails over the surface of the sea. The Labrador stream, however, re-emerges to the surface of the Atlantic near the African coast, and to this circumstance is due the abundance of fish in the vicinity of Walfish Bay, as the high temperature of the tropical waters is materially reduced by its influence.

Another current of cold water passes along the eastern coast of Greenland and renders it one of the permanent ice-locked regions of the earth. The west coast of Greenland, on the other hand, is visited by one of the branch currents of the Gulf Stream, and is open to navigation for several months each year. That this marine current is of equatorial origin is proved by the tropical vegetation which it carries as far north as Disko Island. And this current conveys to the boreal regions of the Atlantic not only a heat-wave which confers upon them more temperate conditions than those experienced by the adjoining seas, but it also transports a huge mass of water vapor which evolves the protracted fogs which envelop Iceland, Newfoundland, and the surrounding seas. Those dense vapors settle over those parts of the ocean that are traversed by the great liners, and throughout the winter present a deadly and persistent danger to vessels passing between Europe and America. The *Titanic* disaster would doubtless have been averted but for the thick fog which shrouded from view the floating iceberg with which that splendid ship collided.

Icebergs float as far south as 40° N. in the northern, and travel as far north as 38° S. in the southern hemisphere. In tropical regions the temperature of the sea surfaces usually ranges from 70° to 84° F. But, says Sir John Murray:—

"The temperature decreases as the depth increases, the coldest water being found at the bottom. The warm water is a relatively thin stratum, the greater part of ocean water having a temperature below 40° F. It is ice-cold in the Atlantic, even beneath the equator; the ooze dredged from the bottom beneath a tropical sun is so cold that the hand cannot be placed in it without positive discomfort."

The heated water which the Gulf Stream bears into the North Atlantic gradually loses its high temperature, and on reaching higher latitudes slowly descends. But it carries considerable heat with it as it sinks, with the result that relatively warm sea-water is encountered at a greater depth in the North Atlantic than elsewhere in the ocean. In the waters round the coast of Northern Scotland

a temperature of 45° has been met with at a depth of 600 fathoms (3,600 feet), while in the waters near the west coast of Africa the temperature of the ocean is no higher at a depth of 200 fathoms only.

Turning from the Northern Atlantic to its southern division we meet with an oceanic circulation of a similar character, while in the Northern Pacific there occurs a considerable current, the Kuro-Siwo, the "Black River" of the Japanese which, although of a lower temperature, and less rapid than the Gulf Stream, is governed by kindred conditions. The Indian Ocean and the Southern Pacific likewise possess their marine currents, whose circulation, owing to the fact that they are located in the southern hemisphere, is always in an opposite direction to those of the northern hemisphere.

In the Southern Seas, in the South Atlantic, South Pacific, and Indian Oceans, all the southerly sections of the sea-surface circulation impel their liquid masses in an easterly direction, and this mode of motion is frequently strengthened by the anti-trade winds which, in these areas, assume the form of low air currents, and flow from the west. The Antarctic waters thus become the region of a continuous west-east movement, in which both wind and water unite.

Those natural laws which condition the circulation of the earth's unfrozen oceans extend to those areas whose surfaces are solid fields of ice. The marine currents which circulate in these frigid realms impart a motion to the very ice. This is known as the ice-drift, and it was by means of this movement that the famous Freethinker, Nansen the explorer, by—

"voluntarily imprisoning his ship, was able to effect his journey to the neighborhood of the North Pole. The mountains of floating ice, the icebergs, which are fragments from the glaciers covering the circumpolar lands, are carried by the cold currents even as far south as the regions where transatlantic liners travel. They finally disappear in the warm waters of the Gulf Stream."

The pronounced differences between the temperature of the equatorial surface-waters and that of the polar seas set in motion a flow of water from the Poles to the Equator, the chilly water from the polar areas being denser than that of the sunlit Equator. This causes a surface circulation, which greatly increases the circulation which is generated by the trade winds. This phenomenon clearly proves a certain relationship between the atmospheric and hydrospheric circulation. As we shall subsequently see, this association is very close; and it may also be observed that the ocean currents, caused by the movements of the winds, react upon the air currents, and direct through their combined activities the ordinary atmospheric circulation over the large land-surfaces themselves.

One has merely to glance at a map which displays the distribution of the chief sea streams to note that the leading marine currents are grouped about the areas of high pressure that are situated above the ocean masses in latitudes of 30°. Over these warm water currents are suspended vast volumes of air, to which the heated water communicates both heat and motion.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded)

### Obituary.

It is our sad duty to record the death of Mrs. May Boulter on October 9, as the result of a cycling accident. The deceased lady collided with a motor-ambulance at Palmers Green, and death was almost instantaneous. Frequenters of the lecture-stations in the London parks will remember Mrs. Boulter's devoted and energetic support of her husband, Harry Boulter, in his freelance propaganda. Mrs. Boulter's amiable and sympathetic disposition endeared her to a large circle of Freethinking and Socialist friends, many of whom were present at her cremation, which took place at Golder's Green on Saturday, October 16, when a Secular Service was impressively read by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, of the National Secular Society, several of whose members attended the ceremony. To her husband and three children we tender our heartfelt sympathy.—E. M. V.

**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.  
INDOOR.

TWYNHOLM HALL, Bayonne-road, Fulham Cross, S.W. : Wednesday, October 27, at 8.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Question of Theism."

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